

AL-13 SPECIAL MATCH REPORT

With so many talented teams in the Gymea Soccer Club at the moment there has been a lot of talk which is the best team in the Club. You cannot walk into any Club, Pub or Business Establishment in Gymea without hearing this subject debated. Naturally most debate centers around the PL-1's and the AL-13's as there is no doubt these are the Club's top 2 teams. Both teams are chock-a-block full of talented players: the AL-13's are full of veteran players who have scaled the heights of the game, while the PL-1's are full of youngsters. The AL-13's, of course, boast one of the code's great coaches - the legendary "Super Coach Bone", whilst the PL-1's have a young coach in the form of Glenn Floyd who is keen to make his mark.

I still have a contact with N.A.S.A. and I recently sent him reams of information on all the players and their profiles and, between Space Shuttle Projects, he was able to feed all this information through their Super Advanced Computer. The computer played a simulated match between the 2 teams and so sophisticated is this computer thought to be that the results can virtually be deemed to be facts.

The only concession that I made to the AL-13's, due to the fact they give away a considerable age advantage, is that I added a guest player to their team. Being a big fan of his all my life I decided to invite the legendary and late John 'The Duke' Wayne to play for the AL-13's. Since he never played a game of soccer, or probably never saw a game of soccer, I reckon that this is fair enough.

The following is a summary of the report sent to me by the computer:-

** Match day arrives and sees a bumper crowd at the cauldron, numbering in thousands. President Ray has the BBQ going flat out with sausage and steak sandwiches. Jan and the girls are doing a roaring business in the canteen. Uncle Harry and Dave are going great guns behind the bar. The AL-13's are having trouble keeping Chadwick away from the food.

** The PL-1's are pretty confident and have stuck to their regular pre-match routine the night before - Meet at Gymea Pub - then on to the Tradies - then on to the Casino - then back to Carmens - then back to the Cross for breakfast at the Beef & Bourbon - then home for a couple of hours sleep before the big match.

** Both teams line up in the middle for the start of play but the start is delayed when the referee refuses to allow John Wayne to play in cowboy boots, especially when they have spurs attached. A difficult situation is averted through mediation from President Ray and Super Coach Bone and "The Duke" agrees to wear traditional soccer boots.

** The match starts and it is obvious from the start that the PL-1's boast both an advantage in speed and fitness. Only experience and cunning are keeping the AL-13 veterans in the match. The PL-1's certainly tackle hard but the AL-13's are masters of the old clip across the back of the heels and other such AL-13 chestnuts. The AL-13's slow the match down to their level with the old roosting tactic - the roost across Gymea Bay Road is very popular.

** The PL-1's strike early with great goals to Matt Robinson and Will Hardman and only some great saves from Chadwick are keeping the AL-13's in the match.

** John Wayne, who is playing centre back for the AL-13's, is causing the PL-1's some problems. Although he is conceding some penalties he is pulling off some sickening hits and has already forced Michael Ward and Aaron Cadet to be replaced. The PL-1's have been forced to attack wide in order to avoid "The Duke".

** Veteran AL-13 players Michael Blumor and Tony Dale are playing great games and, together with Jimmy Johnston and John Condron, they are holding the midfield together. Garth "Guru" Pettit is providing most of the attack together with Dave Forsyth and Darren. Skipper Tony Neale, Rob Blumor and Geoff Stone are keeping the defence solid but, they too, are giving "The Duke" plenty of room as he appears to be pretty indiscriminate with his hits.

** Just before half-time and disaster for the AL-13's when an air-swing from Rob Blumor allows Geoff Phillipson a one-on-one with the keeper and he slots one past Chadwick. Three nil down and a long way back - the AL-13's hit the sheds a very dejected team. It would take all of Super Coach Bone's motivational skills to lift the AL-13's.

** The AL-13 dressing room resembles a scene from "Battle of Britain" with players collapsed all over the place. Tony Dale has collapsed and efforts are being made to revive him - eventually a nice fresh sausage roll is waved under his nose and he quickly comes back to life. In such a chaotic scene Super Coach Bone is about to launch into a big speech when, suddenly, all eyes turn to the corner of the room where "The Duke" has risen from the bench - you could hear a pin drop. "The Duke" starts, "Well Pilgrims, I've been in some tough situations in my life" and "The Duke" goes on to recite some stories like 'The Alamo, the storming of the Beaches of Normandy and Anzio, taking back the Islands in the Pacific' but to name a few. "The Duke" said that despite all odds he knew the AL-13's could come back and beat the PL-1's. An uplifted and confident AL-13 team hit the paddock for the 2nd half.

** A couple of minutes into the 2nd half and the referee blows a halt to the match. He runs over to the side-line to deal with a couple of hecklers who have been constantly bagging out himself and the linesmen. Doug Booker and Gerry Buckley are removed from the ground (or at least asked to go into the hall).

** Michael Blumor, who has been playing great soccer, goes for a run up the side-line, Josh Hackney comes across in cover. He shows Michael the side-line and OH NO!!!, the old veteran is going to try to beat him with pace. Josh absolutely nails Michael and sends him sailing right into the AL-13 bench. The bench falls backwards and pandemonium follows as AL-13 players go sprawling into the gully in front of the Clubhouse. Being such finely tuned athletes the injury toll is horrific. Someone is immediately despatched to go up to the Chemist Shop and get every bandage and tube of Dencorub in the shop. It's now up to the 10 players on the field to do the job - a daunting task!!

** 20 minutes into the second half and what could be the turning point occurs. Brett Kirby goes for an attacking run up the middle, bad decision Brett, as "The Duke" comes across and absolutely wipes him out. What happens next is sheer chaos as the referee gives a penalty in the box to the PL-1's but doesn't even card "The Duke". (I suspect the ref is a big John Wayne fan as well). Some of the PL-1 players let the referee know their feelings in no uncertain terms. The ref responds and pulls out the red card - Troy Colburt, Geoff Phillipson & Matt Booker are sent off. This works out well as the 3 of them can help carry Brett Kirby off the ground as they go off.

** Luke Mason takes the penalty and goes for the top right-hand corner, Chadwick anticipates and launches himself and is horizontal in mid air as he just manages to flick the ball over the bar. I think this computer is due for a service.

** Before the PL-1's are able to regain their composure the AL-13's strike back with 2 quick goals - one to Dave Forsyth and an absolute screamer from 'Guru' Pettit, We now have a match on our hands.

** With time running out and with players collapsing everywhere (mainly AL-13 players), Tony Neale went down, once again, requiring medical assistance. All eyes suddenly turned towards the dressing sheds when what looked like a mummy from some cheap B grade movie moved down the steps and hobbled on to the park. Yes, it was Michael Blumor under all those bandages and what an unbelievable act of bravery; the crowd rose as one. Although his mobility was severely limited the mere fact of his presence lifted the AL-13's for one last effort.

** With only seconds remaining there was an almighty effort from both sides to get control of the ball. During all this scrambling Michael Blumor's bandages began to unravel (Another great job of strapping from Super Coach Bone) and, as Michael seemed to be running in circles, most of the players became tangled and entwined in the bandages. Out of this comical scene however John Wayne came steaming out with the ball and made a

great burst up the middle. Despite possessing awkward ball skills "The Duke" had only the keeper to beat. He had a big wind up and launched at the ball, only he had a complete air swing. However, his boot had flown off his foot during the shot and had gone cart-wheeling through the air and collected Amir, the PL-1 keeper, right between the eyes. With Amir knocked out cold "The Duke" proceeded to hit the ball into the back of the net as full time was blown - a 3 all draw.

**Both teams head back to the hall after the match to share a couple of quiet drinks. There are players slumped everywhere with all sorts of bandages. All "The Duke's" victims are sitting together lined up against a wall and the big fella has bought them all a beer. President Ray gets up and says a few words and declares the teams joint winners. Everybody thanked "The Duke" for playing but we all agreed it would be better if he retired as he would spend even more time at the judiciary than Troy Colburt. As the sun set over Gynea Bay Oval and the crowd wandered off home all the players were left to reflect on a great soccer match.

The Man on the Hill

Well the match started in controversy when the Bangor players moved in and took over OUR bench, not a smart move boys as it made the match very personal indeed, that's OUR bench!!!

With our team on ground control I was volunteered to referee the match on the next ground. President Ray - I'll have to speak to the Journalist Union about this one. It is very difficult to referee one match and report on another match simultaneously. However I did manage to do this with the assistance of the 22 players from the 35D's who all turned out to be experts on the rules of soccer. In fact I suspect they all go to bed with a soccer rule book, I personally prefer a good novel.

Our match seemed to be a very evenly contested affair, everything was running in the usual course of events - Jimmy Johnston & John Condron were butchering anything that moved - Michael Blumor was budging in the back play - Chadwick was letting in goals.

Meanwhile back at the 35D's I was being tested with my knowledge of the rules - that's basically because I don't know a real lot of them - and I didn't appreciate Jimmy Johnston yelling out from the next ground "You're a joke Ref." - ever seen yourself play soccer Jimmy? Being a journalist I, however, was not deterred - for all the rules I didn't know I just made up new ones - and I think the boys appreciated this. Although it's a bit hard to tell - they don't seem to smile very much.

Then out of the corner of my eye I witnessed a great goal - Michael Blumor rose out of the pack and hit a great header which beat the goalkeeper pointless. Hang on!!! that's the wrong end!!! And that goalkeeper was our own Chadwick - an own goal. When I said to Michael after the match "A great goal mate" - he replied "Not really - it's only Chadwick I beat". Very cynical Michael.

Fortunately with only 2 minutes remaining John Condron slotted the winner. Both John and Peter finished with 2 goals each. Super Coach Bone was a happy man.

Back at the 35D's the match finished in a one all draw - a fair result - and soccer was the winner on the day. All the boys went away happy - or at least I think so???

The Man on the Hill

AL12 v ST JOHN BOSCO WON 2-1

Well it was the annual trip to Dobell Park (a very ordinary place) to play against Bosco (a very ordinary group of individuals). Bosco were never a chance to halt the Gynea Bay Juganaut and we just rolled right over the top of them and ground them into the dirt. Super Coach Bone has moulded us into a great unit and a very technically correct unit. Bosco had no answer to our skills and as per usual resorted to dirty play to put-us off our game, with 2 Bosco players being sent from the field. Yes folks the Man on the hill' was a victim of foul play being backed down whilst making an incisive run, resulting in concussion. Whilst this has not done wonders for my Mel Gibson like looks it has given me a certain amount of Journalistic licence because as I sit here I am sure I am in Disneyland' as Donald Duck is sitting next to me and Mickey Mouse is on my other side. Donald and Mickey both reckon the whole team played well with a great goal to Col Grumble and the match winner scored by that ageless Warrior Michael Blumor. A great effort from Tony Dale to complete the game after doing a triathlon the day before; thats when Tony goes to the Pizza Hut and starts with a pepperoni pizza, then a ham and pineapple and finishes off the last leg with a family size super supreme pan pizza. James Bowmaker had his first full game since recovering from surgery to his back. Some cynical person suggested it was exploratory surgery to see if he had plastercine in his bones instead of bone marrow, but James assured me it was to remove the yellow streak from his back. (sorry James, Mickey made me write that).

Anyhow, Mini Mouse and Daisy Duck have just turned up and we are all off to the Chinese for dinner.

The Man on the Hill

Injury Report: Graeme Thornley - concussion
Steve Doleghuy - both knees
Super Coach Bone - Strained tonsils, suspected stomach
ulcers, rapidly receding hairline.