

**STAFF STUDENT FOOTBALL MATCH**  
**7<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

**Score:** Staff 5 - Students 5  
Students won 8-7 on Penalties

**Location:** Birmingham University Astro Pitches

**Staff team:** An assortment of washed up athletes of yesteryear, peppered with rare fragments of precocious talent.

**Student team:** A team of wannabe superstars, hampered by the stresses and strains of countless nights of late night drinking and 4am pilgrimages to kebab land.

The atmosphere tingled with anticipation for the latest instalment of the ferocious annual battle between the staff and students. The battle, however, was not to be fought out on a floor 4 clinic, but instead on the hallowed turf of Birmingham Uni.

The game got off to a fierce start with tackles a plenty and some spells of good football to match. The Staff started the brighter and shifted the ball around with a good degree of confidence. Deservedly they went ahead through a wonderfully executed 20 yard free kick from Richy that arrowed into the top corner. A moment later the staff right winger (sporting blinding luminous yellow boots) was through on goal in the inside right channel, but was thwarted by the onrushing Harpal 'van der' Singh.

Against the run of play the students hit back to equalise via a simple finish profiting from a mix up at the back post. The next goal owed nothing to simplicity but the supreme technical ability of Tem, as he launched a speculative effort from the half way line that looped over the staff goalkeeper. The third student goal came just before half time courtesy of Sunil 'Adebayor' Shah as he clinically converted the cross from the right hand side.

The half time whistle blew and the staff looked dejected as it appeared mission impossible would have to be achieved in order to stage a comeback.

Early into the second half the staff pulled a goal back via a 20 yard lob by the impressive and effervescent Richy. The half time oranges appeared to provide the catalyst for an improved staff performance. The success was built on the pace and trickery of wingers Richy and Nida and the silky skills of Danny Saund in midfield. They soon made their pressure count as they equalised through a towering header at the back post.

The fans and neutrals admired the wonderful display of attacking football that was being exhibited by these gladiators. A further goal was added by each team that, in all honesty, I don't seem to have any recollection of, as it was increasingly difficult to keep up with the end to end action. A few contentious decisions from the inept referee was greeted by many players suggesting that he was 'a \*bleeping\* disgrace' (reminiscent of scenes that would be more at home with Didier Drogba rather than a staff student dental game). However, there was nothing contentious about the award of a cast iron last minute penalty that appeared to have given the staff an opportunity to record a precious victory. The penalty was duly converted and greeted with scenes of jubilation from the staff, although, this was not to be the end of proceedings. The students valiantly fought on in added time to equalise with the last kick of the game, forcing the game into penalties.

The subsequent penalties went into sudden death with the 8<sup>th</sup> staff penalty taker joining the illustrious company of Roberto Baggio, Stuart Pearce and Chris Waddle as players with mercurial talent (but with the unfortunate inability to convert from 12 yards under such pressurised conditions). The subsequent events, including a celebratory 50 yard dash and pile-up to (and on top of) the goalkeeper, resulted in injuries sustained to numerous student players.

All in all a wonderful evening of football was played out testament to the competitive yet friendly relationship between staff and students. By the way, better luck next time ye old has beens!

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Special Guest Referee  
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