



## Legends refuse to be put out to grass

### PFFC Legends 2 PFFC Stars 4

*Hugh, 20 February 2005*

For those aficionados of the minor cult which has built itself into the phenomenon of PFFC over ten laborious years, Sunday morning's celebratory encounter between a Legends Eleven and our current Stars was an occasion to cherish.

The sweep of the match is simple to describe - the black-clad Legends cruised to a deserved 2-0 lead by half-time, but the current Red Men replied with interest, and their superior fitness ensured them a 4-2 win well before the finish.



Raj in a familiar role: climbing on a defender to reach the top corner.

Behind that headline story a match unfolded of great enjoyment for all concerned, in bright, clear conditions on a riverside grass pitch in Wandsworth Park. Technical problems for the Eurostar service robbed us of the presence of Jez and Carlos, who had got as far as Lille, with one rumour even placing them in Kent, before being towed back to Brussels. This was a great disappointment for all, and forced last-minute squad changes on the club's management. Stefan had made it from Zurich, however, and gave the event a direct link, along with Geoff, to the first match of the club, ten years earlier almost to the day.

Our current side were forced to begin with ten men, and the Legends took full advantage, with Neil adding a text-book mid-half tap-in, following excellent right-wing work from Stefan, to Cornish's stunning fourth-minute opener, leaving the 2005 formation's pride in tatters. Ronan had cleared off the line and Owen had pulled off a magnificent low save to his right from Neil, to prevent an even worse calamity. Tamber was rightly fuming. At the



Captains Raj and Ally bridge the years with a handshake while referee Hugh, in traditional fleece and lumberjack shirt, looks on

other end, chances were few, with Raj toiling with gusto, in spite of a heavy cold and onerous local government responsibilities, in front of a defensive screen of Filippo, Brian and Geoff, with over a century of experience between them. Rob, nursing yet another pre-match tweak, prowled unbeaten at the back. In midfield, Marco (II), Clarkey, Al and Richard competed for everything. For the Legends, this was a vintage forty-five minutes. But the second half saw a dramatic, some might say shocking, reversal, following Al's first-minute duplicate strike into the same top-corner of the net, having been transferred to the previously under-strength Red Men on Ian's arrival. Pressure from the current Stars began to mount, and cracks to appear in the Black ramparts. Filippo's foul-count cranked upwards. First Dennis equalised and soon afterwards Kieran fired the younger generation ahead. Marco (II) limped off with the recurrence of a serious knee injury. Gibbo and Adam too went close for the Reds before a counter attack saw Clarkey fouled in the area by Damian, with the penalty decision accepted with good grace.

The match had reached a pivotal moment. Converting the penalty would have meant 3-3. Eleven volunteers presented themselves, but Ian accepted the responsibility. Sadly, the Legends' good fortune had dried up, and the kick went wide. With fitness now telling significantly on the outcome, Kieran, Marco (III) and Ally were carving wider gaps and it was with inevitability that Dennis put the game beyond doubt.



Legends in their own lunchtime. Philosophers past and present celebrate an historic occasion – and the club's most civilised yet

4-2 it finished, but one half each gave the Legends plenty to talk about as the party adjourned to the Alma Tavern, Wandsworth, for a wonderful Tenth birthday roast dinner in a wood-pannelled private dining room. This milestone for the club had been marked in a manner admirably reflecting its character. Any price on a Twentieth Anniversary celebration?

Legends (first half): Rob; Filippo, Brian, Marco II, Gaffer; Clarkey, Raj Cornish Al, Richard; Stefan, Neil  
 PFFC '05: (first half) Owen; Ally, Damian, Ronan; Gibbo, Marco III, Kieran, Tamber; Adam, Dennis  
 Legends (second half): Rob; Filippo, Brian, Marco II, Gaffer; Clarkey, Raj, Ian, Richard; Stefan, Neil  
 PFFC '05: (second half) Owen; Gibbo, Ally, Damian, Ronan; Al (later re-transferred on Marco II's injury), Marco III, Kieran, Tamber; Adam, Dennis

**Man of the Match:** Cornish, who, with either team, led by example with two beautiful goals and complete commitment



The Gaffer holds court with the faithful