

# Casuals win late to stay alive in survival battle

By James Streatfield

CORINTHIAN-CASUALS ended a lengthy spell without a win in remarkable fashion on Saturday following a hard-fought encounter with fellow fighters for survival, Wingate and Finchley.

Brian Adamson was in the dug-out for Casuals following the dismissal of former boss Justin Fevrier. Returning to the starting XI was Jack Tucker, Casuals' captain, who put in a stellar display in defence, while Jordan Clarke made his second debut for the club following his signing in midweek. Among the other debutants were Yann Janssen, who started up front for Casuals, and Sean Agun, who made his first appearance off the bench.

As expected from two teams in desperate need of points, the opening exchanges were closely fought, but with little end product. Casuals, playing against the wind, struggled to fashion many chances, though Adamson's men grew into the half. Finlay Lovatt brought the side their best chance of the half as his header was miraculously turned round the post by Ben Goode in goal for the visitors.

Following the half-time break, Casuals had to dig deep to stay level. Coulter was forced to make multiple impressive saves, denying Wingate and Finchley's Vasiliou three times in the half.

Having weathered somewhat of a storm, Casuals then went in search of a winner, and their efforts were rewarded late on when Malakai



Corinthian Casuals celebrate their win against Wingate and Finchley Picture: Stuart Tree

Hyman met a cross from Sahid Kamara, tapping in at the back post to earn Casuals a much-needed, and well-deserved, victory.

Next up is an away trip to Pottery Bar Town on Saturday after an empty midweek allowed time for Adamson to imprint his style

on this Casuals team, whose first win since January 2 keeps alive the slimmest hopes of survival in the Isthmian Premier Division.

## Maestro Morley saves Esher from Hull hell

By Richard Spiller

Hull 26 Esher 27  
National League 1  
Saturday March 25

A LAST-GASP penalty from Sam Morley snatched victory for Esher, keeping alive their hopes of survival.

The fly-half's magical left foot has so often been crucial to his side and never more so than on Saturday's trip to the North East, knowing victory was imperative to avoid the drop.

Yet Es came within moments of allowing Hull to grab a first victory of a campaign, which has seen them marooned in the basement throughout.

Trailing by two points with time running out, the visitors were grateful to the prolific Morley for hitting the target to lift them out of the relegation zone. They are just three points clear of Taunton - heavily beaten by leaders Rams - with three matches left, the first Saturday's home date against Bishop's Stortford for which there is free admission. That is followed by another long trip to Darlington Mowden Park before hosting Rams.

Hull got off to the ideal start when Timoci Waqadua stormed in for the opening try on six minutes, scrum-half Sam Bullock responding to make it 5-5 as they sides battled away in heavy rain. Reece Dean put the hosts back in front on 16 but wing Harri Lang pounced on a dropped pass to race over from deep and Morley converted.

A brace of penalties ensured Hull were 16-12 up by the interval, Es getting the second half off to a promising note as they struck through No 8 Ben Atkins, although the extras were missed to leave the gap only a point.

The nip and tuck nature of the game would continue throughout, Dean's smart feed enabling Mike Adlard to score under the posts and send Hull ahead again. The visitors had replacement forward Afrabi Fossaghton to thank for keeping them in the game by driving over on the hour, Morley converting to put his side 24-23 up.

But Es were caught offside. Dean's successful kick putting the hosts in front by two points with 15 minutes remaining.

In a tense finale, Es needed to defend well to prevent Adlard going over for a try, which would have effectively killed them off, and reward came as a charge upheld resulted in a penalty which league top-scorer Morley despatched for victory.

## Hercules girls shine

By George Mallett

Hercules Wimbledon Athletic Club turned up in numbers at the English Schools Cross-Country Championships held in Wollaton Park, Nottingham on Saturday. The annual competition sees athletes in years 7 to 13 compete first for their school in the Schools County Championships earlier in the year and then, if successful, for their counties at Saturday's race.

The standout performance was in the junior girls' race as the club had two athletes in the top 30 with Isabella Harrison 18th and Selin Ciceksever an outstanding 27th. The pairs performance had them first and second counters in their London Schools team, who earned team bronze.

Also competing for London were Jack Hobden in the inter boys, finishing 158th, and Millie Thorpe in the senior girls in 185th.

Competing for Middlesex, the pick of the bunch was Cameron Elliott, who was 128th in the senior boys, with brother Zach Elliott 193th in the junior boys' race. Eloise Davies was 225th in the senior girls' race whilst Thalia Mistry, competing for Devon, was 309th in the inter girls' race.

In the junior boys, Thomas Whorton finished seventh in the Surrey team in 205th as the county earned ninth place. On the south coast on Sunday, Jonathan Cornish ran away from the rest of the field to take the Eastleigh 10k title in an impressive 30.11.

Though almost a minute outside his personal best, it saw Cornish beat a high-quality field, finishing 13 seconds clear of Will Bryan of Southampton AC.

# Euro exertions hinder domestic progress

By Tim Harrison

EXHAUSTED by their European exertions, and depleted by injuries, Chelsea came a cropper at Manchester in the much-vaunted women's weekend of football.

It has left some of the fans who made a crack-of-dawn start to trek to City's ground, after losing an hour's sleep when the clocks went forward, question-

ing Emma Hayes' obsession with winning the Women's Champions League.

Most supporters' real goal is domestic domination, and some now feel the Blues may be sacrificing the league in favour of

continental glory.

The test will come on Sunday when the team bus sets off for the Midlands to try to recapture WSL momentum in the tightest title race in years, having entertained Lyon at Stamford Bridge on Thursday night.

Chelsea looked jaded and accident-prone last Sunday in the

2-0 defeat by City, with Hayes calling it "one game too much" and admitting: "It's hard to win the league when you have three games in a week."

Victory against Aston Villa would steady the ship, but with Erin Cuthbert and Millie Bright joining the sick list, it looks a very tall order.

# Sunday semis serve up some muddy fare

By Patrick Hutchison



Hackbridge Hurricanes' Louis Parry won the competition for being the muddiest

IT'S Sunday morning, it's raining and muddy, but we have two semi-finals to play. Beddington Cyclones against Hackbridge Hurricanes and Wallington Tornados against Grange Lightning.

The Cyclones against Hurricanes were first up in what were difficult conditions. The Hurricanes started fast, pinning the Cyclones back into their own half. A few half chances by Louis Parry with one going wide and the other being held by Cyclones goalkeeper Finley Styles.

An attack on the counter by the Cyclones saw a shot saved by Hurricanes goalkeeper Aarush Bhomia but he could only parry

it to the awaiting Cyclones striker Momin Abubakar, who slotted home his first goal of the season (1-0).

It didn't take long for the Hurricanes to equalise in the second half with a neat finish by Louis Parry, and it's all to play for.

An incredibly close game needing extra time to separate the two. A free kick awarded to the Hurricanes just outside the box and up steps Jack Parry and makes no mistake, making it 2-1 to the Hurricanes. With little time left, the Cyclones are committing bodies

forward looking for an equaliser only to be caught on the break. Finn Wyner with a lung-bursting run follows up on an initially saved shot and taps it home, the game finishes 3-1 and the Hackbridge Hurricanes are through to the Silver Cup Final.

Wallington Tornados against Grange Lightning started cagily. Grange applying the most pressure without creating too many clear-cut chances.

A ding-dong battle in the middle of the field but neither team able to break the deadlock. Sam Hunter-Brook has done well with his handling after a few long shots whilst a deflected free kick

by Callum Hams struck the post. Second half has started much the same as the first, Wallington Tornados unable to make the most of their speedy players due to the pitch being very boggy and the Grange defenders not only protecting their goal well but also starting attacks from the back.

Full-time whistle goes and it's extra time, which passes by without too much going on. The match goes to penalties. Wallington Tornados win the shootout 2-1 and progress to the final of the Silver Cup to face Hackbridge Hurricanes whereas the Beddington Cyclones will face Grange Lightning in the Bronze Cup Final.