

JANUARY 2005— SUB REF SAVES THE MATCH!

Islip 1-4 Fritwell

ISLIP	
1	Barry Cooke
12	Rob Winlow
17	John Cooper
4	Ben Shermer
5	Paul Walton
6	Adrian Varney
7	Steve Corbin
8	John Barker
9	Luke Gammon
10	Duncan McKnight
11	Paul Druce
14	James Baker (used)
15	Nick Wyatt (used)

Venue	Church Road, Islip, Oxfordshire
Date	Saturday, 29th January 2005
Competition	Oxfordshire Senior League Division 1
Referee	Mr K Smith (Banbury)
Sub Referee	Mr P Walton (Kidlington)
Attendance	4

Match Details			
08	0-1		Nicholls
58	0-2		Holland(1)
72	0-3		Holland(2)
85	1-3	Gammon	
86	1-4		Filite

FRITWELL	
1	Daniel Spencer
2	Aaron Hodges
3	Jos Clarke
4	Brian Joyce
5	Ryan Bush
6	Dave Hazel
7	Scott Grimshaw
8	Garrick Kimber
9	Ashley Holland
10	Steve Risbridger
11	Murray Nicholls
12	Luke Kimber (used)
14	John Pilpa
15	Rui Filite (used)

I made fairly regular trips to games in the Oxfordshire Senior League and this was the second level of the league. A train trip was the opted mode of travel as there is a railway station at Islip. It's on the Oxford to Bicester line and had an infrequent service. Islip FC were struggling in the OSL and my travelling companion, Chris, and I decided it could well be their only season in membership. All was set fair so off we went for their game with Fritwell, which is located north of Bicester. On arrival we found Islip to be a pleasant village and their ground in Church Road, as expected for this level, had rather basic facilities but within a pleasant, rural environment.

A rather strange set of events unfolded. I had a chat with referee Mr K Smith who told me he was feeling unwell and almost 'cried off' this morning. I was glad he didn't as the next train was about two hours away! I meet Mr Walton, the Islip secretary (add to that manager, groundsman and general club factotum), who enquired whether I was the chap that called him about the game (social media at this level being still very much in its infancy stage back in the day). He apologises to the referee about the state of the lines on the pitch: "I went to the builders' merchant to get some paint but they were closed" he explains.

The match starts with just Chris, two people who appear to be from Fritwell and myself watching. A few others gradually filter in to this public park but they filter out just as quickly. Nicholls puts the visitors into an eighth minute lead with a good finish and a delay of a couple of minutes followed where the ref was chatting to the Islip manager on the touchline. The game recommences but with just 18 minutes played, Mr Walton appears in full referee's kit with two flags in his hand as Mr Smith departed. The 'new' referee calls both skippers together and was due to restart the game with a drop ball on the halfway line but the players tell him it was an Islip goal kick. There seemed to be a bit of a mix-up with the timings as the half-time whistle is blown after 41 minutes with Fritwell, the more dominant side, still just that goal in front. During the break a strange picture conjures in my mind of a man dressed in referee's kit giving Islip their half-time team talk!

Into the second half. Holland added a second goal for Fritwell, a simple near post header. Holland netted again, at a point when Islip had changed their club linesman and he wasn't looking and decided to swig from a bottle instead and missed what looked to be a clear offside before the ball was slotted past home keeper Cooke. A couple of late goals came as a teasing cross found Islip's Gammon as the far post. This was immediately countered by Filite who coolly diverted the ball past Cooke and then shot into an empty goal as two home defenders lose the chase.

I have to say that Mr Walton, the Islip secretary/manager/jack-of-all-trades, did a great job at officiating the game and credit should also go to the players who played sensibly too. I failed to mention earlier that he did tell me he was a qualified referee as he was going to take over in the middle. I felt it pertinent to thank him for taking on the refereeing task at the end of the game as the other possible outcome, a match abandoned after just eight minutes and the next train back to Oxford hours away would have proved to be a most unsatisfactory outcome, to say the least!

The good folk of Islip had clearly failed to attach to their team as no one turned out to watch and Islip's venture into the Oxfordshire Senior League did indeed last just the one season. Fritwell continued in the OSL for a while longer.

When Mr Walton appeared to take over the whistle one of those two other spectators said: "I bet that bloke's been waiting ages for a chance to do this; he's got his refs kit on and also has flags at the ready!" Who knows whether he'd been waiting "ages" to do so, but from my point-of-view it was just as well he did!!



Images from the match at Islip.

