



Alleyn Old Boys 6s – Polytechnic 8s 3-1 (1-1)

16.4.2016, Goals: Borja

Line-up:

Miltos, Tin, Istvan, Petr, Clement, Abz, Dimitris, Celso, Gustavo, Arash, Borja

Subs: *Eoghan*

Farewell to the 2015/16 Season

Our last game of the season brought us back to Dulwich where we faced Old Alleyn Boys who were still keeping their hopes for the League title. They desperately needed 3 points to close the gap between them and current League leaders Civil Service 7s.

The beginning of the game was honoured by a minute of silence in a respect of one of the home team players whose young life ended tragically the day before while being on holiday in his homeland Trinidad & Tobago.

The game started as expected with the home team pushing and pressurising our defence. As we missed Karl and Eoghan didn't feel well enough to play Istvan had to play a centre back next to Petr. Although it wasn't his natural position he coped with his new role well and won several important tackles.

Despite being under pressure we tried to pass the ball and play good football but it was clearly the home team that controlled the game.

The first goal in our net was due to our poor defending. A long ball was sent behind Clement and Istvan but neither of them managed to clear it.

The OAB's winger won the ball and sent a high cross inside our box where neither Petr nor Tin were able to eliminate the danger and the striker slotted the ball right next to the right post. 1-0

We then levelled the game and had our first chance when Gustavo missed (like several times this season) a great chance from a very close distance. Our hard work

finally got rewarded when Arash's long shot bounced off the keepers' hand and Borja tapped it in. Borja's great awareness earned us an equaliser. **Borja 1-1**

The entire team worked hard for the rest of the first half and despite being under a permanent pressure and facing many dangerous chances the score-line remained unchanged till the half time.

In the second half the home team put everything into attack. They increased their aggression, were quicker with the ball and more accurate with passing. To be fair there was just one team in the second half and it was just a matter of time when OAB would score their much needed second goal.

Another quick attack through our left side, clever pass across our penalty box and unmarked striker tapped the ball in at our right post. It may have looked like offside but the referee had different opinion. 2-1

We didn't want to easily give up but were only able to match the aggression, not the passing nor the composure. The home team scored their third goal that was nearly identical to the second one. Again an unmarked player inside our penalty box with plenty of time to finish. 3-1

We practically didn't have a decent chance in the second half but worked hard not to concede more goals and finish our season with a reasonable result. The final score (3-1 for OAB) was fair result and we wished the home team good luck with their pursuit for the League title.

MOTM: POLYTECHNIC 8s

The entire team deserves credit for their overall performance throughout the season. We played first year in a higher division 4 and will most probably finish 5th out of 9 teams which is a success.

We didn't lose to any of the teams below us and managed to "steal" points from Civil Service 7s and West Wickham 6s above us, both strong contenders for the League title.

It was incredible seven months of football and I would like to thank everyone for their hard work, commitment and Polytechnic Club representation on and off the pitch.

Without every single of you there wouldn't be Polytechnic 8s team!

South Bank 6s – Polytechnic 8s 2-2 (1-1)

9.4.2016, Goals: Dewayne, Arash

Line-up:

Miltos, Istvan, Jonny, Petr, Clement, Abz, Nikos, Tom, Celso, Arash, Dewayne

Subs: *Tin*

Still unbeaten in the last 6 games

In the second from last game of the season Poly 8s got finally to play South Bank 6s after numerous cancellations from the hosts. The team wanted to keep last games' winning momentum and secure the 5th place in the league.

Poly 8s started the game strong, with good circulation in the midfield and great runs from the wings. The first chances for an opener were not that far away. Arash found his moves that got him the Polytechnic Club second top scorer last season and Dewayne continuously created threats for the hosts' defence.

In the first 15 minutes of the game everything was working like a Swiss watch and we soon got rewarded when Istvan's precise cross found Dewayne at the far post who opened the score with a header. **Dewayne 0-1**

Unfortunately from that moment Poly 8s stopped doing what was said before the game and South Bank were getting back into the game. Perhaps we became a little bit too much complacent thinking it's going to be an easy afternoon.

Our midfield started miscommunicating and eventually gave space to South Bank to step up and create chances. With the middle of the park completely lost and the opposition attackers able to outrun Poly's defence in most occasions, an equaliser was not that far away.

Around the 30th minute South Bank won a throw at their left side. The ball bounced over Jonny who lost his man and gave the chance for the South Bank left wing to pick up the loose ball and head straight for the goal. He then passed the ball to their unmarked striker who calmly finished it pass Miltos. 1-1

The remainder of the first half found Poly struggling to bring the ball forward and the only good chance came from another corner when Dewayne's powerful volley went over the bar.

The half-time pep talk by Petr brought everyone back in their senses and demanded for more passion and composure during the second half.

And the team did just that. As soon as the second half started Arash stole the ball up front, broke into the area and scored his 3rd goal of the season. A beautiful goal by Poly's striker. If only we saw a bit more of this throughout this season. **Arash 1-2** After conceding a second goal South Bank players became more aggressive and mouthy which frustrated Poly who were pushing for a third goal.

Our biggest chance for the third goal came when Arash won a free kick right outside the penalty box. Jonny stepped up and his long cross/shot ended up back in the net when the goalkeeper lost the ball from within his hands and the ball crossed the line. However, to everyone's surprise, the ref called an offside claiming that before Jonny took the kick Dewayne was one step in front of the last defender. A terrible decision since Dewayne did not interfere with the play...

20 minutes into the second half saw Poly 8s under a constant pressure, losing space and trying to clear the ball at any given time. The team was lucky enough not to concede a goal at that time, but a second equaliser was inevitable.

With 8 minutes left on the clock South Bank pushed even more to bring this game to a draw. Unfortunately for Poly the hosts succeeded when we didn't clear one of the numerous corners and the ball bounced to their striker's feet who equalised from a short distance. 2-2

It was only towards the end of the game when Poly woke up once again and tried to score a winning goal. But it was South Bank that could have scored the winning goal when the long ball bounced off Jonny to their striker who went 1-on-1 on Miltos to only send the ball high over the bar...

MOTM: Arash

Arash reminded us of the good old Arash from last season. His quick thinking, passing game and effectiveness up front helped the team create several chances. Not to mention that he scored a beautiful goal.

Polytechnic 8s – South Bank 5s 7-1 (3-0)

2.4.2016, Goals: Nick 3, Marc 2, Celso, Jack

Line-up:

Miltos, Bobby, Harry, Aaron, Petr, Jan, Nikos, Stef, Celso, Marc, Nick

Subs: *Jack*

An established winning streak brings the biggest win yet

After a week without an action due to Easter break Poly hosted South Bank 5s in their final home game of this season. The hosts still had many players away enjoying Easter holiday but the substituting Polytechnic players were determined to snatch another win.

The start of the game found Poly bombarding the opposition for an early goal. Bobby's precise long passes, Celso's once again excellent runs and quick thinking, and Nick's ability to hold the ball on his feet created a number of threats early on in the game.

However with already 35 minutes gone and despite our numerous promising chances the score line didn't change. The visitors had their first big chance when a long kick found their striker inside our penalty area where he tried to trick Miltos by sending a bouncing shot near his left post.

Miltos showed that even though he was cold due to not having to do much so far he is always ready to make an excellent save. The deflected ball found the SB's winger whose shot was blocked by Petr.

Two minutes later it was finally the time for the goal-galore to begin. Bobby's excellent long drive found Nick inside the area whose volley meant a beautiful opener for us **Nick 1-0**.

Three minutes later Poly won another corner kick. Nick's delivery found Jan at the back post who then headed the ball past the keeper and Marc simply tapped it in **Marc 2-0**.

We grabbed the momentum and a minute later scored the third goal of the game. After a beautiful passing football that started from defence Nick received a ball near the penalty spot and curled it near the keeper's left side **Nick 3-0**.

The remaining minutes of the first half found Poly trying to expand their lead with both Nikos and Stef missing a couple of great opportunities.

During the half time Jan gave his place to Jack on the left flank. Petr, Poly's captain, warned the team about being too complacent and encouraged the team to push for more goals in the second half.

The start of the second half fulfilled the captain's words. Two minutes into the second half Celso confirmed his great recent form when he scored our fourth goal. Jack sent a great ball inside the penalty area from the left wing where Celso was stronger than his marker and slotted the ball back in the net **Celso 4-0**.

The team was hungry for more goals. Nikos got the ball outside the area, managed to break it to his left but was brought down. Nick took the free kick and lobbed the ball in to find Marc who volleyed the ball in **Marc 5-0**.

Few minutes later Harry and Petr stopped the counter attack, Petr sent a precise ball to Nick's feet who outpaced his marker and confidently increased our lead by a shot pass the keeper **Nick 6-0**.

Our last goal came after another long delivery to the box where Jack was ready at the back post to tap the ball in **Jack 7-0**.

It wouldn't be a Poly game without hiccups. With 15 minutes left on the clock, Stef who was covering Bobby at the back received the ball. For some weird reason he thought the referee called for something and left the ball roll slowly next to him without even looking at it. The South Bank striker picked up the loose ball and went all the way for a goal.

Miltos saved the first shot but Stef could not clear the rebounded ball giving the South Bank striker another chance to score 7-1.

MOTM: Celso

We have made another huge step to sustain the 5th place in our first season in higher Division.

There were several strong candidates for the MOTM reward.

Nick scored hat-trick and terrorised the opposition throughout the entire game.

Marc supplied Nick up front, helped the midfield and scored 2 goals.

Nikos tirelessly battled in the middle of the park and had a few shots on the goal.

Miltos had two great saves, one in each half.

Petr owned the left flank, eliminated all incoming threats and delivered precise passes.

However it was **Celso** who stood above all and confirmed his excellent recent form with a goal. The right-winger put another great game in his bag and helped the team reach their biggest win yet. That's the third MOTM for Celso and the second consecutive one.

Polytechnic 8s – Civil Service 8s 2-1 (1-0)

19.3.2016, Goals: Shane, Tom

Line-up:

Miltos, Clement, Petr, Dimitris, Istvan, Celso, Max, Weksy, Stan, Tom, Shane

Subs: Arash, Borja

3 wins in a row got us out of the relegation zone

The return leg against the local rivals Civil Service 8s promised a very close game and a battle for every inch of the pitch. We started very well and soon took a lead after Shane converted Tom's corner kick. The ball slid through several feet inside the penalty box towards the back post where Shane tapped it in **Shane 1-0**.

The visitors tried to equalize but our defence led by Petr and Dimitris successfully eliminated their attacks. On the other half of the pitch Celso, Tom and Shane were constantly threatening the CS' goal, earned several corners but unfortunately we weren't able to convert any more into the goals.

The middle of the park was controlled by Max and Weeksy who both worked hard to help defence as well as support the flanks. It looked like it was just a matter of time when we score the second goal but despite creating few promising chances the scoreline remained unchanged in the half time.

In the second half Arash replaced Max who pulled his hamstring just before the end of the first half so we had to push players around a bit. Stan replaced Max in the centre of midfield and Arash went on left wing.

As usual for the teams that are 1 goal down in the half time Civil Service started the second half in a big pursuit for an equaliser. Our defence proved their good form from the last 4 games and didn't allow anything dangerous around the penalty area. Clement and Istvan totally eliminated the visitors' flanks while Petr and Dimitris controlled the centre of defence.

We could increase our lead 20 minutes into the second half when Arash hit the cross bar and 5 minutes later Celso's great 1-to-1 chance was denied by the goal-keeper. Our hard work was finally awarded 15 minutes before the end when Shane found Tom inside the box and his shot ended up back in the net. What a relief! **Tom 2-0**. Borja then replaced Tom and caused big problems to the opposition defence with his perfect corner kicks delivery.

It wouldn't be a proper Poly game without a drama. With only 8 minutes left we all pushed forward trying to score our third goal. After we earned another corner kick Dimitris, our centre back, ran forward for glory. He received a ball on the edge of the penalty area and tried to shoot.

Unfortunately he didn't hit the ball as he had wished and it bounced towards the middle line where Petr tried to clear it but only hit the CS striker out of whom the ball bounced off and rolled towards our keeper who for some unexplainable reason

didn't pick it up nor cleared it. The ball then bounced off to the striker's feet who easily put it back in our net (2-1).

The opposition sniffed a chance to equalise and pushed everything to their attack. Fortunately our defence eliminated all threat and we managed to win a third game in a row.

MOTM: The whole team

Great team performance and effort. Everyone played very well and fought hard for the team!

Polytechnic 8s – Actonians Association 8s 2-0 (1-0)

12.3.2016, Goals: Arash, Eric

Line-up:

Miltos, Clement, Petr, Dimitris, Istvan, Julian, Nikos, Stef, Arash, Marc, Eric

Subs: *Clement, Celso, Abz*

The beginning of a win-streak!

Last Saturday brought us back into the Poly grounds where we hosted our neighbours Actonians Association 8s in the return leg. The team was boosted with a couple of come-backs and determined to gain another crucial 3 points. Dimitris came back a bit tanned from his Caribbean expedition and Tin resumed from a pulled-string injury that had left him out for over a month. The visitors also introduced few new faces that didn't play in the first leg and the game was ready for a great battle from the initial whistle.

It was the visitors who had a first big chance in the 5th minute when the ball somehow bounced through our 2 centre-backs and Miltos had to produce a fine save to prevent the high ball going in. We then improved our passing and started to create very promising chances.

Eoghan's absence put Dimitris in the centre of the back four. This gave our defence the extra pass from the defensive line and also helped the team to push up for more organised and structured attacks. The midfield was orchestrated by tireless Nikos and Stef who both helped the defence to eliminate counter attacks and supplied Arash and Julian on flanks with accurate passes.

Eric's physical skills and great positioning up front allowed us to destruct two defenders at any given time. This created extra room in the midfield and helped with

the tactical gameplay, while Marc was able to carry the ball over and break it down the flanks.

Poly opened the score 20 minutes into the game after our corner kicked was deflected to Nikos who took the rebound and tried something that looked like a shot. His attempt ended up being a pass to Arash whose great shot passed through in between the keeper's feet. A much needed goal from our last season's top scorer. **Arash 1-0**

We continue to push for the second goal. Stef, Marc and Julian produced a fine 1 touch football when Stef's shot from the edge of the penalty box missed the goal by just few inches, Eric's shot was denied by a keeper and Julian's shot from a close distance went over the bar.

The second half brought Celso in to replace Julian on right wing. Celso's determination, quick thinking and excellent recent form gave Poly even more control in the middle of the park. The visitors' frustration from not being able to create any real chances or even threats culminated in nastier tackles on our players and applying more physical game pushing our players to their limits.

However we again showed a strong character and team spirit and despite few bruises and bleeding nose we didn't allow Actonians to take control over the game.

On the contrary, to eliminate Actonian's physical and mind games we produced even better football in the second half. In traditional Poly fashion a number of "easy" chances were missed bringing the dark thoughts of a late equalizer into our players' minds. But Arash, Eric and Marc kept bombarding the opposition goal looking for a second goal. With 8 minutes to go, Arash crossed the ball over to Eric who then tried to find Marc but the ball was deflected. Nikos took the rebound and produced a shot that was unfortunately deflected once again.

However, always determined Nikos picked up the ball a second time, led it to his left side in an effort to go past the last defender to have a second shot, but the defender took him down kicking his right leg.

The referee correctly saw an advantage and ordered to play on as the ball ended on Eric's feet who controlled it, aimed at the target, shot and scored! The second goal of the game was a reality and everything seemed to have come to a happy end! **Eric 2-0** Tin then entered the match to replace Eric for last two minutes to test his foot and get some game time in the light of his recovery.

Miltos (GK) – another clean sheet, 2 very important saves, made sure to demonstrate who's controlling the penalty area with a slight bump into the opponent's striker.

Istvan (RB) – sacrificed with bleeding nose, fearlessly eliminated counter attacks from left side, always played it safely with long defensive balls

Dimitris (CB) – his experience, leadership and football skills helped organise the defence and support attack.

Petr (CB) – battled to help to keep clean sheet and organise the defence line, didn't let the opposition into any direct threat of our goal

Clement (LB) – solid performance, winning headers, great striker marking

Nikos (CM)- Tireless running, fighting in every tackle and for every ball, baffled the opposition with what looked like poor shots but were brilliant passes instead leading to our 2 goals.

Steff (CM)- Controlled the middle of the park, great attack support.

Celso (LW) – another top performance, won nearly every tackle, strong and quick with the ball, sent Arash a beautiful pass to seal our victory which Arash unfortunately kicked over the bar

Julian (RM) – attacking threat from the right side throughout the game, also helped on the right back while Istvan was bleeding

Arash (ST) – finally broke his goal drought, got a bit provoked by some of the ref's decisions

Marc (ST) – Great link between our midfield and Eric

Eric (ST) – physical and strong, scored our second goal

MOTM: Dimitris

Dimitris' come-back brought more strength and reassurance at the back. The acting defender was able to control the game from the ground up, carry the ball over in the midfield and create more structured and organised attacking plays. A great and solid performance from the experienced midfielder/centre back.

Civil Service 8s – Polytechnic 8s 0-1 (0-1)

27.2.2016, Goals: Petr

Line-up:

Miltos, Alan, Petr, Eoghan, Istvan, Jack, Nikos, Mark, Wesley, Arash, Jack

Subs: Clement, Celso, Abz

Very close game with happy ending

Last February Saturday's fixture brought us to our neighbours in Chiswick and also in the table, Civil Service 8s. There was only 1 point difference between the home

team and us leaving both squads desperate to earn crucial 3 points to escape the relegation zone. The referee and both captains went through the initial ritual and the big battle between the old rivals could begin.

We started very well and had few good spells in the first 10 minutes. Arash's powerful shot missed the target by just few inches and Wesley's half-volley was denied by the Civil Service keeper. The home team then started to threaten through counter attacks but our careful defence kept eliminating them. Both sides tried to control the ball on a heavy surface, the centre midfielders fought hard to win every ball and fed their flanks with accurate passes.

25 minutes into the game saw the home side winger's shot just several inches wide off the right post and few minutes later Miltos saved another big chance created after the corner kick. We made 2 changes when Abz replaced Jack on the right wing and Celso got on for another Jack on the left wing.

We survived these crucial moments and hit back. Jack took the corner kick and crossed the ball inside the penalty area where the ball bounced to Petr whose volley lobbed the keeper and ended up in the left top corner. **Petr 0-1**

We wanted to capitalize on the momentum and kept pressurizing. It looked like we were very close to score our second goal but both Arash's and Wesley's chances were blocked and we stayed 1-0 up in the half time.

In the second half the strong wind we faced the first half turned and we faced it again. The hosts jumped on us from the initial whistle and our defence was under permanent attack.

10 minutes into the second half while defending another corner kick the referee saw one of our players holding the Civil Service striker inside the box and called a penalty. However Miltos hypnotised the executor who kicked it over the bar. It was the third "saved/denied" Miltos's penalty this season!

Last 35 minutes saw our most determined and disciplined performance in this season. Every single player put up an excellent fight and worked really hard for the whole team. It wasn't the best football to watch but we managed to keep the lead to the final whistle!

Miltos (GK) – produced several magnificent saves, denied penalty, kept clean sheet.
Istvan (RB) – eliminated counter attacks from left side, battled to help to keep clean sheet.

Eoghan (CB) – one of his best performances in the Polytechnic club, great defending blocks, not afraid of sticking his head into the dangerous tackles

Petr (CB) – winning goal, great defending, managing and leading the team to the victory

Alan (LB) – solid performance, made several crucial blocks inside our penalty area

Nikos (CM)- great tackles and headers, never gave up a battle

Celso (LW) – absolutely top performance, strong on the ball and in tackles, accurate passing

Abz (RM) – elegant touch and ball distribution

Arash (ST) – terrorising the opposition defence, few chances missed

Wesley (ST) – supporting Arash, good ball holding

Clement (ST) – new discovery of an attacking force, great headers and passes

MOTM: Petr

The captain set up an example how to fight for crucial 3 points. Working hard together with Eoghan in defence, managing the team's tactics, substitutions and mainly scoring the winning goal!

Actonians Association 8s – Polytechnic 8s 2-2 (1-2)

20.2.2016, Goals: Stef, Johnny

Line-up:

Miltos, Clement, Petr, Istvan, Eoghan, Nikos, Stef, Arash, Abz, Johnny, Michal

Subs: Tin, Celso, Borja

Good performance – unfortunate ending

After almost a month without any official game, Polytechnic 8s made their way into a familiar turf. Even though Poly was not the host team, the game took place in Polytechnic's grounds due to lack of suitable pitches in Old Actonians' home ground.

The kick off found Poly controlling the game. Both Stef and Nikos were carrying the ball down the middle of the park, creating spaces for the full backs and the wings to move up and push the opposition. Both Arash and Johnny up front were very active and quick with the ball on their feet creating constant threats.

Poly was pushing for a goal mostly from the right side of the pitch thanks to right back Istvan and right wing Abz. Miltos was doing his thing, trying to find Arash with long balls from his area. One of these managed to bounce over the last defender, Arash carried the ball over inside the box, but due to the terrible condition of the pitch (or rather inability to finish ?), the ball bounced higher than he expected and went over the crossbar. Great chance missed...

Poly continue their pressure and earned a corner kick from the left side. Johnny took the corner kick and delivered a lovely ball inside the are to find Stef's head who tapped it in across the goal. A beautiful finish from Stef. **Stef 0-1**

Five minutes later, Nikos won a free kick outside the area. Johnny took the free kick and with half a cross half a shot scored a lucky goal. The keeper blocked the ball but managed to lose it from inside his hands. **Johnny 0-2**

With 20 minutes to half time, Poly pushed for a third. In a typical Poly fashion, after losing the ball upfront, Actonian's got the rebound, broke past the midfield and down the right flank. With 3 against 4, their winger crossed the ball inside Miltos's area to find the striker who tapped it in and let it rest at the back of Miltos's nest. Another goal conceded during a counter attack. 1-2.

During half time Celso came in for Michal in an effort to bring some pace down Poly's left side.

The second half started with Actonian's really pushing for a goal. The lack of stamina, the rain and the strong winds, pushed Poly back in their own half. For 25 minutes Poly was defending effectively not giving away any real chances for the opposition to score. Both centre defenders Eoghan and Petr produced an incredible performance throughout the second half, keeping Poly in the lead.

With 15 minutes remaining on the clock Poly started pushing forward, looking for a third goal. Borja came in for Abz and Michal came back in for Johnny. With Michal and Borja up front the team started creating few more chances. Petr kept tirelessly coming up for every corner and the team nearly got rewarded when he won the rebounded ball just outside the penalty area passed to Michal who powerfully curled it aiming the right side of the goal. With the ball flying in, half the team started celebrating. However, a last minute save on the line by an Actonian defender brought the team back to reality. We were so close to seal the lead...

At that point the game was wide open with both teams pushing for a goal. 8 minutes before the end of the game, Actonians won a corner kick. Nikos tried to head the ball away but lost his step. The Actonians defender with a bit of luck managed to strike the ball in to equalise. 2-2.

The last remaining minutes Poly tried to convert the victory on their side. Nikos took a shot, Borja tunnelled it, but the ball went just wide off the left post. Unfortunately, the game came to a close and Poly was unable to “cash out” of an amazing team performance.

MOTM: Eoghan

Eoghan for playing his best game yet with Polytechnic. The central defender gave a stellar performance keeping the opposition away from Miltos’s goal. His passion and determination gave boost to the team and he managed to keep, together with Petr, most of the opposition chances away from our box.

Civil Service 7s – Polytechnic 8s 1-0 (0-0)

23.1.2016, Goals:

Line-up:

Miltiadis, Karl, Petr, Istvan, Eoghan, Nikos, Dimitris, Arash, Prince, Anthony, Georgiou

Subs: Tin, Celso, Borja

This could have gone either way

Sometimes in football you need a bit of luck to snatch a win. Last Saturday Poly put in their best performance so far this season, but the team was unlucky to score, unable to convert the numerous chances.

It was a close game between two sides equally thirsty for the win. Poly 8s introduced few new faces to help in the final third of the pitch. The game started with some strong challenges as both teams were trying to control the middle of the park. Poly managed to control the ball and circulate it around effectively, producing some promising attacks.

Poly’s defence was solid during the first half, as its defenders managed to keep mistakes to minimum, effectively transitioning the ball to their midfielders. Both teams tried to hit in the counter attack twice but the defence lines were present, whenever needed.

The first good chance for Poly came from a free kick. Prince was taken down right outside the top right corner of the area and Dimitris was called to take the free kick. Dimitris tried a direct kick, testing the opposition goalkeeper who managed to put out an impressive save.

The first half ended 0-0 with both teams emphasizing more on their defending lines. Poly made a couple of changes during half time. Tin was brought in to replace Peter to give a bit more strength on the left flank, and Celso was brought in to replace Nikos in an effort to give more pace in the middle of the park.

The second half started where the first ended, with both teams trying to keep their focus on their defending lines.

As the clock was ticking away, Poly tried to move closer to the final third of the pitch. In a move similar to the last game, Arash came from the right, went past a defender and tried to break the ball to Dimitris. Dimitris took the shot, but this time he hit a goalkeeper.

Poly kept pushing for a goal and a few minutes later, after a wonderful cross from Anthony, Prince stretched his foot but could not tap the ball in.

Meanwhile, Civil Service was trying to break Poly's defence with counter attacks. One of their chances from the left nearly left Miltos hanging as the ball hit the crossbar.

With the clock nearing 80 minutes, Civil Service had another great chance to score. After a couple of passes between Poly's defence line, the attacker pulled a shot, Miltos saved it, but the ball went straight for the back of the net. Miltos then tapped it right on top of the line and saved Poly from a sorry goal.

Poly then pushed even harder to open the game. From one of the many attacks the team pulled from the left side of the pitch, Anthony tried to find Borja right behind the defence's back. Unfortunately the ball was slightly faster than Borja who could not reach it before the keeper blocked it right in front of his legs.

Murphy's law and football's law say that if you wish for something very much and don't managed to get it, it will come back and bite you. That's exactly what happened, as after one of the many Poly chances, Civil Service managed a counter attack finding

space in the middle of the park. With 5 players against 3, they managed to do what Poly was trying for 88 minutes – send the ball to rest at the back of the net. 1-0.

The last two frantic minutes found Poly trying to pull a last minute deal and get at least a point. However, the referee decided to close his eyes to a clear penalty that happened right in front of his eyes, sending the two teams to the dressing room couple of minutes later and giving Civil Service the three points.

Overall the team produced the best football for this season. Even though the score doesn't reflect the effort, we are determined that with performances like the last one, the three points are not that far away.

MOTM: Anthony

Polytechnic 8s – West Wickham 6s 1-2 (1-2)

13.1.2016, Goals: Dimitris

Line-up:

Miltiadis, Clement-Petr-Karl-Tin, Stefan-Dimitris-Nikos-Celso, Michal-Arash

Subs: *Eoghan, Borja, Istvan*

Unfortunate start to the new year

After almost a month without official games, in lieu of the holidays, Poly 8s hosted West Wickham. Poly was looking for “revenge” after the unfortunate draw 3-3 (we were 3-0 up after first half) in the first round, and an opportunity to start accumulating 3-pointers.

The hosts started the game strongly. With the help of Stefan, Poly controlled the game in the middle of the park and created a couple of promising chances to score. Unfortunately, after only 10 minutes of play, Michal, who was working the left flank, got injured and had to be substituted by Borja. After the first 15 minutes, West Wickham started pushing their way into Poly's goal, but Miltos and his defence cleared them all.

25 minutes into a game Miltos volleyed the ball down the middle. Arash controlled it and moved the ball down the right wing. After getting past 3 players, Arash managed to get himself into the box and opened up the defence for his teammates. Dimitris took the opportunity to move quickly inside the box and asked for the ball. Arash passed it at the right second and Dimitris volleyed it in the back of the net. A magnificent goal by Dimitris and a beautiful move by Arash. **Dimitris** (1-0).

After that Poly had a couple more chances to score and expand their lead, but the opposition's goalkeeper denied them all.

The first half was coming to an end with only 3 minutes remaining on the clock. Poly was once again up front trying to convert one of the many chances. It was then when the unfortunate happened. After losing the ball inside the opposition area, West Wickham played a long ball up front on their left wing. Poly defence could not clear it and the opposition striker kicked the ball forward towards our goal. Miltos was on his way to pick the ball up but the striker somehow slipped and kicked Miltos who consequently couldn't prevent the ball from going past him and slowly rest at the back of his net. (1-1)

Unfortunately this was not the end of it. After a nice move by Borja who passed the ball down the middle for Nikos to create a chance, we lost the ball again and the opposition scored a second goal in a copy-paste scenario. The long ball bounced over Tin to give another chance to West Wickham's striker to go one-on-one with the Miltos. (1-2)

In just 3 minutes West Wickham managed to make a total come back after our trivial mistakes...Can we ever learn from them?!

Eoghan who boost Poly's confidence for a comeback gave the half time pet talk. The team played a more concise football with two attaching midfielders pushing the team upfront. There were several good chances for Poly to get back into the game, but either due to the goalkeeper's skills or the team's inability to finish at the final quarter of the pitch, the half time score was enough to decide the winner.

Overall the team showed some promising signs of improvements. There are still areas to improve, but last Saturday's game against the second team in the league gave us confidence for the remainder of the season.

MOTM: –

No-one really stood up above the others...

Old Wilsonians 7s – Polytechnic 8s 4-1 (3-1)

12.12.2015, Goals: Michal

Line-up:

Miltiadis, Alan-Eoghan-Karl-Tin, Clement-Dimitris-Nikos-Celso, Michal-Gustavo
Subs: *Petr*

In search for passion...

Another league game brought us to Hayes where Poly 8s were tasked to overcome Old Wilsonians 7s – a team that have been cruising past us each time we met. Unfortunately, the outcome was not different from what was expected – a “heavy” 4-1 loss against a better side. But, are they that much superior to us? Nikos offers his view:

Nikos's view

So, are Old Wilsonians 7s really that much better than Poly 8s? My gut answer is NO.

Our recent results against them got me thinking. What is it that we lack against our opposition?

Why have we been getting smashed lately? Have we lost the ability to control the ball, or forgot how to shoot?

I am not exactly sure. What I am most definitely sure about is we've lost our winning attitude and the passion to play football.

Losing your winning attitude leads to lower self-esteem, which leads to mistakes, which leads to internal friction, which leads to mistrust in your team-mates, which leads to... and the list goes on and on.

I remember last season when we played this team who won the league without a loss. We were confident we could take them on and be a competitive opponent. We were sworn to play like a team and beat them. We had confidence in our abilities and we really wanted this.

Even though we lost 1-2 at home we showed passion, courage, guts and worked a team. Unfortunately last Saturday this was not the case. We were joking around they would destroy us even before the game...

Disappointing really...

The problem is not that we lost talent. It is not even that some of us got older. It's the passion we are missing and the team spirit.

We need to start thinking more as a team. Play for the team and do things to help each other! We need to stop fighting and shouting at one another and concentrate on how we can do things better as a team.

We need to try to control the ball because we surely have the ability to do it. We

need to take a step back and think about whether what we do is helping our team members on the pitch.

Some days you will be good, some other you will be terrible. But both days you'll be part of a team, a winning team because the more passionate we become about the result and our team prestige, the easier we will convert our chances into goals.

We need to show a different attitude. We are the underdogs that need to fight every game like it's our last one. As soon as we put all of our egos aside and work as a team we will start winning again.

Regarding the actual match day there is not much to say. Polytechnic was back on the defence line early on in the game. The opposition fired a couple of long shots testing Miltos's reflexes. After one of these chances they won a corner. Miltos successfully saved the first ball in, but the rebound was not properly cleared resulting in a goal. 1-0

The second goal was not very far away. After pushing the opposition into their area and creating a couple of promising chances OWs 7s developed a counter attack. They sent a long ball flying over Poly's defence line, Miltos ran to clear the ball but their attacker was faster than the Poly goalie and lobbed the ball in. 2-0.

Despite the unfavourable score Poly 8s put their heads up and showed some signs of good football, particularly when they decided to play the ball to feet. We got soon awarded when Alan crossed the ball inside the penalty area and after a couple of bounces Michal tapped it in **Michal** (2-1).

The goal brought some excitement to the team making everyone on the pitch believe in the comeback. Unfortunately that did not happen. In another counter attack Miltos cleared the ball which then unfortunately ended up at the wrong set of legs and the hosts' striker sent the ball back in our net. 3-1

Petr then came in for the second half to replace Clement and help Nikos with the midfield. The team started circulating the ball a bit better however was giving too much space to the opposition resulting in some great opportunities to expand their lead.

The second half had nothing to offer for Poly 8s offensively. The very few and rare occasions the team managed to create were saved by the keeper who in fact had an easy job clearing them away.

To make things worse a rather comical situation resulted in the fourth goal in our net. From our poor corner the ball was cleared just outside the OWs' penalty box. Dimitris took the ball and passed it back to Karl in an effort to pass it around and start an organised attack. However the opposition managed to steal the ball and the attacker didn't give any chance to Miltos in a 1-on-1 situation.

Really a disappointing performance all around. Hopefully next game the team will manage to come back with a stomp and cover some of the lost ground.

MOTM: –

No-one really stood up above the others...

Broonfield 4s – Polytechnic 8s 6-1 (3-0)

21.11.2015, Goals: Nikos

Line-up:

Miltiadis, Clement-Petr-Karl-Tin, Ali-Dimitris-Nikos-Celso, Arash-Borja

Subs: *Gustavo*

A disappointing Cup performance in North London

This week Poly 8s travelled to North London for the second round of the ISEH cup to face Broomfield 4s, a team leading their league race in North Division 3. The Poly 8s players did not let the freezing cold weather get under their skins and toughened up in a pursuit to progress to the next round and gift their captain a win for his 42nd birthday!

There was a slight change in tactics this time. Arash started up front in an effort to drag the opposition defenders as well as to resuscitate his deadly shots that made him the Club's second best goal scorer last season. In defence Clement made his debut in the team as a left back.

The first few minutes saw Poly 8s controlling the ball and passing it up front to Arash or to Ali and Celso on the flanks. Arash indeed had soon his first shot on goal and it all looked like a very promising afternoon.

Unfortunately the midfield was not performing at its best, particularly Nikos who couldn't adjust his feet to the slippery pitch. The hosts midfield seemed to have been more organised and aggressive and soon managed to get to the balls first. On one of these occasions the Broomfield's No.8 tackled Nikos from behind with both his feet.

The referee didn't see it as a foul and ordered to play on. Nikos started to swear at the ref in Greek just to immediately find out that the referee understood his mother tongue. This deepened his frustration even more and resulted in a loss of a focus on the game and got him disconnected from the rest of the team for the entire first half.

Lesson to learn – USE YOUR FRUSTRATION TO MAKE ADDITIONAL TACKLE, ADDITIONAL PASS, ADDITIONAL RUN – CONVERT IT INTO A POSITIVE AND BENEFICIAL USE FOR THE TEAM!

Unfortunately the frustration started to crawl onto the rest of the team and it was just a matter of time when the hosts took the lead. Another free kick against us, little push inside our box and the ball ended up in our net (1-0). Despite the clear push committed on Karl the referee had enough of our arguing and allowed the goal.

Lesson to learn – DON'T PUT THE REFEREE AGAINST US BY ARGUING WITH HIM. YOU WILL NOT ACHIEVE ANYTHING BENEFICIAL OUT OF IT. NEITHER FOR OUR TEAM NOR FOR YOURSELF. ON THE CONTRARY HE WILL SURELY GET SICK AND TIRED OF US AND WILL MAKE US FEEL IT.

We soon conceded a second goal when the shot from the Broomfield's right winger slipped out of Miltos's gloves offering an easy tap-in to an incoming striker (2-0).

Lesson to learn – DEFENDERS MUST ALWAYS FOLLOW AND MARK THE STRIKERS. WE HAVE ALREADY CONCEDED SIMILAR GOALS (TAP-INS) SEVERAL TIMES THIS SEASON.

Right before the half time Broomfield 4s won a right corner. The ball was crossed in, Nikos completely lost his mark and their striker headed in third goal (3-0).

Half time found Poly 8s without any confidence. Even during the pet-talk the team already knew this just wasn't our day and there was no belief to turn things round. However to shake things up a bit Gustavo took Ali's place on the left wing to add a bit of pace to our attack.

Unfortunately the second half began in the same way the first half finished. Despite the Poly's midfield starting to control the ball a bit more Broomfield were penetrating our box every other minute. The culminating pressure resulted in an easy fourth goal when Broomfield played a long ball behind Poly's defence to find their striker alone right in front of Miltos who couldn't stop him from scoring. (4-0)

At that point everyone from the visiting team put their heads down and it looked like the entire team collapsed. We started getting annoyed, shouting at one another, getting irritated and arguing with the referee or the opposition players. However

against all odds we managed to score a goal. Dimitris passed the ball to Borja who picked it up right outside the area and moved to the right to open the pitch. He then passed the ball to Nikos who was following up. Nikos curved the ball right to the top left corner of Broomfield's net. **Nikos** (4-1)

Unfortunately Nikos's goal could not change much. Dimitris had to get off after receiving a knock. This brought back Ali. The team continued to struggle in the midfield that looked disconnected. Broomfield's fifth goal was not a far away. Another free kick found an unmarked striker inside the box who lobbed the ball in (5-1).

To sum up this miserable afternoon Broomfield scored one more goal through an attack down the right wing when the right-winger crossed the ball inside the penalty area and the left-winger volleyed the ball in – magnificent goal (6-1).

This was the worst performance displayed by Poly 8s this season. Considering all previous performances and team work, this time everyone looked disconnected and unfocused. We all need to settle down and work hard as a team to find the strength to come back. We MUST let anger and fights aside and display performances like the one we all saw last Saturday against Old Wilsonians. And that is achievable only by supporting each other, encouraging and helping in all four lines.

MOTM: Clement

The French newcomer showed some great skills throughout the game, a passion to help the team and quick thinking. Clement was inside every tough challenge on his side, marking and tackling the opposition with flair and helping Dimitris with pushing the ball forward. He is 100% worthy of this title and we hope to see more of these performances in the future! Welcome to the team Clement!

Polytechnic 8s – Old Wilsonians 7s 1-3 (0-1)

14.11.2015, Goals: Nikos

Line-up:

Miltiadis, Istvan-Petr-Karl-Tin, Arash-Dimitris-Nikos-Abz, Carlos-Celso

Subs: *Eoghan, Gustavo*

Author's note

Before moving into the report I would like to make a statement. Even though the result was negative a milestone was reached! After 14 months, 22 games, 2,050 minutes, and around 88 shots on/off goal, our feisty, tireless and passionate

midfielder Nikos, managed to finally score his first goal for Poly! Some brief calculations suggest that Nikos scores every 2,050 minutes on average (some difficult math here)! His incredible performance has forced the club to honour him with the “If he can score, everyone can!” award! When contacted Nikos commented “I am delighted to have scored! I believe I proved my parents proud and gave answers to all people who were questioning my shooting technique and abilities. I hope this goal becomes the stepping stone for young kids who look to become football stars in the future”.

Beautiful footwork in a rainy afternoon

This week we returned to Poly’s grounds in Chiswick where Poly 8s faced OLW 7s – a team they are very familiar with since last season. Poly 8s were looking to end the unfavourable result streak and get their “revenge”.

The home team met very early this time to discuss tactics and went through positions and individual player’s roles. Dimitris took over to expand on few defensive tactics and how each player should be positioned in a number of game occasions, including throw-ins and goal-kicks.

The game started a couple of minutes later due to OLW players being late. Both teams agreed to hold two minutes of silence to pay a tribute to the victims of the Paris terrorist attacks the night before and to Arash’s close friend who lost her fight to cancer.

Poly 8s started the game mostly operating in the centre of the pitch, trying to control the ball and creating chances that would allow them to take the lead. The hosts were building their attacks by short passes from the defence as the heavy rain was not ideal for long balls. Poly 8s indeed managed to create a number of promising opportunities in front of the opposition goal and came close to opening the score sheet twice. However, the heavy terrain and the lack of clinical finish from Carlos and Celso up front prevent the team from taking the lead.

The unwritten rule of football says that if you miss many chances you will get punished. And that was exactly the case with Poly 8s. On a counter attack on the left wing OWL crossed the ball to the other side where their midfielder lobbed the ball in to find the attacker who escaped from his marker (Nikos) and headed the ball in. Due to the bad weather the ball stopped on the goal line but an OLW midfielder followed up to push it in. (0-1)

The rest of the first half continued the way it started, with Poly creating chances and Celso, the most active player throughout the game, adding a creative touch to Poly's game.

In the half time Poly 8s made several changes in their formation. Suane substituted Carlos up front, Arash also moved up front and Celso onto the left wing.

The second half found Poly controlling the middle of the park and transitioning the ball around the pitch. The team again started creating promising chances around the opposition goal however a number of them were either deflected by well organised OLW's defence or saved by the goalkeeper who eventually became the man of the match.

Poly continued their siege pushing OLW deeper in their area. However as the pitch was getting heavier many chances were going to waste, the shots were saved by the visitor's goalkeeper or somehow blocked right before the goal-line.

With fewer and fewer minutes on the clock Poly 8s kept tirelessly pushing for an equaliser. With 20 minutes to go Dimitris got pushed close to the corner flag and lost his boot. Every Poly 8s player stopped to play and waited for the ref's whistle which never came...

With the entire Poly 8s team "frozen" the opposition took an advantage of the situation and passed the ball onto their free striker who scored the second goal (0-2).
Lesson to learn – PLAY TILL THE WHISTLE!

Poly did not give up and continued their game – though missing one chance after another. At that point Petr stepped out to give his position to Eoghan at the back and Gustavo came in for Arash.

The hosts' effort finally got rewarded when Nikos pushed up trying to get in front of the goal. He opened up some space for Istvan who saw Nikos's move and tried to pass the ball behind the defender. The defender missed the ball and Nikos was found in front of the goalkeeper where he finished a beautiful team play. (At this point please refer to the introductory note). **Nikos 1-2!**

With the first goal for the day Poly 8s were determine to score a second one and even turn the game around. However Dimitris and Gustavo missed our biggest opportunities to equalise. In particular Gustavo who failed to tap in the ball in front of an open goal.

8 minutes before the end of the game the expected happened. In our frantic pursuit to equalise the OLW undertook a counter attack on the left flank and crossed the ball over to the other side where their striker managed to go past Nikos and Eoghan and took a shot. Miltos initially deflected the ball which unfortunately bounced to an unmarked oncoming right winger who easily closed the match scoreline. 1-3

MOTM: Celso

This was the first time in this season when the entire Poly 8s team produced good football. We saw a great team-work from every player on the pitch, accurate passing, skilful ball control and dominating performances.

Celso was tireless with his runs, strong on the ball and was causing a constant threat to the opposition's defence.

Polytechnic 8s – South Bank 6s 2-2 (1-0)

7.11.2015, Goals: Abz, Diego

Line-up:

Miltiadis, Petr-Eoghan-Karl-Tin, Arash-Dimitris-Nikos-Abz, Carlos-Celso

Subs: Istvan, Diego, Borja

VIDEO: Miltos saved 2 penalties

The search for the first home-win continues...

After a week with no action due to the cancelled cup game, we were brought back to Poly grounds for the league game between Poly 8s and South Bank Cuaco 6s. Poly needed a win to continue their chase for the first two positions and also secure their first home win in the league.

The game started with both teams trying to find their feet on the wet pitch, looking for long balls inside the opposition area. Poly tried to take advantage of the strong wind in their backs, working the ball down the flanks. The hosts had a chance to open the score when Dimitris, with a killer ball behind the defence, found Abz who was denied by the goalkeeper.

The first twenty minutes found each team having a chance to score before Karl took the visitors' attacker down from behind to conceive a penalty and receive a yellow card. Number 10 took three steps to hit a curled shot but Miltos managed to produce an incredible save to keep us in the game! No, wait... The referee saw Eoghan getting inside the box too early and ordered a penalty retake. A very rare decision on this

level of amateur football! The number 10 took a retake, chose the same placement and Miltos produced the same incredible save! Miltos saved two penalties in under a minute to keep a clean sheet. A great moment from the Poly goalkeeper.

The penalties seemed like they shook Poly's determination up a bit as we started working the ball in the opposition area in more orthodox ways. In one of the better organised attacks Tin found Carlos who passed the ball in the middle on Dimitris. Dimitris looked for Nikos inside the box who was dragging along South Bank's last man. Nikos, who was a step behind the ball, managed to tackle it before the defender and passed it onto incoming Abz, who went past the goalkeeper to open the score **Abz 1-0!**

Half time found the team agreeing on working the ball down the middle and playing it to the feet. To change things round a bit, Istvan came in to replace Eoghan, and Diego to replace Celso.

The second half started better for Poly who dominated the pitch for the first 15 minutes. Dimitris who was running up and down controlled the ball and opened the game across both wings. Poly started creating chances with Arash up front and Diego from the left and pushing up for a second one.

One of these chances found the ball being cleared off the opposition area, Nikos took the rebound, went past one player and found Diego inside the area. Diego stopped the ball, turned and scored down the right side of the keeper. A great "welcome back" from Diego! **Diego 2-0.**

After the second goal, Poly got loose. The opposition sniffed an opportunity and started hitting Poly with counter attacks. It didn't take long for the visitors to convert their dangerous attacks. The ball was quickly played down the Poly's left flank and crossed to an empty space in midfield. Nikos was out of position and the South Bank's unmarked attacker shot a great ball in to bring his team back into the game (2-1).

The rest of the game found Poly pushing for a third goal and South Bank for an equaliser. Arash had a couple of great chances to do so, but the opposition goalkeeper denied him each time. Borja, who came in shortly after, was not given the chance to play his game and score either.

The game was slowly coming to an end when 7 minutes before the referee's last blow the unexpected happened. South Bank Cuaco placed a desperate long ball in. Tin

seemed to have been controlling the situation covering the ball to win a free kick. However the pressure from the South Bank's striker brought him back to his own area, a step away from Miltos. The two Poly players failed to communicate effectively and Tin passed the ball back to Miltos, who initially went to pick it up but then realised it would have been a back pass. Having realising that he panicked and the ball bounced over his foot to end up at the back of his net (2-2).

Truly a strong candidate for Nathan Watling's award aka the biggest howler of the season!

We again lost a winning game in the second half. Once after leading 3-0 against West Wickham and now after leading 2-0. Hopefully we can learn from this and earn some more points, particularly in home games. We definitely MUST work on reducing so many inaccurate passes, making our corner kicks more efficient and being more clinical in our finish.

MOTM: Nobody

With two saved penalties in a row, Miltos is definitely a strong contender for the award. However, after the miscommunication with Tin at the end of the game resulting in the loss of two points and with no-one really standing above the rest, we are unable to give this week's award to anyone.

Polytechnic 8s – Old Meadonians 8s 1-2 (0-1) AET

24.10.2015, Goals: Carlos

Line-up:

Miltiadis, Istvan-Petr-Karl-Tin, Arash-Dimitris-Nikos-Carlos, Borja-Gustavo

Subs: *Ali, Celso*

Unfortunate ending in the second Polytechnic 8s' cup-thriller

Last Saturday brought us back to Polytechnic grounds where Poly 8s hosted Old Meadonians 8s for the first round of the AFA cup competition. It was the second time this season the two teams met following their first pre-season friendly game in September.

It was a great day for football with an occasional rain coming in and out during the game. Both teams started the game rather conservatively emphasizing on their defensive lines, making sure any incoming crosses got safely cleared. The first minutes of the first half found both teams trying to capitalize on their attackers' pace, looking for long balls behind the back of the defence.

25 minutes into the game it was one of those long balls that resulted in Old Meadonians 8 opening the score line. Their most active player throughout the game found space in the midfield and, after a miscommunication between Poly 8s' midfield, passed the ball parallel along the defence to find their striker right in front of Miltos who couldn't do anything to prevent the goal (0-1).

This goal came as a shocker for Poly 8s who looked like they couldn't turn things around for a few minutes. The host team started finding its steps again towards the end of the first half, pushing the opposition deep into their area. Our greatest chance came one minute before the end of the first half. Gustavo took the ball from Arash and drove towards the goal outpacing the last defender. He then passed the ball to Borja who shot the ball directly to the goalie. The ball re-bounced back to Gustavo who unfortunately hit the post from 1 meter distance meaning we were losing 0-1 in HT.

During the second half, Poly 8s pushed up to get an equalizer. We were trying to get the ball in through the line. A few good chances here and there were put to safety by the opposition goalie. Arash had a couple of good free kicks before Carlos managed to take the ball between two defenders on the counter attack and provide a beautiful finish – **Carlos** (1-1).

The extra time looked like the game was going to be decided in the penalties. The crucial moment came right before the end of the extra time's first half when Old Meadonians won a free kick outside the Poly 8s' penalty area. The visitors' midfielder produced a great one-step free kick curling the ball over the wall to end in Miltos's net (1-2).

In the second half of the extra time Poly 8s put everything in trying to convert their chances into a much needed equalizer. Unfortunately they were not successful and the unfavourable score 1-2 stayed till the end of the game, giving Old Meadonians 8s the ticket to the next round.

MOTM: Carlos

For the second consecutive time, Carlos takes the MOTM award for his runs throughout the game and of course for the equalizer.

South Bank Cuaco 5s – Polytechnic 8s 0-4 (0-3)

10.10.2015, Goals: Borja 2, Abz, Carlos

Line-up:

Miltiadis, Rich-Petr-Dimitris-Alan, Abz-Dimitris-Nikos-Carlos, Borja-Gustavo

Subs: Ali, Arash

First season win, on a “heated” Saturday afternoon

Last Saturday, the Poly 8s got their first season win against South Bank Cuaco 5s. It was a well-deserved and much needed win that helped the team to build their confidence.

But in a traditional Poly 8s fashion, the game did not start without a few surprises. After struggling to get a team together for our Saturday match, a few players turned up just before the kick off and a couple of others made it during half-time. Nevertheless, we had the 11 needed to start the game.

The game started with Poly 8s dominating the pitch. It looked like it was going to be an easy Saturday afternoon as our speedy offensive line were quicker on the ball than the opposition's defence.

Poly 8s had a couple of chances before netting their first goal with Borja. Alan, who helped on the day from Vets, took the throw in in the last quarter of the pitch to find Nikos who lobbed the ball in for Borja to score a beautiful goal – **Borja** (0-1).

Poly 8s continued the pressure looking for a second goal. That came a few minutes later when Celso found Abz on the counter attack and Abz had no problem passing his defender to finish a beautiful team play – **Abz** (0-2).

The team looked hungry for more. So minutes later a third goal was down the line. Carlos picked up the ball outside of the opposition area, went past his marker and went on a one-on-one with the goalie. The goalie saved Carlos's kick but failed to clear the ball promptly and Borja who was following up netted the ball for his second goal on the day and third for Poly – **Borja**(0-3).

Just before the half time, Miltos showed signs of his skills when he performed a memorable save. During one of the only two shots on goals, the opposition won a corner kick. The ball ended up right inside the penalty area where an unmarked midfielder headed a beautiful ball going what it looked like in. But Miltos saved the goal sending the ball for a corner kick by performing a magnificent dive (nearly killed Nikos who was right underneath him).

Half time found Poly leading the game 0-3. A good 45-minute team performance overall. The half time pep-talk by the injured Karl was aimed to boost the team confidence to not let their game drop. Unfortunately, that was not the case and

combined with the referee's "questionable" decisions the game became more of a rodeo performance.

Poly started the second half where they left off. Unfortunately the opposition entered the second half ready to pull up a "fight". The wrong one. The opposition team's players started playing more aggressively, and with the help of the referee tension started getting over Poly's players.

Around the 60th minute, a penalty was awarded for Carlos. Carlos took the ball and easily converted it into a goal from the penalty spot – **Carlos** (0-4).

Arash took Rich's spot on the left back to help the team with holding up the ball and creating more room for the midfielders.

And at this point things started getting steamy. South Bank Cuaco started complaining to the referee who seemed lost between the lines. Players from both teams started getting more aggressive with each other, resulting in "mini-fights". Things got worst towards the end, when Nikos (who was previously hurt on the head) stole the ball trying to push his team up for a counter-attack. The opposition player tackled him from behind and Nikos unfortunately lost his temper to begin a fight (hopefully we won't have to see things like these in the future).

The game ended a few minutes later with Poly taking the first 3 points for the season.

MOTM: Carlos

Carlos was playmaking, passing and running up and down the pitch until his substitute on the 80th minute by Ali who kindly offered to help us out.

Polytechnic 8s – Alleyn Old Boys 6s 1-4 (0-3)

3.10.2015, Goals: Ali

Line-up:

Miltiadis, Anthony-Karl-Matt-Petr, Ali-Dimitris-Nikos-Conor, Arash-Gustavo

Subs: Abz, Borja, Carlos

Can we take this game as a learning curve for the season?!

On the first October Saturday we hosted a very good side Alleyn Old Boys. The visitors had been dominating since the initial whistle and took a lead early into the game when their forward ran through our defence and hit the ball right next to the right post (0-1). We weren't able to catch up and soon conceded second goal when

their winger received a long ball over our defence and calmly put it in (0-2). The things got even worse when referee awarded a penalty against us. We all felt the opposition player was offside and our keeper just claimed the ball but the referee had a different view. Fortunately for us the executor hit the cross bar. We didn't learn from that and let the well playing Alleyn Old Boys score one more time before the half time (0-3).

During the half time talk we all agreed we don't give up our Saturdays to play like this and were determined to change things round. Arash pulled back to right back to strengthen the defence and Carlos came on to play right wing. We started a totally different game in the second half. We increased our aggression, passed the ball better and significantly improved our overall performance.

Just about when we created several promising chances and earned few corner kicks an unfortunate individual error in the centre of our defence allowed the visitors to score one more goal (0-4). However we didn't put our heads down and continued in what we had started. Our effort was soon rewarded when Ali scored his first goal in the season **Ali** (1-4). The things then got a bit steamy as we felt we could still do something about the result. Under our pressure the opposition started to shout at each other and foul us. However with so little time left the scoreline didn't change and we lost our first game in the season

MOTM: The whole team for the second half

There was no-one who would significantly stood above the rest. However the MOTM award goes to the whole team for its second half performance. I hope we can learn from this game and take it to the next games. We have to set our minds on the game from the beginning – that can be perhaps improved by turning up on time and have proper warm-up. Just to compare – the opposition had their entire team at Poly 1 hour prior the kick off...

Polytechnic 8s – Winchmore Hill 8s 4-3 (0-1) AET

26.9.2015, Goals: Ryan, Ben, Abz Lee

Line-up:

Miltiadis, Rich-Petr-Matt-Tin, Ryan-Dimitris-Nikos-Carlos, Richard-Gustavo

Subs: *Abz, Lee, Ben*

Cup drama with Happy end!

The cup games always spice up the season and this Saturday was no difference. Having to play at Old Meadonians grounds few players got lost even before the game

had started. To be fair the other 3 Polytechnic teams playing there experienced the same problem.

We started very well, kept the ball rolling and played very good football. Nikos's excellent pass over the opponents' defence found Richard who unfortunately kicked the ball over the bar. Gustavo's quick feet supported by Ryan on the right wing and Carlos on the left wing caused big problems to the opposition and it looked like it was just a matter of time when we score an opener. Winchmore Hill (WH) however had very dangerous counter attacks after one of which they scored. It is fair to support Miltiadis's criticism of our defence that left the attacker space and time inside the 6 yard box to put back the re-bounced ball (0-1).

Ben then replaced Rich on left back and we started to use more our full backs to support attack. However despite playing a very good football we didn't manage to score and were losing 0-1 in the HT.

In the second half Abz replaced Carlos and we pushed to equalize. Fine work between Dimitris and Ben supplied Ryan on the left wing who finally equalized **Ryan** (1-1). Few minutes later WH managed to score again (1-2). Lee came on to support our attack and with 20 minutes left we again pushed for an equalizer. Matt's excellent cross found Ben's head whose header ended back in the net **Ben** (2-2). We took advantage of the momentum and soon scored our third goal when Abz tapped in Gustavo's cross **Abz** (3-2).

It wouldn't be a proper cup game without last minute equalizers and extra time drama so we didn't want to spoil the tradition and let our opposition score just few minutes before the final whistle (3-3).

With tiring legs, few knocks and looking into another 30 minutes of football some of us tried to persuade the referee to go straight to penalty shoot out but the ref had none of it and started the extra time. We managed to score soon into the first half of the extra time when Lee bravely penetrated into the box and put the ball back in the net **Lee** (4-3). We then controlled the game and worked hard towards the win.

MOTM: Ben

It was a proper cup game drama with our Happy end. Everyone involved put a great effort in and worked hard to achieve the result. Miltiadis showed us again some of his magnificent saves, Nikos produced one of the best performances since joining the club. Tin and Matt were successfully eliminating counter attacks and Dimitris orchestrated the middle of the park. Ryan, Abz, Richard, Gustavo and Lee were

constantly putting the opposition's defence under pressure creating chances. However Ben's performance stood above all. Great left back with excellent attack support and scored goal!

West Wickham 6s – Polytechnic 8s 3-3 (0-3)

12.9.2015, Goals: Carlos, Alan, Arash

Line-up:

Miltiadis, Alan-Petr-Eoghan-Tin, Joe-Dimitris-Steve-Simon, Arash-Gustavo

Subs: *Rich*

Did we lose 2 points or gained 1?

Our first away game took us to West Wickham. With so many unavailable players we didn't know until Friday evening whether we would actually be able to put 11 players together, not mentioning to pull out a competitive team. With a great help from 1875 Vets team we finally got 12 brave fighters together and headed all the way towards Kent.

We had a dream start when Joe was trapped down inside the box and Carlos converted the penalty, his second in this season **Carlos** (0-1). We dominated the first 15 minutes and were soon awarded. Dimitris's corner kick was deflected by Petr to Alan whose powerful thunder shot ended in the Opposition's net **Alan** (0-2). Arash then came on for Carlos and soon scored his first goal in this season **Arash** (0-3). What a dream first half!

Although we were stressing out the game WAS NOT OVER YET during the half time talk the second half had an absolutely different scenario. The host team felt they had nothing to lose and started to play simple football causing big problems to our tiring midfield and defence. To make things even worse Eoghan (centre back) pulled his muscle and had to be substituted.

The hosts scored their first goal 10 minutes into the second half and sniffed a chance to dramatize the game (1-3). They put us under even more pressure and it looked like it was just a matter of time when they score another goal. The inevitable came 10 minutes later (2-3). We tried to strengthen the midfield by putting Carlos back on and changing a formation to 4-5-1. However we have to admit the host team was much better and deserved the equalizer (3-3).

MOTM: Miltiadis

On Friday, a day before the game, with so many unavailable players a point would have been a great success. In half time, being 3-0 up, a point would have been a big disappointment. After the final whistle a point IS a great achievement thanks to magnificent Miltiadis's saves!

Polytechnic 8s – Civil Service 7s 2-2 (0-1)

12.9.2015, Goals: Carlos, Tin

Line-up:

Miltiadis, Joe-Karl-Eoghan-Petr, Diego-Dimitris-Nickos-Abz, Arash-Kostas

Subs: *Carlos, Borja, Tin*

Promising start to the new season

After a very successful season and few internal discussions in the club our team have been promoted and become Polytechnic 8s for the 2015/16 season. Consequently we were put into a higher Division 4. There have been few changes in the squad over the summer however we managed to keep the core of the last season's team. We lost our 2 great full backs Diego and Matt, but gained Steve G to support our attack forces and Tin (right back) who have come back after recovery from injury.

Our very first league game was against very tough opposition – Civil Service 7s (CS). We had a very good spell in the first 15 minutes and created several promising chances. However it's fair to mention that we could feel the difference in quality between the Division we played in last season and the current one. Unfortunately for us we got punished for our first mistake in defence when Petr's back pass to the goalkeeper was caught by the CS attacker who calmly scored (0-1). Not an ideal start to the season but we didn't put our heads down and fought back. Despite our pressure and several chances the score didn't change till HT.

Carlos came on for the second half and his hard work up front was soon rewarded when he passed the CS goalkeeper who took him down preventing Carlos from scoring into an empty net. Carlos took the penalty and equalized **Carlos** (1-1). Half way into the second half CS pushed again and put our defence under pressure. CS took a lead again when our clearance bounced off the CS midfielder to their attacker who scored (1-2). With only 15 minutes left we put everything in in a pursuit to equalize. Our hard work and determination was awarded when Tin bravely ran among 4 CS defenders inside the box and his stretched leg put the ball into the net **Tin** (2-2).

MOTM: Diego

It was Diego's last game for our club as he's moving back to Madrid. Many thanks for all his hard work and contribution to the Polytechnic Club and all the best back home!
