

GOLDEN OLDIES AIM TO ROLL BACK THE YEARS

*Filippo Ricci, staff
reporter*

No, Wandsworth council didn't try to give the advantage to the Current Team by using the sprinklers to ruin the pitch in Chelsea style, but expect some mud and strong wind on the once immaculate grass on the left bank of the Thames. Conditions that probably won't suit the flamboyant style of play of the Legends, ready to grace the pitch with a very attacking minded side, fielding Dennis Fontana (who has switched allegiances after last year's game, together with Pritpal S Tamber) behind the golden pair of strikers, Stefan Howald and Neil James. Dennis will act in a Marcol style, supporting the spectacular duo that bagged not less than 74 goals in three seasons between 2000 and 2003.

**Andrews: "I have
divided loyalties for
this fixture"**

The current team, submerged by a depressing 6-1 drubbing from Viacom Outdoor – the rock-bottom team in the London Premier League – in their last outing, have been put through their paces over the past two weeks by the

military regime of midfielder-coach Marco3, and will do everything to get a morale-boosting win to prepare for the next league game, a difficult encounter with Eastern Promise next Thursday at Willesden.

**Goober Fox: "Enjoy
yourself!"**

The Legends will surely remember the 'leaky defence' of Burge & Gunson in the Grafton League and will try to revive those marauding memories against a back four that this year have already conceded 44 goals in 12 games in the London League, an average of more than 3 every 90 minutes. The Legends, more used to the trickery of grass and to the early kick offs than their younger opponents (now jetlagged by those Monday nights), will bank on a back four line that started together only once, but in what has gone down in the PF annals as a memorable match. That was on pitch 10 in Regent's Park on 21 October 2001 – Sunday morning, *ça va sans dire*. With Ian Coyne rather than Rob Alexander in goal, Joe Boyle, Paul Kayley, Brian Bannister and Filippo Ricci were heroic against Cameron Athans, a nasty team from Walthamstow, in the London FA Junior Cup. "A game full of passion and resilience", remembered Geoff Andrews, assessing his *chorizo busturias* during the press conference held down-

stairs at Jose's on Friday lunchtime, "particularly on the part of the home side who were facing tough opposition from a team in one of the better Essex leagues, also included two-footed tackles, torrents of abuse and indifferent refereeing. It was an absorbing and closely fought match, played in atrocious conditions. A typical British cup-tie which lived up to the expectations of PFFC's Italian defender, even if he was disappointed by the final result". PFFC fielded Neil and Stefan up front (both of whom scored), plus Paul Clarke and Richard Shepherd, who came on as a sub. The team lost 4-2 after extra time.

**Kayley: "We're well up
for it"**

Another trip down the PF memory lane that should send shivers down the backs of the Current Team is to 6 October 2002. In another epic game, the first of that winning season for PF, the Thinkers won 3-2 in the historic setting of Hampton Court, home pitch of the fiercest opponents of those grassy years, Inter Aztec. Not less than eight of the Legends that will play today in Wandsworth Park were there on that bright Sunday morning, 7 in the starting line up: Rob, Joe, Filippo, Paul, Raj Chada, Neil, Stefan, plus Richard. And in the season 2000/01 the three games played together by Rob, Filippo, Paul and Brian, with Joe

twice entering the field later on, PF always won: 4-2 vs Falcons, 5-2 vs Grafton (with the only other goal of Filippo's PF career, the second coming earlier this season) and the massive thrashing, 5-1, of South Indies, who would eventually win the league that year. Rob, Raj and Stefan were also part of those triumphs.

Clow: "Respect, but no mercy will be shown"

And after the gritty performance of last year, when the Legends ended the first half 2-0 up and wasted a penalty when 3-2 down, the Current Team must be fully aware that anything less than a 100% performance won't be enough against the elder but wiser Legends eleven. They will use this occasion to test some new faces: Rob, the third of his kind to have debuted in the London League, Mikey, at 16 on his way to becoming the youngest player ever to wear a PF shirt, José, the last player to be signalled to the Gaffer by chief scout Vito Vittore and the first Chilean to play for PF, and finally Rinaldo, the fourth chap from Valtellina to enter the PF frame.

Johns: "This game is immense to me"

The other faces will be the familiar ones, starting with captain Ally Clow, who, like Treasurer Owen Mather, actually played, and scored, in the Inter

Aztec game mentioned before. Also highly familiar to the Legends will be the Cornish figure of Alan Johns, the winger now in his seventh season with PF, the longest-serving player of the club. Last year in this fixture he managed to score for both teams, basically tearing apart by himself the tired Legends team in the second half. The Camden supremo Raj will have to work hard in the Legends midfield, with Dennis not expected to cover too much, and will need the help of Tamber and Lele Capurso (who flew from Rome for this prestigious occasion, as Stefan did from Zürich) to stamp his local authority on the midfield area and prevent Al from taking control of the park from the right. The ageing back five of the Legends will also be tested by the pace of Mikey, more than 20 years their junior.

Ricci: "The Magic of the Cup will guide us"

Finally in his briefing with the press at Meson Bilbao Mr Andrews announced that the Legends will be captained by Filippo, whose phone call to the Gaffer during a baby-sitting session in Battersea Park in autumn 2004 kick-started what has already become a classic and special event for the Thinkers' club. Filippo will swap his current place in the centre of defence to go back on the left, where it all started for him, many years ago in Regents Park.

Wandsworth Park, 10.30

PFFC Legends (4-3-1-2) (probable): Rob; Joe, Brian, Paul, Filippo; Lele, Raj, Tamber; Dennis; Neil, Stefan.
Subs: Geoff, Richard, Clarkey.

PFFC Current team (4-4-2) (probable): Marco4; Dodo, Ally, Damian, Vipul; Rob, Kieran, Jose, Al; Mauro, Mikey.
Subs: Andy, Ronan, Owen, Giovanni, Rinaldo.

Referee: Hugh Tisdale (Harwich)