

WBHC Mens Match Reports 2008/09 Season

Dramatic End to the Season as Wood Saves Bassett at the Death (28 March 2009)

Wootton Bassett 1sts 2 - 1 City of Bath A

Wootton Bassett Mens 1st XI secured another season of Avon Division hockey with a gutsy 2-1 home win against City of Bath A on Saturday.

In the knowledge that only a win would guarantee their safety the Bassett men took to the pitch highly motivated to secure the result. In the opening encounters Bassett took the game straight to the Bath team, who lie second in the Avon Division. This attacking approach eventually paid off when a well saved shot from Kyle Barnes was bundled over the line by a determined Callum Black.

The early pressure did not last though and in the run up to half time Bassett came under pressure themselves, playing nervously at times and falling back to defend. The back four played superbly well, whilst Paul Warren in goal was in inspired form, making a string of excellent saves including two from penalty corners. Bassett withstood the onslaught and ran out 1 - 0 to the good at half time.

The second half started as the first had ended, with Bassett camped in their own half under sustained pressure. Eventually, Bath converted an opportunity after a string of penalty corners that had been well defended by Bassett. With the scores at 1 - 1, Bassett went back on the attack. Wave after wave of flowing hockey followed but, with Bath crowding the D with defenders, a break through looked to be beyond the home side. With just two minutes remaining, as the game seemed to be slipping away, Bassett created their final chance. The ball was worked through the midfield and reached Kyle Barnes. Barnes, followed by his two man-markers, drove into the D and unselfishly squared it to centre back Ali Wood. A stunning strike from just inside the D left the Bath keeper no chance and gave Bassett the three points they required.

In the unbelievably tight Avon Division the win secured fifth place for Bassett and guaranteed safety in a league from which up to six teams could be relegated. After the match Bassett Captain Dan Stanley said, "It's been a stunning revival in the second half of the season, after looking out of it before Christmas we've won eight of our last eleven games. On this form we have to set our sights firmly on the top next time."

Scorers: C.Black, A.Wood **Man of the Match:** P.Warren

Team: P.Warren, J.Wright, A.Wood, S.Bell, M.Skivington, J.Macleod, M.Tolley, D.Stanley (c), K.Mansfield, K.Barnes, C.Black, M.Bray, A.Sammon, M.Turner

Swindon C 1 – 0 Wootton Bassett 2nds

Wootton Bassett ended the 08-09 season with a defeat of the hands of local rivals Swindon C. Bassett were high in confidence after last week's impressive display and were looking to secure fourth place in Wilts & NE Somerset Division 2.

The game started with Bassett dominant, switching the play along the back line looking for a gap in Swindon's defence. The composed play almost paid off when Grant Kirkup spotted the run of Luke Salisbury at the back post. The ball was drilled hard into the D, but was just out of reach of Salisbury. Bassett continued to attack Swindon's goal only to be stopped by some great keeping. Swindon had a rare attack near the end of the first half but were halted through some last ditch defending from man of the match Ross Pinnuck.

The second half started in similar fashion, with Bassett looking to use the pace of the youngsters on the wings and the experience of Mike Davies and Kirkup in the middle. With Bassett attacking they left themselves short at the back and ultimately conceded a penalty corner. Swindon took full advantage a struck the ball home. With ten minutes remaining Bassett looked for a single goal which would have secured fourth place in the league. Having gone close on numerous occasions, Bassett could not find the finish required.

Despite the defeat Captain Luke Salisbury said, "We can take some positives from the game, but the season as a whole has demonstrated the skills of the younger players coming through into the second team. Next season we will be pushing for promotion."

Man of the Match: R.Pinnuck

Team: L.Baldry, T.Ponting, D.Metson, R.Pinnuck, L.Salisbury (c), G.Kirkup, M.Davies, M.Daniell, R.Appleby, J.Lee, D.Beale, M.Thompson, J.P.Terry.

Four out of four for Bassett Men's 2nd XI (7 March 2009)

Wootton Bassett 2nds 6 – 2 Chippenham C

The men's second team continued their impressive run of form, notching up their fourth win in a row in Wilts & NE Somerset Division 2.

The game started very evenly with Chippenham snatching the first goal. Bassett immediately responded when right winger

Mark Turner hassled the defender off the ball to create his first opportunity, which he slid home from an acute angle. Captain Luke Salisbury then added a second, slotting the ball away from close range.

Man of the match Tom Ponting was in complete control of the midfield and was rewarded when he flicked the ball over the keeper following a slick one - two. Turner then powered a cross in hard to set up Jakeem Lee for an easy finish. Bassett were then struck by an injury when vice-captain Dave Gardner was forced off the pitch with a broken wrist when a dangerously lifted shot struck him after a penalty corner.

With Gardner off the pitch Bassett conceded a second after a scrappy piece of play led to a penalty corner. But they responded straight away, adding another as Turner beat the goalie and placed the ball in the back of the net. As the final whistle approached skipper Salisbury read a defenders pass and intercepted. Salisbury beat the 'keeper a set up Lee for his second of the match.

The win leaves Bassett in fifth place in W&NES 2, only one point behind fourth placed West Wilts.

Scorers: M.Turner (2), J.Lee (2), L.Salisbury, T.Ponting **Man of Match:** T.Ponting

Team: M.Thompson, R.Pearce, D.Gardner, J.Sharp, T.Ponting, D.Metson, L.Salisbury (c), G.Kirkup, J.P.Terry, M.Turner, J.Lee, R.Appleby, M.Henshaw

Chippenham 1st XI 4 – 1 Wootton Bassett 1st XI

A determined men's first team travelled to top of the table Chippenham on Saturday and came agonisingly close to snatching a draw.

Bassett went straight on the attack at the start of the match, with Kyle Barnes and Martin Bray both having chances early on. As the forward pairing chased down every lost cause Bray was hit on the shoulder from a dangerous attempt at an aerial. The resulting free hit was fired forward but flew past the attackers crowding the D.

Chippenham then began to settle into their slick passing game. A sustained spell of pressure from the home side led firstly to man of the match Max Brennan saving off the line and then James Wright repeating the act when a shot came flying towards him at head height. Chippenham eventually opened the scoring midway through the half when a cross into the D was deflected home by the centre forward.

Bassett's heads did not drop and they quickly pulled back an equaliser when John Macleod struck a thunderbolt of a shot into the corner of the goal from a penalty corner. For the remainder of the half the midfield players cancelled each other out leaving the score at 1 – 1 going into the break.

The second half started at a frantic pace with both teams creating chances. Despite numerous attempts Bassett could not break down the solid Chippenham defensive line and often found themselves defending counter attacks.

As the half wore on Chippenham won a string of penalty corners. The first two were thwarted by runner Kristian Mansfield, who received a hit to the head, his face mask saving him, and a bruised leg for his efforts. However, Chippenham made no mistake from the third and retook the lead.

Following the goal Mark Tolley was carried off the pitch with an ankle injury, Macleod slotting into the midfield to take his place. Bassett pushed for an equaliser and had a goal disallowed when a strike from just outside the D was deflected into the goal. As Bassett pushed forward the inevitable happened and Chippenham slotted home a third. In the last ten minutes the tiring Bassett side tried to push for a second but ended up short at the back and ultimately conceded a fourth.

Bassett should take heart from a good performance against the top team in the Avon League. They will be hoping to take that form into the last three games of the season as they attempt to avoid relegation back to Wilts & NE Somerset Div 1.

Scorer: J.Macleod **Man of the Match:** M.Brennan

Team: P.Warren, A.Wood, J.Wright, M.Skivington, M.Brennan, S.Bell (c), M.Tolley, J.Macleod, K.Mansfield, M.Bray, K.Barnes, C.Black, M.Daniell

Wootton Bassett 1 – 4 Old Bristolians A (28 February 2009)

Bassett took to the pitch in a confident mood against fellow relegation candidates, Old Bristolians, on Saturday. What followed was one of the strangest games most of the Bassett team had ever played in.

From the start the visitors attacked Bassett, however the Bassett defence held firm and weathered the early onslaught. Bassett then began their typical assault on the OB's goal. Some fast flowing moves around the midfield created the first chances for Kyle Barnes to run at the defence. It appeared that OB's remembered Barnes' solo effort earlier in the season and set out to stop him at all costs. A number of short corners followed as Barnes was hacked to the ground time and again, but Bassett could not convert a single effort. After twenty minutes Mark Turner broke away from his marker and crossed the ball for man of the match Ross Pinnuck to sweep home through the 'keepers legs. Bassett then continued their attack in search of a second, but to no avail.

As the second half began it became clear that OB's had decided to ratchet up the pressure on Bassett. What followed was by far the most physical encounter of the season, with some tackles bordering on violence as one Bassett player after another was clattered to the ground. Barnes was once again the number one target, being hacked to the ground from behind when clean through on goal. The resulting short corner was sent spiralling wide. Martin Bray was then body

checked whilst trying to receive an aerial ball sent up by Bruce Carter. The physical play took its toll on Bassett with three players eventually going off injured. John Macleod was left on the floor having been elbowed off the ball in the centre of the park; OB's then broke away, won a short corner and levelled the scores. Two minutes later a misplaced pass was intercepted and the visitors took the lead. Bassett reorganised their team in an attempt to take the game back to the visitors. However, as they attacked they were left weakened at the back and conceded two more goals late on. As the final whistle approached Bassett pushed for a consolation goal but could not break through the tough OB defence.

Next weekend Bassett face an away trip to second placed Chippenham on Saturday and a home match against bottom side Team Bath Buccs F on Sunday.

Scorer: R.Pinnuck **Man of the Match:** D.Jeffery, R.Pinnuck

Team : P.Warren, A.Wood, M.Skivington, D.Jeffery, J.Wright, S.Bell (c), J.Macleod, K.Mansfield, R.Pinnuck, M.Bray, K.Barnes, M.Tolley, M.Turner, B.Carter

Devizes A 6 - 3 Wootton Bassett Mens 1sts (22 February 2009)

On Sunday, Bassett travelled to Devizes to contest the first round of the Wiltshire Trophy.

The game began at a frantic pace with the Devizes team passing the ball around at lightning speed. However, Bassett held out well and were happy to let Devizes pass the ball around in front of them and put in the tackles when required. Bassett's patience eventually paid off. Captain Stu Bell intercepted a wayward pass and set up the counter attack. Matt Edgar linked up with 1st team debutant Matt Daniell whose pin point cross found Kristian Mansfield at the near post who stretched to deflect the ball past the onrushing 'keeper. Bassett then enjoyed a period of prolonged possession as they searched for a second. However, Devizes broke out of defence at pace and won a penalty corner and the resultant unstoppable shot brought the scores level at 1-1.

Devizes then went on the all out attack, quickly creating another string of penalty corners. Bassett prevented the first two being scored but could do nothing to stop the drag flick from the third. As half time approached Bassett went back on the attack in search of an equaliser. The physical Devizes defence held out, but conceded a short corner as Ross Pinnuck ran into the D. Ali Wood stepped up and fired home a powerful drag flick and a keenly contested first half ended with the scores tied at 2-2.

Bassett started the second half as they had finished the first. Joint men of the match Mark Turner and Ross Pinnuck picked off several misplaced passes and had shots saved. Eventually Turner played the ball through to Pinnuck who slotted the ball under the 'keeper to restore Bassett's lead. The visitors then had to withstand sustained pressure as Devizes pushed forward, 'keeper Paul Warren making some outstanding stops when required. But the pressure eventually paid off when, ten minutes from the end, a powerful cross was skilfully deflected into the goal to again level the scores. Two minutes later the tiring Bassett defence conceded a penalty flick, which was converted with a bullet of a flick to give Devizes the lead going into the final five minutes. Bassett raised their game once more and came close to equalising when Mansfield and Edgar had five shots in a row saved off the line. Finally fitness told and Bassett were hit twice more on the break and Devizes secured the semi-final spot.

Once again Bassett were more than happy with a great performance against a team from a higher league. The game also saw a number of promising 1st XI debuts from Bassett's latest crop of talented youngsters.

Scorers: K.Mansfield, A.Wood, R.Pinnuck **Men of the Match:** R.Pinnuck, M.Turner

Team: P.Warren, A.Wood, J.Wright, E.King, M.Skivington, S.Bell (c), M.Edgar, R.Pinnuck, K.Mansfield, M.Turner, M.Daniell

Bassett caught on the break

Firebrands B 5 - 3 Wootton Bassett Mens 1sts (21 February 2009)

A depleted Bassett 1st team made the trip to Bristol on Saturday to face a Firebrands side only three points above them in the Avon Division.

Bassett started nervously and struggled to retain any possession in the opening encounters. Matters were made worse when midfield playmaker Mark Tolley went off with an injury after five minutes. Firebrands took full advantage and were a goal to the good when a deflected free hit beat Paul Warren in goal. Two penalty corners followed within the next ten minutes and Bassett found themselves three down within half an hour. A quick reorganisation saw Bassett begin to assert some authority within the midfield. Kyle Barnes went close when his attempted lob cleared the 'keeper and defenders but, agonisingly, landed on the roof of the net. On the stroke of half time Matt Edgar broke through from the midfield and linked up with Grant Kirkup to win a penalty corner. From the short corner the ball reached Kristian Mansfield who swept it home to bring the scores to 3 - 1 at the break.

Bassett were resurgent after the break. First Kyle Barnes broke through and scored from a one on one with the 'Brands 'keeper and then, minutes later, Barnes turned provider as he slotted the ball through to Edgar who slid the ball under the keeper to level the scores. The next twenty minutes were all Bassett. Mansfield went close to giving the away side the lead and then Ali Wood struck inches wide from a penalty corner. As Bassett pushed for the winner they inevitably left themselves vulnerable at the back. Firebrands broke out of defence and won a contested penalty corner after Warren had spectacularly saved an attempted flick. A string of penalty corners followed with 'Brands eventually scoring at the fifth attempt. As Bassett searched for another equaliser Firebrands broke away and scored a fifth with the last touch of the game. The Bassett team left the pitch satisfied with a good performance but knowing that they should have won a game that they had fought so hard to get back into.

The league have recently announced that, due to circumstances in the higher divisions, the end of this season could see the entire bottom half of the Avon Division relegated. The announcement means that Bassett, who currently lie in 9th place, are now five points from safety with a game in hand and six games remaining. Next Saturday Bassett take on fellow relegation candidates Old Bristolians, 1pm at the Lime Kiln.

Scorers: K.Mansfield, K.Barnes, M.Edgar **Man of the match:** P.Warren
Team: P.Warren, A.Wood, J.Wright, E.King, M.Skivington, S.Bell (c), M.Edgar, R.Pinnuck, K.Mansfield, G.Kirkup, K.Barnes, M.Turner, M.Tolley

Bassett men hear Avon calling (31 Jan 2009)

Westbury and UB B 3 - 5 Wootton Bassett Men's 1st XI

Bassett extended their Avon League winning streak to four games on Saturday, with an away win at Westbury-on-Trym.

Bassett struggled to find their game in the opening encounters as the surprisingly slow pitch proved to be a great leveller. However, they settled in towards the middle of the first half and began an assault on Westbury's goal. Kyle Barnes went close on numerous occasions, but couldn't find his usual clinical finishing. Eventually captain Dan Stanley stepped up to fire home the opener. Five minutes later Matt Edgar broke through and made it two with a brilliantly taken goal. Bassett then decided to make a game of it and, once again, relinquished their lead, conceding two goals from short corners before the break.

A stern half time team talk from Stanley had the desired affect as Bassett hit twice, early in the second half. The first was created by a brilliant run from man of the match centre back Ali Wood who squared the ball for Barnes to provide the finishing touch. Wood then struck home Bassett's fourth from a short corner to regain their two goal cushion. However, Westbury lifted their game and hit Bassett again to reduce the lead to one goal but the home side's revival was short lived and Stanley finally put the game beyond doubt when he skilfully played the ball into the goal off the 'keepers foot.

The win sees Bassett jump three places to seventh in the Avon League.

Scorers: Dan Stanley (2), Kyle Barnes, Matt Edgar, Ali Wood **Man of the match:** Ali Wood
Team: M.Thompson, A.Wood, J.Wright, M.Skivington, S.Bell, M.Tolley, M.Edgar, D.Stanley (c), M.Turner, M.Bray, K.Barnes, K.Mansfield, R.Pinnuck

Two wins in a weekend for the men's 1st XI (24 Jan 2009)

Wootton Bassett Men's 1st XI 2 – 1 Team Bath Buccs E

Wootton Bassett looked to extend their Avon League winning run to three consecutive games on Saturday and did so in style, dispatching second place Bath Buccs in the process.

The game started tentatively with both teams passing the ball around the midfield whilst trying to figure out their opponent's game. Despite a long Buccs spell of possession the first clear cut chance of the game fell to the home side. Kyle Barnes and Mark Turner broke through on goal, Barnes squaring the ball for Turner to dive in on the far post, only to see his reverse stick sweep rebound off the crossbar. A sustained spell of pressure from Bassett led to the next chance for Barnes, who beat the defender but couldn't round the outstanding Buccs keeper. A string of Buccs short corners followed, but the visitors found keeper Matt Thompson in inspired form making saves with his legs, gloves and even one with his head. The breakdown from a Buccs short corner fell to captain Dan Stanley who fired a trademark reverse stick pass down the line to Barnes. This time Barnes made no mistake in rounding the Buccs defence and slotting the ball under the keeper to give the home side a 1 - 0 lead at half time.

The second half began with both teams on the offensive. This time it was Bassett who won the string of short corners but, despite their attempts, could not double the lead. Buccs then piled on the pressure, desperately trying to manufacture a short corner in the Bassett D. Eventually they were awarded a short and, this time, the set play was fired home from close range. The goal only served to fire Bassett up even more. Within minutes Kristian Mansfield was clean through on goal, only for the Buccs defender to push him to the floor as he lined up to shoot. Barnes then stepped up and calmly dispatched the resulting penalty stroke. The last ten minutes were a tense affair as Buccs threw caution to the wind and sent their entire team forward. However the home team held out and gained an important win in their quest to stay in the Avon League for another season.

Scorer: Kyle Barnes (2) **Man of the match:** M.Thompson
Team: M.Thompson, A.Wood, D.Jeffery, M.Skivington, J.Wright, S.Bell, J.Macleod, K.Mansfield, D.Stanley (c), M.Bray, K.Barnes, M.Turner, R.Pinnuck

Wootton Bassett Men's 1st XI 3 – 2 RAF Under 23's (25 Jan 2009)

Sunday saw a tired but enthusiastic Bassett side take to the pitch to do battle with an RAF Under 23's team that included Bassett's very own Matt Thompson in goal and John Macleod in the middle.

The game started at a frantic pace as the RAF youngsters penned Bassett back into their own half. However, the home

team never looked out of it and the pace of 1st XI debutants Matt Daniell, Luke Salisbury and J.P. Terry caused no end of problems for the RAF back line. Eventually Kyle Barnes broke through and faced a one on one with Thompson. This time Thompson read Barnes' flick and pulled off a miraculous save to prevent the home side going ahead. The RAF side eventually made their possession count when a clearance fell to an unmarked player on the edge of the D who scooped the ball high into the air and cleared the Bassett defence giving them a 1 - 0 lead going into half time.

The second half started at the same frantic pace, this time the RAF lads took their first opportunity and converted a short corner to double their lead. Two minutes later it looked as though they had added a third, but the goal was ruled out for an earlier infringement. Bassett then took the game to the visitors. First up it was Barnes who finally got the better of Thompson in goal. Five minutes later Barnes was at it again, lifting the ball high into the net to tie the scores. Finally Grant Kirkup, on his 1st XI return, broke into the D and played a cross towards the back post only to see his effort deflected off a defenders stick into Thompson's goal. The last five minutes were end to end but Bassett held out to win the match 3 - 2.

Scorers: K.Barnes (2), G.Kirkup **Man of the Match:** K.Barnes

Team: R.Batey, A.Wood, D.Jeffery, M.Skivington, J.Wright, G.Kirkup, J.P.Terry, K.Mansfield, D.Stanley (c), R.Pinnuck, K.Barnes, M.Bray, E.King, L.Salisbury, M.Daniell

Two in a row for Bassett's 1st XI (17 Jan 2009)

West Wilts B 3 - 5 Wootton Bassett Men's 1st XI

After an excellent home win before the Christmas break, Bassett were hungry for a first away win of their Avon league campaign against West Wilts B.

A quick West Wilts attack in the opening seconds of the game almost caught out the visitors but Bassett soon established their grip on the game with attacking waves and fluid passing moves orchestrated by midfield dynamo Mark Tolley. Bassett, who came close to scoring on several occasions, were kept out by a resolute defence and a string of outstanding saves from the home keeper. However, the deadlock finally broke after half an hour when sustained pressure was converted into an opening goal by Kyle Barnes from a short corner.

The lead was doubled before the break when man of the match Tolley rifled in from close range and Bassett were deservedly 2-0 up at half time.

West Wilts fought back immediately and were awarded a disputed penalty flick when a goal-bound shot was dragged into the body of skipper Dan Stanley. The unstoppable spot-flick goal gave West Wilts hope and they equalised soon after with a breakaway move which was not dealt with by an otherwise solid Bassett defence marshalled by Ali Wood and a resurgent Max Brennan.

The game's next goal would be crucial in deciding the game's outcome so when the West Wilts centre forward burst through on goal it looked ominous for Bassett. 'Keeper Paul Warren slid out to neutralise both ball and player so the inevitable second p-flick was awarded. This time Warren's imposing frame and goalkeeping experience resulted in a supreme save which galvanised the Bassett team to regroup immediately and play with the desire and composure shown in the first half. A period of Bassett dominance followed, with probing runs from the right led by an excellent Mark Skivington linking up well with winger John Macleod. Bassett captain Dan Stanley's resilience paid off when his shot from close-in was deflected off the keeper and Stu Bell poked it home to deservedly regain the lead.

In the final twenty minutes of an enthralling game, Bassett could have scored several more, but West Wilts' veteran keeper was in inspired form and kept out Barnes until he finally extended the lead with a cleverly taken low shot. A resurgent Mark Turner was also denied after rounding the keeper, but Skivington sealed the win when he found the net from a scrambled short corner late on. Despite conceding a short corner goal with the last strike of the game, Bassett are looking confident and well capable of extending their Avon league status beyond 2009.

Scorers: Kyle Barnes (2), M.Tolley, S.Bell, M.Skivington

Man of the match: M.Tolley

Team: P.Warren, A.Wood, M.Brennan, J.Wright, M.Skivington, S.Bell, M.Tolley, D.Stanley (c), J.Macleod, K.Mansfield, K.Barnes, M.Turner

Wootton Bassett Men's 2nd XI 1 – 1 West Wilts C

Bassett played at home to high flying West Wilts C with their seven match unbeaten record at stake.

Bassett started strongly straight from push back, and within the first 5 minutes were unlucky to have an attempt cleared of the line, and the follow up just wide. Both teams had an equal share of the possession, and Bassett were forced to defend deep, showing glimpses of their counter attacking force.

In the second half Wilts came out strong and pushed Bassett deep into their own half. Bassett's defenders were in top form and kept West Wilts from any clear attempts, and on multiple occasions the speed of the forwards caught the Wilts defence of guard. Eventually man of the match Grant Kirkup took advantage of a slick counter attacking move and hammered the ball at the backboard from the top of the D.

The away team then won a string of short corners, but were kept out by some last ditch defending and excellent saves from 'keeper Matt Thompson. The fine display of keeping was finally beaten when a Wilts forward powered the ball into the roof of the net. For the last ten minutes both teams searched for the winning goal, but neither team could make the break

through.

Scorer: G.Kirkup **Man of the match:** G.Kirkup

Team: M.Thompson, D.Gardner, T.Ponting, D.Metson, A.Sammon, R.Cook, J.Sharp, D.Beale, G.Kirkup, J.P.Terry, L.Salisbury, J.Lee, M.Daniell

Wootton Bassett Men's 3rd XI 1 – 1 Team Bath Buccs Badgers

Bassett were confident ahead of the match, despite the fact the same team beat them 11-0 in their first match of the season.

Bassett pressurised the visitors from the off, challenging the skilful Bath youngsters in every area of the pitch. The Bath Buccs 'keeper played a solid first half stopping Matt Daniell and Martin Bray's numerous attempts on goal. Bassett came closest to scoring when Martin Bray hit the ball at speed towards the goal, and Daniell got a deflection taking the ball over the crossbar. Bassett's defence initially dealt with any counter attacks but couldn't hold out as Buccs scored the opener just before half time.

Bassett pushed back in the second half full of confidence. Bassett had the chances to equalise, but could not find the back of the net. An excellent performance from Dave Beale saw him threading passes through to Matt Daniell. Eventually a superb link up between Bray and Daniell led the equaliser, Bray providing the finishing touch.

Man of the match Tom Ponting made forward runs with the ball from the back, creating more chances for Bassett to take the lead, but the away team held out for a 1 – 1 draw.

Scorers: M.Bray **Man of the Match:** T.Ponting, R.Appleby

Team: M.Thompson, R.Pearce, T.Williamson, T.Ponting, D. Beale, M Daniell, N.Sharp, M.Bray, R.Appleby, A.Lyons, K.Page, M.Gowshall, B.Henshaw, E.Daniell

Stanley sick of the sight of rival team (*Wilts Gazette & Herald Thursday 15th January 2009*)

Wootton Bassett take on West Wilts B for the sixth time in a little over 12 months on Saturday and captain Dan Stanley admits he is sick of the sight of certain members of their squad.

His side travel to Warminster and will take heart from the fact they have scored 14 times against them in the past four games, although have not won on any of those occasions. They will be buoyed by the 3-2 win before Christmas over fourth-placed Team Bath Buccs D and are desperate for a second successive victory as they seek to move out of the Avon Division relegation zone.

"We were promoted with them last year to this division and there's a bit of rivalry between the pair of us," said Stanley. "We played them four times last season with friendlies, leagues and cups and lost to them 6-4 at the start of this campaign. They are generally cracking games when we play each other but I'm sick of the sight of one or two of their players. Especially those that run through our midfield and keep scoring."

Bassett are yet to win away from home this season and find themselves one place off the bottom of the table and six points from safety. Their pursuit of a breakthrough win won't be helped by the news that vice-skipper Dan Jeffery and striker Martin Bray will miss the clash with West Wilts. But Bassett do welcome a new signing in the shape of midfielder John McCloud, who has just moved to the area from Staffordshire.

"We haven't played at our best away from home this season," said Stanley. "If we can get any kind of result against West Wilts then it will be a bonus. However we beat Team Bath in our last league game and hopefully we're on an upwards curve now."

Bassett slow to shake off Christmas (3 Jan 2009)

Wootton Bassett 1st XI 4 - 6 Bristol & West

A bit of Christmas over-indulgence and freezing temperatures may have been to blame for a disappointing performance by Wootton Bassett 1st XI on Saturday, as they lost out 6-4 to a slick passing Bristol and West side.

Early on the match the sides looked well matched, as some quick attacking play from Bassett was matched with some good movement by the Bristol side, who broke the initial deadlock when a rare lapse in the Bassett defence left a Bristol striker unmarked at the back post for a tap-in. Bassett responded quickly however, with Kyle Barnes beating his man and then the keeper to level the scores. Bristol and West then had the better of the remainder of the first half, scoring two more goals while Bassett could only manage one in reply through Kristian Mansfield.

The second half started better for Bassett, with a return to the early quick passing creating several chances. Kyle Barnes again levelled the scores with an impressive solo effort. The sides then traded goals for 4-4, Grant Kirkup scoring the Bassett goal on his return to the side. Bassett were lucky not to be behind however when goalkeeper Paul Warren made a stunning save high to his left when seemingly beaten by an impressive strike.

It was then that the Christmas period began to tell for Bassett, as slow legs and a couple of injuries allowed Bristol to attack for the last 15 minutes, during which time they scored two goals and missed a penalty flick to leave the final score

at 6-4. Bassett will be looking to improve on this performance at home to Marlborough next weekend.

Scorers: K Barnes (2), K Mansfield, G Kirkup **Man of the match:** Paul Warren, Dan Stanley, Max Brennan
Team: P Warren, D Jeffery, A Wood, J Wright, M Skivington, D Stanley, G Kirkup, M Tolley, S Bell, K Barnes, K Mansfield, R Pinnuck, M Brennan.

Bristol & West 0 - 3 Wootton Bassett 2nd XI

Bassett opened the scoring with a great shot from JP that went in bottom corner from top D. Then, after a great passing move by the Bassett team, they broke through the B&W defence again, the ball came to Luke Salisbury and he took a fine shot on goal that was deflected in from Matt Daniels.

After half time Bassett changed to a 4-4-2 formation and held their 2-0 advantage thanks to a number of great saves from Bassett's keeper and Man of the match, Lee Baldry. Although Bassett didn't play as well as they did in the first half, they still managed to come up with another goal from a fantastic reverse flick from Dave Beale that lobbed the keeper.

An all round good performance from the Bassett team and a good and promising start to the New Year.

Barnes hat trick brings three points for Christmas (13 Dec 08)

Wootton Bassett Men's 1st's 3 - 2 Team Bath Buccs D

This Saturday saw Wootton Bassett's 1st team play host to high flying Bath University and come away with all three points.

Having narrowly lost out to the students earlier in the season Bassett knew to expect an early onslaught from the away side. Bath came out with their typical fast flowing hockey, utilising the pace and skill of their young team. Bassett defended valiantly in the opening encounters but eventually conceded the first from a penalty corner. The home side then took the game to the students with Kyle Barnes and Martin Bray chasing down every lost cause up front. Barnes intercepted a misplaced pass and made no mistake in lobbing Bath's 'keeper for the second time this season. The students came straight back at Bassett and quickly re-established their lead with a skilful reverse strike from the top of the D. This week, however, Bassett refused to lie down and accept defeat. The equaliser came as a result of some of Bassett's best hockey this season. A right wing to left wing pass picked out captain Dan Stanley who played the ball into the D and, in doing so, won a penalty corner. From the resulting set play Dan Jeffery calmly slipped the ball to his left for Barnes to finish on the stroke of half time.

The second half started with Bassett on top. The home side's attacking style of play had clearly rattled the students and Bassett did everything they could to capitalise on the visitors' lack of discipline. A string of free hits around the D saw shots flying inches wide of both posts. The break through finally came when James Wright and Mark Skivington linked up in the middle of the park and sent Barnes through to complete his fourth hat-trick of the season. The final fifteen minutes of the match was a tense affair with the students throwing everything they had at the home team. Bassett's defence held up well, and when the defensive line was eventually broken Paul Warren was always on hand to pull off the required acrobatic saves. With two minutes left on the clock Bath won a penalty corner. The students thought they had the equaliser, but the goal was disallowed for an infringement before the shot. The final whistle sounded and Bassett's army of fans let out an almighty cheer!

The win leaves Bassett on ten points going into the Christmas break and, in a season plagued with injuries and availability problems, shows what Bassett can do when they have their first choice team available.

Scorers: K.Barnes (3) **Man of the Match:** K.Barnes, J.Wright, M.Skivington
Team: P.Warren, A.Wood, D.Jeffery, J.Wright, M.Skivington, M.Tolley, S.Bell, D.Stanley (c), K.Mansfield, M.Bray, K.Barnes, R.Pinnuck

West Wilts E 1 - 4 Wootton Bassett Men's 2nd's

Wootton Bassett negotiated Saturday's floods to travel to West Wilts and sailed away with a 4-1 win.

Bassett got off to the perfect start with a goal in the 1st minute when Grant Kirkup and Mark Turner linked up on the right. Jakeem Lee received the cross, turned his marker and shot low to the Goalkeeper's right. Bassett continued their assault on the Wilts goal but were unable to find a second. After 20 minutes Wilts finally put together an attack and won a penalty corner. The resulting strike levelled the scores at 1-1 going into the break.

The second half started in similar fashion to the first with crosses flying in to the Wilts D from all angles and a series of great saves from the Wilts 'keeper. Bassett eventually found the back of the net when Luke Salisbury deflected the ball past the in form 'keeper. Minutes later Bassett went 3-1 up when young debutant J.P. Terry found an unmarked Matt Daniell in the D. Daniell's shot was dispatched neatly under the oncoming 'keeper. With the final whistle approaching Bassett got a fourth to the put the result beyond doubt. A goal line scramble resulted in Rob Appleby calmly dragging the ball back and lifting it over the 'keeper to give Bassett their biggest win of the season so far.

The result capped off a fine end to 2008, with Bassett's 2nd's now unbeaten in five games.

Scorers: J.Lee, L.Salisbury, M.Daniell, R.Appleby.

Man of the match: M.Thompson

Team: M.Thompson, D.Metson, T.Ponting, M.Davies, A.Sammon, M.Turner, G.Kirkup, M.Daniell, L.Salisbury, J.Lee, J.P.Terry, Rob Appleby, R.Cook

Wootton Bassett Mens 3rds 2 - 4 Witney

A depleted Bassett third eleven played host to a much older and more experienced Witney side on Saturday.

The game started well, with promising performances from newcomers Richard Appleby and Elliot Daniell. However, Witney took the lead midway through the first half with a well placed shot. Bassett continued to play well until a missed stop from a Bassett player gave Witney the ball in the D, and a 2 - 0 lead. Towards the end of the first half Bassett turned up the tempo, with Colin Field eventually pulling one back and bringing the score to 2 - 1. The Witney defence managed to weather the remainder of the storm and held on to their lead at half time.

Bassett came back rejuvenated from their half time oranges. However it was Witney who came out the stronger. The away team immediately went on the attack, only to be thwarted by defenders Rupert Pearce and Elliot Daniell. Goalkeeper, and man of the match, Tom Williamson stopped all attempts on goal until half way through the second half when a Witney attacker smashed the ball into the back of the goal. Bassett again raised their game and pushed for their second, with good passing and attacking play. A shot on goal was saved by the 'keeper but Field was on hand to dispatch his second of the game. Witney quickly re-established their two goal lead, taking the score to 4 - 2. Sloppy tackling in the D then resulted in a penalty flick being awarded to Witney, but Williamson denied Witney the opportunity to extend their lead. The closing minutes of the match were end to end but the score line remained at 4 - 2 as both sides were too strong in defence.

The performance was encouraging for Bassett's development team, particularly as it came against a much more experienced team than they are usually faced with in the Wiltshire Badgers League.

Scorers: C.Field (2)

Man of the Match: T.Williamson

Team: T.Williamson, R.Pearce, C.Field, M.Henshaw, B.Henshaw, A.Lyons, K.Page, E.Daniell, Richard Appleby, K.Mansfield, A.Wood, R.Pinnuck.

1st XI throw away another 2 - 0 lead

(6 Dec 08)

Wootton Bassett Mens 1sts 3 - 5 North Wilts

Saturday saw defeat for Bassett in the Avon Division, in a game that they really should have won against local rivals North Wilts.

High on confidence after drawing with Bristol University the previous Saturday, Bassett started well, with an early period of sustained pressure being rewarded with two goals. The first came when a Wilts clearance found man of the match James Wright outside the D, who drove in unopposed to score. Bassett then doubled their lead when a deft touch from Martin Bray found Kyle Barnes, who beat the keeper with a fine shot.

This was followed by a spell of pressure from a rejuvenated North Wilts side. Although Bassett initially defended well, an injury to Mark Tolley forced a major reshuffle and the visitors capitalised to score two quick goals. A third was added just before half time to leave the score 3-2 at the break.

Bassett came back out firing on all cylinders and quickly reasserted themselves in the match. Although they gave away an early penalty corner, which was well converted by North Wilts, Bassett responded quickly with some good attacking play, eventually opening up an opportunity for Barnes to add his second.

Bassett kept the pressure on, as they spent the next 15 minutes camped in the North Wilts half. Sadly, they failed to convert their chances, and conceded a final goal at the death to leave the score at full time 5-3.

Scorers: James Wright, Kyle Barnes (2)

Man of the match: James Wright

Team: P.Warren, J.Wright, M.Brown, A.Wood, M.Skivington, M.Tolley, R.Pinnuck, D.Stanley (c), K.Mansfield, M.Bray, K.Barnes, M.Turner.

Team Bath Buccs 2 - 3 Wootton Bassett Mens 2nds

Bassett came into the game on the back of a strong performance at home last week and started the game in the same vein of form moving the ball well. Bassett lost Dave Gardner early on to injury but continued to play strongly with some good attacking moves, notably a pitch long run from Dan Metson.

A strong defence kept Bath Buccs at bay and the breakthrough came for Bassett with an instinctive goal from Stuart Bell shortly before half time.

Bassett continued in the second half with the good from of the first and went two up with a goal from Grant Kirkup. Bath then pressed forward, pressurising the Bassett defence and pulled a goal back. But, just when it looked like the home side

had gained the upper hand, Bassett restored their two goal margin with a great break away goal from man of the match Jakeem Lee.

Bath continued to dominate possession in an increasingly intense encounter, winning a number of short corners. Eventually they pulled another goal back from a deflection, but Bassett managed to keep Bath at bay in the remaining minutes to claim an important win.

Scorers: Stuart Bell, Grant Kirkup, Jakeem Lee. **Player of the match:** Jakeem Lee
Team: R.Batey, D.Gardner, T.Ponting, D.Metson, A.Sammon, J.Sharp, M.Daniell, S.Bell, R.Cook, L.Salisbury (c), R.Appleby, E.King, J.Lee, D.Beal, G.Kirkup

Wootton Bassett Mens 3rds 2 - 2 Bristol & West

Opportunities for Bassett to score in the first half were few and far between, with Bristol taking a one goal lead by half time. However, Bassett came back from the half time break rejuvenated and Matt Daniell came very close to scoring within the first few minutes. Defenders Tom Ponting, Rupert Pearce and Dan Metson thwarted the majority of Bristol's attacks and goalkeeper Tom Williamson produced many fine saves keeping Bassett in the game.

On twenty minutes, Matt Gowshall took a hit to the knee, reducing Bassett to nine players. Despite this handicap Matt Daniell slotted the ball into the net from the free hit and Tom Ponting scored a second, bringing the score to 2-1. The visitors renewed their attack, however the Bassett defence kept them at bay until the dying minutes of the game, when a deflection off the post was controlled by a Bristol player who pushed it into the goal.

Bassett tried desperately to score again, however the final whistle blew, with scores level at 2-2. A deserved result, however Bassett would have fancied all three points after an excellent performance.

Scorers: Matt Daniell, Tom Ponting. **Player of the Match:** Andrew Lyons
Team: T.Williamson, R.Pearce, D.Metson, T.Ponting, K.Page, R.Appleby, M.Daniell, M.Gowshall, M.Tolley, A.Lyons.

Solid Point for the 2nd's (29 Nov 08)

Wootton Bassett Mens 2nd XI 1 – 1 City of Bath C

Following last week's draw against Chippenham, Bassett came up against another of the teams at the top of W&NES Division 2 at Lime Kiln on Saturday. Again, with an encouraging team performance, they came away with a point against City of Bath.

Bassett took Bath by surprise right from the start, driving forward with some slick inter-play to Jakeem Lee who smashed a ball against the far post. City's passing skills allowed them to move the ball up into the Bassett half, but the home side's defence smothered their attacks. After 20 minutes Bath were forced to give away a short corner. Mark Turner collected the ball and passed to the man of match Ali Sammon to tap in Bassett's goal. City responded immediately, equalising from a diagonal ball across the D swept in at the far post. 1-1 at the break.

Bassett knew they would have to work hard in the second half to stop Bath scoring again. They reorganised to defend deeper, looking to catch Bath on the break. A superb display by the back three, with keeper Lee Baldry pulling off several great saves, kept the visitors at bay. Sammon and Grant Kirkup in midfield continued to thread balls up to the forwards and Bassett were unlucky not to get another goal. But, despite chances falling to both sides in the final minutes, the final whistle blew for a well deserved 1-1 draw.

Scorer: Ali Sammon. **Man of the match:** Ali Sammon.
Team: L.Baldry, D.Metson, M.Daniell, R.Appleby, J.Lee, T.Ponting, D.Beale, J.Sharp, D.Gardner, A.Sammon (c), G.Kirkup, M.Turner, E.King.

First win of the season for the 3rd's! (15 Nov 08)

Old Bristolians A 4 – 2 Wootton Bassett Mens 1st XI

Bassett men's 1st XI travelled to the south of Bristol on Saturday for a tough Avon League encounter against Old Bristolians.

Following last week's result Bassett were keen to show that they can compete in this league and quickly took the initiative in the match. Driving runs from Mark Tolley in the midfield, combined with the pace of Kristain Mansfield and Callum Black on the wings led to numerous chances for the visitors in the opening exchanges. Bassett soon took the lead when a pin point pass from Tolley found the stick of Kyle Barnes in the D. Barnes made no mistake in sweeping home his 14th goal of the season. Bassett continued their dominance but were then hit on the break by the skilful Bristol forwards. The equaliser stunned the young Bassett side and the home side took full advantage by quickly dispatching goals two and three to give them a 3 – 1 lead. Net minder Paul Warren was again in fine form, pulling off some miraculous saves to keep Bassett in the match at the break.

A positive half time talk from coach Ian Wood lifted Bassett for the second half. Ali Sammon and Matt Edgar combined well to create the next chance, but the ball was fired wide by forward Matt Jakubiec. Edgar and Barnes then combined to flash a cross into the D, Black providing the finish at the back post.

At 3 – 2 down Bassett again lifted their game, sensing a win was on the cards. A Jakubiec flick was flying into the corner of the goal, only for an OB's defender to dive across the goal mouth and save the ball off the line. Two minutes later Bassett thought they had equalised, but the goal was disallowed and a penalty corner was awarded instead. The forward line maintained their pressure and again thought they had scored when a Mark Skivington flick was saved off the line by a defender and Jakubiec dispatched the rebound. However, the goal was again disallowed. Man of the Match Ali Wood broke out of the defence and sent Mark Turner clean through on goal but the 'keeper managed to smother the ball and prevent the goal scoring opportunity. OB's then broke out of defence and secured the result with a well taken fourth goal. Bassett continued to press but could not find the breakthrough they needed in the final minutes.

Despite the result, Saturday's performance has left the Bassett team in a confident mood. Right half-back Ross Pinnuck said of the result, "Bassett worked well as a team but were denied the result they deserved by some desperate goal line defending."

Scorers: K.Barnes, C.Black **Man of the Match:** A.Wood
Team: P.Warren, A.Wood, M.Brown, R.Pinnuck, J.Wright, M.Tolley, M.Skivington (c), K.Mansfield, C.Black, M.Jakubiec, K.Barnes, M.Brennan, A.Sammon, M.Turner, M.Edgar.

City of Bath 0 - 2 Wootton Bassett Mens 3rd XI

Bassett thirds traveled to Bath on Sunday and secured their first win of the season.

Bassett had the upper hand from the very beginning of the game, with pressure being applied by attackers Matt Daniell and Matt Gowshall. Despite their dominance, they were unable to break through until the middle of the first half, when Daniell skillfully flicked the ball over a diving goalie and into the back of the net.

Bassett started the second half even stronger than the first. Solid in defence and with the midfield moving the ball well up to their attackers, City of Bath were forced into retreat. The visitors won several short corners, but were unable to convert until the closing minutes when man of the match Tom Ponting finally slotted one home. As Bassett kept up the pressure, several good chances fell to Andy Lyons but the home side hung on. 2-0 to Bassett at the final whistle.

Scorers: Matt Daniell, Tom Ponting. **Man of the match:** Tom Ponting
Team: L.Baldry, R.Pearce (c), N.Sharp, M.Bray, M.Henshaw, C.Field, T.Williamson, D.Metson, B.Henshaw, M.Daniell, R.Abbleby, K.Page, M.Gowshall, T.Ponting, A.Lyons.

10 man 2nd XI rescue a point at Devizes (8 Nov 08)

Wootton Bassett Mens 1st XI 5 – 0 Firebrands B

RSC Award 5 - 0 walkover (16 Dec 08) as Firebrands fielded inelligible (higher league) player. Original Result WB 0 - 10 Firebrands

Wootton Bassett suffered their worst league defeat for seven years as they were outplayed by a surprisingly rejuvenated Firebrands team. With both sides struggling in Avon Division, Bassett felt they had an opportunity to win only their second game of the season. Unfortunately Firebrands quashed this optimism within the opening ten minutes when, through quick interplay between their forwards and midfield, they slotted home 2 quick goals.

To compound matters for the home side, two of their key defenders Ali Wood and captain Stuart Bell, were forced to depart the field through injury. Facing an uphill battle, Bassett knuckled down, creating several opportunities for themselves. This mini revival however lasted all of five minutes before Firebrandts re-asserted their dominance and scored a third before halftime.

The second half brought more misery for Bassett as the opposition hammered home their advantage, cutting through the heart of the Bassett defences, and scoring at regular intervals. One of the only bright spots on a miserable afternoon for the home side was a rampaging run by man of the match Mark Tolley, who beat several players before squaring the ball to Kyle Barnes, who uncharacteristically shot narrowly wide.

Man of the match: Mark Tolley

Team: P.Warren, S.Bell (c), D.Jeffery, A.Wood, M.Brown, A.Sammon, K.Mansfield, M.Tolley, M.Brennan, K.Barnes, J.Wright, M.Skivington, C.Black.

Devizes C 1 – 1 Wootton Bassett Mens 2nd XI

Despite only playing with ten players, Bassett put in a tireless performance to come away from the game with a hard earned point. The match did not start well, with Devizes scoring within the first five minutes. However Bassett were not disheartened and good attacking play won them a short corner. Mike Davies took full advantage, drilling home a powerful strike from the top of the D to score his first goal of the season.

Devizes had the lion's share of possession throughout the remainder of the half but failed to create any clear-cut chances due to some excellent defending and the score remained 1-1 at half time.

The home side continued to press after in the second half but failed to break through the resilient Bassett defence of Dave Gardner, John Sharp and Dan Metson. Bassett did manage to piece together a handful of attacks on the break, but to no avail. Despite their larger share of the ball, Richard Batey in goal was alert to any danger in the D and Bassett kept Devizes at bay through to the final whistle to secure a valuable league point.

Scorer: Mike Davies **Man of the match:** Ross Pinnuck

Team: D.Beale, D.Metson, R.Pinnuck, D.Gardner, J.Sharp, M.Davies, M.Daniell, L.Salisbury, R.Batey, M.Thompson.

West Wilts 1 – 0 Wootton Bassett Mens 3rd XI

Bassett travelled to West Wilts for their fourth Badgers league match of the season on Saturday.

Scoring opportunities were rare for the visitors in the first half, but the defensive partnership of Rupert Pearce and Tom Ponting held firm and an under-strength Bassett side held the skilled youngsters of West Wilts to 0-0 at the break.

Bassett came out with new intent and put instant pressure on West Wilts. Man of the match Ponting pulled off several excellent tackles and goalkeeper Lee Baldry pulled off numerous great saves, but ultimately neither player could deny the home side their first goal that found its way into the net via a deflection.

The visitors worked hard to equalise. Great interchanges between Matt Gowshall out wide and Sam Gowshall in midfield led to several good chances from Rob Appleby, Kieran Page and Andrew Lyons, but Bassett ran out of time and the game finished 1-0 to West Wilts. Despite the loss, captain Rupert Pearce was proud of his team's performance. "We all played our hearts out and were unfortunate to lose" he said.

Man of the match: Tom Ponting

Team: L.Baldry, R.Pearce, S.Gowshall, N.Sharp, R.Appleby, K.Page, A.Lyons, M.Gowshall, T.Ponting.

Bassett surrender a 2 - 0 lead for the second week in a row (1 Nov 2008)

Team Bath Buccs. F 5 – 3 Wootton Bassett Mens 1st XI (Reporter: Dan Jeffery)

Wootton Bassett continued a difficult season with an away loss to Bath Buccs F. The match started inauspiciously for Bassett as Grant Kirkup was lost to a calf injury during the warm-up, leaving Bassett with only 11 men. Despite this, a confident Bassett team immediately piled pressure on the Buccs defence. Wave after wave of attacks finally led to Kyle Barnes scoring after neat interplay between Barnes and Mansfield. Barnes doubled the advantage minutes later, finishing smartly thanks to an incisive through ball from winger Ross Pinnuck.

Bath eased the pressure with some good tackling and neat passing. Good defence, led by man of the match Mark Brown, negated a series of Bath attacks. However, 20 minutes into the game a penalty corner was awarded, from which keeper Paul Warren was well beaten by a straight strike on goal. Within seconds of the restart Bath won possession and drove forward with menace. Bassett could have no complaints as excellent short passing circumvented some desperate defending and Bath slotted home with a short tap-in. The half ended badly for Bassett as Buccs struck the ball into the Bassett D at chest height. The scattering defence could only turn and watch as a Bath player was on hand to touch the ball in leading to a 3-2 half time advantage.

Bassett seemed rejuvenated after the break, and levelled the score with an excellent break and solo effort from Barnes. Unfortunately for Bassett, Barnes' attacking prowess was negated for the rest of the game by a suddenly steely Bath defence. As time passed, the lack of a substitute showed, as Bassett's tired legs struggled to keep up with Bath's short passing game. 15 minutes from the end Bath took the lead for good from another penalty corner. The win was assured when an ill advised pass from a Bassett defender was intercepted by Bath, and Warren was beaten again.

Scorer: Kyle Barnes (3). **Man of the match:** Mark Brown

Team: Paul Warren, Mark Brown, Max Brennan, Ali Wood, Dan Jeffery, Dan Stanley, Mark Tolley, Kris Mansfield, Ross Pinnuck, Kyle Barnes, Mark Turner

Wootton Bassett Mens 2nd XI 1 – 2 West Wilts D (Reporter: Neal Sharp)

Following their important win last weekend Bassett's second string were involved in another close match at the Lime Kiln, this time narrowly losing out.

Both teams cancelled each other out in the first half with very few chances created at either end. The only entertainment was provided by a spectacular save from Bassett keeper Richard Batey.

The second half started with Bassett on the front foot. The first chance of the half fell to young striker Matt Daniell who's strike flew just wide of the post. Against the run of play West Wilts won two short corners in quick succession, and took full advantage to pull out a 2 – 0 lead. Despite their best efforts, Bassett's lack of composure in front of goal saw them fail to narrow the deficit. Finally, a defence splitting ball reached Matt Thompson up front who slotted the ball into the bottom right corner of the goal.

Scorer: Matt Thompson. **Man of the match:** Matt Daniell

Team: R.Batey, D.Metson, R.Pearce, N.Sharp, J.Sharp, R.Appleby, L.Salisbury (c), M.Thompson, C.Field, M.Daniell, J.Lee, D.Beal

Single Salisbury Strike Secures 3 Points for the 2's (25 Oct 2008)

City of Bath A 4 – 2 Wootton Bassett Mens 1st XI (Reporter: Kristian Mansfield)

Bassett travelled to Bath full of confidence following their win the previous week against Westbury. Their game plan was to keep it tight at the back and exploit the space up front using the exceptional pace of their front line.

This worked well from the start and the visitors quickly gained the upper hand, with well linked passes eventually giving Kyle Barnes enough space to score the opener. Bassett's second goal followed the same pattern. The midfield linked well with the front men and Barnes was able to pop home his second. After fifteen minutes Bath began to get the measure of Bassett's tactics and fired home a well constructed goal. They pressed hard, forcing several great saves from man of the match keeper Paul Warren, before finally drawing level just before the half time whistle.

In the second half Bassett began well with several half chances to score, but gradually Bath gained control in midfield and scored two quick goals to pull out a 4 – 2 lead. Bassett picked up the pace but were unable to break through to close the gap: a disappointing result, especially having surrendered an early two goal lead.

Scorer: Kyle Barnes (2). **Man of the match:** Paul Warren, Ali Sammon

Team: P.Warren, S.Bell (c), D.Jeffery, M.Skivington, M.Tolley, M.Brennan, A.Sammon, M.Turner, D.Stanley, K.Mansfield, K.Barnes, R.Pinnuck

Wootton Bassett Mens 2nd XI 1 – 0 Swindon C (Reporter: Matt Daniell)

Bassett pressed forward straight from the start. The midfield of Dale Titcombe, Grant Kirkup and Dave Gardner injected numerous penetrating balls into the opposition D, only to be denied by the post or deflected wide by the Swindon defence. Only the final finish eluded the home side. Swindon rarely threatened, with man of the match John Sharp snuffing out most attacks before they reached the rock solid defence of Rupert Pearce and Mark Brown. Swindon's sole effort of a goalless first half was from a long range shot that went wide of the post.

Bassett entered the second half searching for a goal. Ten minutes in they almost found it when Brown smashed a ball into the opposition D to Matt Daniell who just failed to put it in the goal. The Swindon keeper pulled off several fine saves to deny the home side and they had to wait until ten minutes from time to seal a deserved win, when captain Luke Salisbury received a pass from Dave Beale, slipped his marker and put the ball into the back of the net.

Scorer: Luke Salisbury. **Man of the match:** John Sharp.

Team: R.Batey, M.Brown, R.Pearce, J.Sharp, R.Appleby, D.Gardner, G.Kirkup, L.Salisbury(c), P.Sammon, M.Daniell, D.Titcombe, N.Sharp, T.Ponting, D.Beale.

Barnes Hat trick seals first league win for Bassett (18 Oct 2008)

Wootton Bassett 1st XI 5 – 3 Westbury B (Reporter: Stu Bell)

Bassett 1st XI were without a point in the Avon Division before this game, but a much improved team effort resulted in a first victory, over Westbury B.

From the start Bassett looked sharper than their opponents, with a goal in the first two minutes by Kyle Barnes after being put through by Kris Mansfield. Confidence was boosted further when 10 minutes later a long corner was awarded and the ball found a dynamic Dan Jeffery at the top of the D who coolly powered it low in the corner for 2-0. This was no less than the home side deserved, but Westbury fought back towards the end of the first half when they pounced on the loose ball following a sharp save from Paul Warren.

Westbury followed this a minute after the break as Bassett gave away a short corner that was converted well to make the score 2-2. This galvanised Bassett into action and they responded immediately with another goal from a Kyle Barnes run and finish in the corner from the edge of the D. From this point Bassett began to stamp their authority on the game, with some excellent play characterised by a great goal line clearance from Jim Wright and a trademark Barnes hat trick goal when one-on-one with the keeper. Mansfield was also rewarded for his selfless play with a lobbed goal from a free hit over a flapping keeper late on.

The visitors grabbed a consolation goal for 5-3 but it did not spoil Bassett's enjoyment of a first win in this highly competitive Avon league.

Scorers: Kyle Barnes (3), Dan Jeffery, Kristian Mansfield. **Man of the match:** Ali Sammon
Team: P.Warren, S.Bell (c), A.Wood, J.Wright, D.Jeffery, G.Kirkup, M.Tolley, R.Pinnuck, M.Turner, K.Barnes.

City of Bath 2 – 1 Wootton Bassett 2nd XI (Reporter: Matt Daniel)

Bassett 2nds losing streak in Wilts & NE Somerset Division 2 continued when they travelled away to City of Bath.

In the absence of some key players in midfield, man of the Match Mark Brown immediately took control and marshalled the team from centre back. Bassett, with their new 3-4-3 formation working well, pushed hard down the right in the first half to put City's defence under pressure throughout the first half. But, in the dying seconds, the visitors gave away a short corner that was scrambled out by keeper Lee Baldry, only to see his efforts penalised. The resulting penalty flick was converted above the backboard on his right for Bath to go in one up at half time..

Bassett came straight back in the second half and made several good runs without reward. Bath slowly began to dominate and scored to make it 2-0 from a short corner, Bassett were desperate for a goal to get back into the game and were successful when, five minutes from time Mark Brown's powerful strike found the stick of Matt Daniell at the post who flicked the ball into the back of the net. Bassett saw a chance of salvaging something from the game and began to pile on the pressure. With one final attempt, Daniell adjudged to have fouled the keeper as he put the ball back into the box and the final whistle blew at 2-1.

Scorer: Matt Daniell. **Man of the match:** Mark Brown.
Team: L.Baldry, M.Brown, D.Metson, L.Salisbury, M.Daniell, R.Appleby, M.Thompson, J.Lee, T.Ponting, D.Beale, E.King, J.Sharp

Marlborough 4 – 0 Wootton Bassett 3rd XI (Reporter: Dan Metson)

Bassett travelled to Marlborough for their third Badgers league match this season on Sunday.

Scoring opportunities were rare for the visitors in the first half, but the defensive partnership of Rupert Pearce and Daniel Metson held firm and an under-strength Bassett side held the skilled youngsters of Marlborough to 0-0 at the break.

After changing their formation at half time, Bassett came out with new intent and put instant pressure on Marlborough. Man of the match Tom Williamson pulled off several excellent saves but his goalkeeping skills could not deny the home side their first goal. Colin Field played well at the back until an ankle injury forced him out of the game. With one of their most experienced players out the squad, Bassett soon fell 2-0 behind.

Marlborough's youngsters now took control of the game and, although Williamson dived to keep out a well hit shot, another forward was following in to flick it over his head for their third. This was soon followed by their fourth to put the game well beyond Bassett's reach.

Bassett came close to a consolation goal in the final minutes as Matt Daniell dribbled the ball into the D, only to be denied by the keeper and, despite Rob Appleby picking up the rebound, the resulting short range shot was tipped wide and the score remained 4-0 at the close.

Man of the match: Tom Williamson.
Team: T Williamson, R Pearce, D Metson, N Sharp, C Field, M Henshaw, B Henshaw, M Daniell, R Appleby, K Page, A Lyons, M Gowshall, T Ponting

Bleak weekend for Bassett (11 Oct 2008)

Bath Buccs 6 – 1 Wootton Bassett Mens 1st XI (Reporter: Dan Jeffery)

Bassett Men's 1st XI continued what is proving to be a challenging season with their third straight loss to an impressive Bath Buccaneers side.

The opening exchanges of the game were a tense affair, with neither side managing to gain the upper hand until a clumsy tackle by James Wright was deemed worthy of a yellow card. Reduced to ten men, the Bassett defence, well-marshalled by Ali Wood, refused to buckle under an onslaught by Bath. Several penalty corners were saved well by Bassett keeper Matt Thompson. However, with Bassett camped in their own half, the pressure proved too much shortly before halftime. A well

struck penalty corner by Buccs found a chink in Thompson's armour and gave Bath the lead.

After the break Bath continued to press however, they found themselves over-extended during an early attack and the counterattack, led by Kyle Barnes and Matt Jakubiec, saw Barnes neatly slip the ball past the Buccs keeper to tie the game.

Instead of providing a spark for Bassett, it was Bath that appeared more motivated by the goal. Pouncing on a defensive error, the home side's forwards passed the ball well round Bassett defenders before slotting the ball home with a short range tap in. Their third goal followed only moments later in similar fashion. A demoralised Bassett side could find no purchase going forward, squandering possession several times. Bath's pressure was telling and, despite several fine saves from Man of the Match Thompson, they scored twice more from penalty corners and once from open play.

Bassett were saved from further damage by the final whistle, 6-1 the final score. Three games into their Avon league campaign and with no points on the board, its back to the drawing board for Captain Stu Bell.

Scorer: Kyle Barnes. **Man of the match:** Matt Thompson

Team: M.Thompson, S.Bell (c), A.Wood, J.Wright, D.Jeffery, G.Kirkup, M.Tolley, R.Pinnuck, M.Turner, M.Skivington, K.Barnes, M.Jakubiec,

Wootton Bassett Mens 2nd XI 0 - 4 Chippenham B (Reporter: Tom Ponting)

After last week's Impressive display against West Wilts, Wootton Bassett suffered another unlucky defeat in Wilts & NE Somerset Division 2.

Bassett started the game the stronger side, dominating the midfield by moving the ball around extremely well. Unfortunately they lost their central defender Dave Gardner early on following a hit in the face from a Chippenham stick. But Bassett were able to retain the upper hand throughout the first half with Pete Sammon and Jakeem Lee both coming close. However, it remained goalless at the break.

Chippenham come out far the stronger side in the second half, they quickly went ahead from a well worked short corner and went 2-0 up shortly after with a shot from another short corner just out of goalkeeper Lee Baldry's reach.

Bassett regained their form and began to dominate the game, although Man of the match Baldry was called on to make some crucial stops from Chippenham breakaways. But, with the home side pressing forward, Chippenham struck twice more on the break to kill off any chance of a Bassett comeback. Bassett continued to push hard for some consolation in the final minutes but couldn't find a way through the visitors' defence. Although it was a very promising Bassett performance, the score remained 4-0 at full time.

Man of the match: Lee Baldry.

Team: L.Baldry, D.Metson, D.Gardner, T.Ponting, A.Sammon, N.Sharp, L.Salisbury (c), M.Davies, D.Beal, M.Daniell, R.Appleby, J.Sharp, J.Lee, P.Sammon

Wootton Bassett Mens 3rd XI 5 – 6 Devizes (Reporter: Dan Metson)

Wootton Bassett and Devizes fought a thrilling Wiltshire Badgers league match in hot sunshine at Lime Kiln on Sunday.

Devizes showed their intent, attacking straight from the whistle, but the home side's midfield allowed them little time and space, forcing errors from the away team. Bassett's quick passing was rewarded when an accurate pass from Mark Tolley was flicked into the back of the net by Matt Daniell. Devizes immediately struck back on the counter, with a hard sweep into the goal and then another searching cross caught the foot of a Bassett defender. From the resulting short corner, Bassett were penalised for a tackle at the top of the D giving the away team a chance to equalize through a penalty flick. The young Devizes forward stepped up to the mark and placed it just above the backboard, with keeper Tom Williamson just unable to reach it.

As half time approached, Dale Titcombe wrong-footed the Devizes midfield as he slipped a ball through to Tom Ponting, whose quick pass found Matt Daniell. A superb piece of individual skill saw Daniell take the ball past two defenders, only to be denied by the charging goalie. However, he didn't give up, collecting the ball and beating the keeper and several defenders to the line for an easy finish. But it was Devizes who took the lead into half time after a powerful shot into the bottom right corner.

Bassett came out strongly after the break, passing round and pressuring Devizes in their search for an equaliser. An accurate cross by Ponting was slotted home by Man of the match Robert Appleby, bringing the score level at three all. The visitors came back strongly, stringing passes into the D. A high ball looked to be going wide until a young Devizes forward tapped it in off the top of his stick. Bassett immediately struck back. Matt Gowshall's superb play down the right was finally rewarded when his shot from the far side of the D pinged into the net.

Bassett kept up the pressure as they searched for the winner, but were penalised for a foot inside the D. Devizes took full advantage, taking the lead from the short corner. With the clock running down, the home side went in search of an equalizer. A foul in the opposition's D gave Bassett a chance to equalise, but Ponting's low flick was brilliantly saved by their keeper. Bassett regained the possession instantly, with Titcombe again picking out Ponting with an accurate aerial ball. He brought it down perfectly into the path of Daniell who equalised after scooping it over the keeper. Then, in the dying minutes Devizes snatched the winner when they drilled a rebounded shot f into the bottom corner.

Scorers: Matt Daniell (3), Rob Appleby, Matt Gowshall. **Man of the match:** Rob Appleby.
Team: T.Williamson, R.Pearce (c), B.Henshaw, C.Field, D.Metson, M.Daniell, M.Gowshall, A.Lyons, R.Appleby, T.Ponting, D.Titcombe, M.Tolley, A.Wood.

Barnes hat-trick on an otherwise lean day (4 Oct 2008)

Wootton Bassett Mens 1st XI 4 – 6 West Wilts B (Reporter: Mark Skivington)

Following last week's impressive performance, Bassett slumped to their first home defeat in over a season.

The home team started on the back foot and, in truth, never found anything close to their form in the previous game. West Wilts struck first, predictably from a well worked short corner. While Bassett tried everything in an attempt to get out of first gear West Wilts struck twice more running away to an early 3-0 lead. Bassett briefly raised their game and started attacking the visitors' goal, Matt Jakubiec and Mark Turner both going close. Eventually Kyle Barnes pulled a goal back for Bassett, with a close range effort lifted over the 'keeper. With half time approaching West Wilts went back on the attack and added a fourth from another short corner.

Following the break Bassett came out much stronger and quickly pulled two goals back, the first a solo effort from Barnes and the second a short corner drilled home by Ross Pinnuck. Minutes later Wilts struck again, this time on the counter attack to take the score to 5 – 3. Sensing a fightback, Wilts increased their aggression in the final quarter of the game, with Bassett skipper Stu Bell being hit on the body three times from lifted balls. Eventually Bell had to go off when an attempted aerial ball struck him on the head from close range. The Wilts player was sin-binned for 10 minutes but, despite Bassett having the numerical advantage, it was the away team that struck next, with a goal on the counter attack. Bassett did manage to pull one back in the last minutes to bring the final score to 6 – 4 and complete Barnes' hat-trick.

Scorers: Kyle Barnes (3), Ross Pinnuck. **Man of the match:** Kyle Barnes
Team: P.Warren, M.Bray, S.Bell (c), J.Wright, D.Jeffery, M.Skivington, G.Kirkup, K.Mansfield, M.Tuner, M.Jakubiec, K.Barnes, M.Brennan, R.Pinnuck.

West Wilts C 4 – 0 Wootton Bassett Mens 2nd XI (Reporter: Luke Salisbury)

Bassett's second team battled against another West Wilts team, but the 4 - 0 score line failed to reflect the closeness of the contest.

Wilts started the stronger team moving the ball around the pitch but, despite their dominance in midfield, man of the match Dave Gardner was able to neutralise their attacks. Then, in the fifteenth minute a defence spiting pass found a Wilts striker who shot low into the corner, Minutes later Bassett found themselves two down from a short corner and, as half time approached, the visitors went three goals up with a sweep from close range.

Bassett regrouped in the second half and almost pulled a goal back when Luke Salisbury deflected a shot goal bound at the near post, only to see it hit the Wilts keeper. Mid way into the half Bassett hit the post with a powerful strike from Matthew Daniell but, with Bassett searching for a goal, Wilts got a fourth on the counter attack just before the final whistle.

Salisbury was pleased with his team's performance: "The game was closer than the score line suggests and, despite some of our regular players being unavailable, we were not outclassed by a team that was playing in the division above us last season."

Man of the match: Dave Gardner.
Team: T.Williamson, D.Metson, D.Gardner, J.Sharp, T.Ponting, M.Davies, A.Sammon, R.Cook, M.Brown, M.Daniell, L.Salisbury (c), R.Appleby.

Bath Buccs 11 – 0 Wootton Bassett Mens 3rd XI (Reporter: Rupert Pearce)

Bassett's under 16's and over 35's took to the pitch in their first Wiltshire Badger's League encounter at Bath University's Sports Village on Sunday. Due to confusion over the league's age rules, Bassett ended up facing a more experienced team.

Despite the score line there were promising performances all over the pitch. Daniel Metson played brilliantly at the back, robbing the skilful Buccs players of the ball on numerous occasions. Goalie Tim Williamson pulled off some athletic saves, receiving the applause of the home side's coaches as well as his own team mates. Rob Appleby and Tom Ponting chased everything down in the middle of the park while wingers Keiran Page and Matt Gowshall never stopped running.

Matt Daniell and Andy Lyons played well up front and came close to grabbing a goal for the visitors on several occasions. Toby Heaton put in a composed performance at left back, while senior players Rupert Pearce, Matt Henshaw and Colin Field led the way.

Man of the match: Daniel Metson.
Team: T.Williamson, T.Heaton, R.Pearce (c), D.Metson, T.Ponting, M.Henshaw, R.Appleby, K.Page, M.Daniell, A.Lyons, M.Gowshall, C.Field.

Barnes inspires Bassett (27 Sept 2008)

Team Bath Buccs D 4 - 3 Wootton Bassett Mens 1st XI

Newly promoted Bassett's mens 1st XI began their Avon League campaign with a thrilling battle against Bath, last season's runaway leaders, narrowly losing 4-3.

The University side dominated the early exchanges but, having soaked up the first ten minutes of early pressure, Bassett's confidence grew. Fantastic defensive play from youngster Ali Wood kept Bassett in the game, with an inspired performance from man of the match goalkeeper Paul Warren providing the final line of defence when Wood was finally beaten. With the students rattled by their failure to score, Bassett took full advantage: Bray fired the ball forward to Kyle Barnes, who sprinted into the D, faked to strike and then calmly lifted the ball over the outstretched keeper to give the visitors the lead at half time.

With no sign of ill-effects from 'Fresher's Week' the students threw everything at Bassett in the second half. Wood went off injured, but the victors' defence held up well until Bath finally broke through with an incisive finish. Two minutes later they struck again, this time slotting home a rebound from a Warren save. Not content with two quick goals Bath added a third, this time from a mid air sweep fired into the goal at close range.

Stunned, Bassett picked themselves up and responded in typical fashion. A searching cross from Mark Turner hit a Bath foot inside the D and Grant Kirkup slammed the ball home from the resulting penalty corner. With Bassett now camped out in the Bath half, the students scored their fourth on the counter attack. However, from the restart Bassett went straight on the attack and quickly pulled a goal back when Barnes clipped the ball into the D for Dan Jeffery to fire low into the corner of the goal and take the score to 4 - 3.

In the dying seconds of the game Bassett won one final penalty corner but could not find an equaliser. Despite losing, they were in up-beat mood after the match, having put in a great performance against last season's form side.

Scorers: Kyle Barnes, Grant Kirkup, Dan Jeffery **Man of the match:** Paul Warren

Team: P. Warren, S. Bell (c) .A. Wood, J. Wright, D. Jeffery, M. Bray, M. Tolley, M. Skivington, M. Jakubiec, G. Kirkup, K. Mansfield, K. Barnes, M. Turner.

Wootton Bassett Mens 2nd XI 1 – 1 West Wilts E

Bassett mens second team dropped two points in their first Wilts & NE Somerset Division 2 league game of the season.

After a bright start, Bassett scored first through Ross Pinnuck. The home side continued to control the game but were unable to convert this into further goals. Richard Batey's goal was never threatened until mid-way through the second half when, in a rare attack, a West Wilts forward deflected the ball into the net to level the scores.

Bassett threw players forward in an attempt to regain the lead but, as the clock ticked towards full-time and their desperation increased, they looked less and less likely to score. 1-1 at the final whistle must be regarded as two points dropped.

Scorer: R. Pinnuck. **Man of the match:** Mark Brown

Team: R. Batey, D. Gardner, D. Metson. M. Brown, J. Sharp, N. Sharp, L. Salisbury (c), M. Brennan, A. Sammon, R. Cook, R. Pinnuck, P. Sammon, T. Ponting, D. Beal.

Mens 3rd XI prepare for first full season (20 Sept 2008)

Witney D 2 – 1 Wootton Bassett Mens 3rd XI

The newly formed mens 3rd XI played their first competitive match at Witney in glorious sunshine on Saturday and produced a very creditable performance which bodes well for the rest of the season. Although all the young players in the team were making their debuts for the club and playing a mature Witney side, they combined well with the senior players to produce an enjoyable and hard-fought match.

Bassett came close early on with a well-worked move which saw Matt Gowshaw hold off a defender and slip the ball past the keeper, only to see his shot go the wrong side of the post. But persistence paid off and they eventually took the lead mid-way through the first half from a short corner which was tucked away by Pete Sammon. However Witney came back and despite a clutch of short corners being saved by the agile Tom Williamson in goal, they managed to level the score just before half time.

In the second half, lack of match fitness began to tell on the inexperienced Bassett side, as Witney started to press forward. Solid defending from young Toby Heaton and 13 year old, man of the match, Ben Henshaw kept the opposition at bay but, despite a last ditch attempt from John Sharp, Witney finally managed to slot home the winning goal as the final whistle approached.

Scorer: P. Sammon. **Man of the match:** B. Henshaw

Team: T. Williamson, R. Pearce (c), B. Henshaw, T. Heaton, M. Gowshall, J. Sharp, A. Lyons, P. Sammon, M. Henshaw, C. Field, S. Gowshall, R. Appleby