5-star Defence of the Realm!

Manny Road hit Watlington for five with no return as they look towards the top of the table.

Manny Road earned an impressive clean sheet against Watlington and scored five in the process to earn their first win, three points, and more importantly, to send a message to the rest of the league on yet another glorious Saturday.

Manny Road (Sunday) had a day to forget in the outer reaches of Oxford (Bletchingdon) as they sunk to a disappointing second half performance that lacked quality, fitness, and nerve.

Manny Road’s game at home to Watlington could be described as a tale of wonderful and resolute defending that kept their fierce and potent enemy at bay and allowed for their strikers to score 5 goals on the break-away, and Scotland could also be described as unlucky to not have qualified for the World Cup, and both descriptions would be equally correct, for this game was all about the outstanding Manny Road Defence.

The defence lined up with Byrne in goal, seeking a consecutive clean sheet, and with Sweeper Dickie on the playstation control, dictating the movements of the two famed man-markers Jones and Burton, who once dreamed that they were strikers. In midfield and
upfront there were some other guys, who were not playing in the amazing defence, oh let’s say the pacey O’Connor out left, the nimble footed Frost out right, the measured Kaiser Kay anchoring, with Trinder and Potter weaving their magic behind Lazarus (resurrected from his wild header last week, see picture) and McGillycuddy (L), resurrected from his viaje in de la mancha. Leaving the romantically inclined Boorman on the bench, calculating the true cost of that ring, alongside debutant Marcus McGillycuddy, who, like his brother and current holder of the Players’ Player of the Year award, is merely another devastating striker that does not play in defence, where the true glory resides.

Meanwhile the reserves had been posted to the outer realms of the empire to preach the Manny Road gospel to some non-believers in Bletchingdon. Due to them playing in a land ‘far, far, way’, we are reliant upon an old crackling wireless for updates on their game, we will try to keep you posted, but we did hear that they were starting with a 4-4-2 of Schofield in goal, and a disgruntled back four of Hassanain, Burton, George, and Cannon, with a midfield

Was this the greatest Scorpion kick ever, or merely the worst diving header so far?
‘line’ of Xie, O’Niel, ‘Bobbins’, and Pothecary, behind a front two of Oyston and Shabala, with Su on the bench. More on that game later.

And we’ve just heard that the Reserves are a goal down already after a horrible mix-up, **GOAL! 1v0 to Bletchingdon**, what a disastrous start, what could have happened?

Unfortunately our crackling wireless appears to have died, so we will be restricted to the occasional telegram from Bletchingdon for further updates.

Back at Manny Road the defence is coping admirably as Burton wins a header before Jones then wins 83 in a row, Dickie’s circle button for Burton must be broken...

The first key moment in the match came when Dickie made a superb tackle and then passed to Burton who launched a long diagonal ball (slice) that could only be put out for a throw in by the struggling Watlington defender. Frost then played an intelligent throw-in to the feet of McGillycuddy (L) who nonchalantly flicked the ball over a defender’s head near the bye-line and then volleyed the ball past the keeper with his left before running the full length of the field, a la Adebayour, to celebrate with Dickie, Jones, and Burton, who’s brilliant defending had allowed it all to happen, **GOAL! Manny Road take the lead on 7 minutes!**

Very soon after Dickie launched a perfect circle (long) pass that was headed out for a corner. Trinder, the non-defender, then curled in a perfect corner to Lazarus, another non-defender, who headed in at the far post, **GOAL! 2v0! Lazarus rushes towards Trinder to celebrate, whilst the rest of the, more appreciative, team rushes towards Dickie to celebrate!**

**Incoming telegram... Goal... Mann-Road...Oyston-volley stop**

Lazarus then had a great chance to seal the points very early on, but with just the keeper to beat he tried a foolish, almost disobedient, lob, result - off-target. He then hit a powerful shot from outside the box, but again, his
effort was, strictly speaking, off-target. Some more great defending by Manny Road then ensued, culminating in a superb 5 yard pass by Jones to the feet of Kaiser Kay, who almost had no choice, thanks to the brilliance of Jones, other than to slide through a perfectly weighted 20 yard through ball to the overlapping Frost on the right who could not help but hit a perfectly timed low and hard drive across the face of the goal for Lazarus to convert and score his second, GOAL! 3v0 and it’s all over!

Of course Jones was smothered in the resultant melee of the celebrations but he managed to compose himself in time to ensure a clean sheet at the interval. Half-time: Manny Road 3 v 0 Watlington.

Incoming telegram... Goal... Mann-Road... Oyston-dribble... halftime stop

The second half started in much the same vain as the first, with the Manny Road
defence leading the way, and the Watlington defence playing a very high line (probably trying to get closer to the Manny Road defenders that they so admired), which of course left plenty of space for the Manny Road strikers to run into and then be cheerfully welcomed by the opposition lino and his enthusiastic and friendly flag-waving. Still, the pace of Frost and now Boorman on the left (replacing the injured O'Connor at half-time) was ample enough for them to latch onto any through balls despite the requisite 10 yard start they had to give to their opposing full-backs. Although it was the venerable Trinder that broke free on the left for the fourth goal, chipping in a delightful curled cross that the keeper could only brush into the path of the waiting McGillycuddy (L) who duly poked the ball home for his second and Manny Road’s fourth, GOAL! IT’S ALL OVER!

Lazarus was now keen to get his hat-trick so with 20 minutes remaining Sanghera replaced him with McGillycuddy (M). The defence was doing such a good job that a bored Burton decided to take a break and wander off (in his mind at least), but nobody noticed as Dickie and Jones and Byrne were doing such a good job. McGillycuddy (M) was keen to impress and his quick-feet danced past a dazzled Watlington but then with just the keeper to beat he opted to...to...to pass! What? Are you sure he’s a McGillycuddy?

Still no word from Bletchingdon, we believe the communication lines are down, but we are sure they are doing fine...

Manny Road had many chances to get the fifth, but the closest were a flicked Frost header from a Dickie free-kick, a great run by Frost that resulted in him tamely shooting wide at the near post, a McGillycuddy (M) shot from a tight angle after yet more dancing, and best of all, a Kaiser Kay shuffle on the penalty spot when he only had the keeper to beat, however his plan to beat the keeper by making him laugh failed as he then passed the ball straight into his arms, never mind Dave,
dribbling round the keeper is a very, very, difficult skill. So difficult in fact that Twinkle Toes Trinder then showed just how difficult it is as he waltzed past the keeper a mere 60 seconds later before slotting home, **GOAL! 5v0!**

The game then eased into its final moments, with the points and the all-important clean sheet secure, until Byrne decided to try his own twinkle-toes routine, dancing round the ball before crudely fouling the approaching striker. Thankfully the referee was one of those modern types that ‘over-protects’ goalkeepers and gave Manny Road a free-kick!

Full-time: Manny Road a clean sheet and a goal or two v Watlington, who had no chance of scoring against such an amazing defence.

No word yet from Bletchingdon, but wait, what’s this, a carrier pigeon has just entered the office...

“Save our souls. Open goal misses, passes to opposition forwards, phantom free-kicks, cars broken into, lost 6v2, we want to come home!”

Oh dear....

After the game, 1st team manager Sanghera had this to say,

“Now that’s what I call defending! Joel, you were rubbish!”

And Reserve team manager Mills said,

“I hate being ref!”

**Sanghera’s Man of the Match** went to ‘Harry’ Potter which is quite surprising for two reasons, i) he’s not a defender, and ii) he’s not been mentioned in this report, but the truth is a good midfielder is much like a good referee, and goes about his business largely unnoticed, effortlessly mopping up the midfield and distributing possession neatly and efficiently.

**Mills Man of the Match** went to O’Neil for an impressive, combative, battling and very visible midfield display that must surely not have gone unnoticed by any visiting scouts.
Mansfield Road 5 v 0 Watlington (ht: 3v0)

McGillycuddy, L. (Frost) 7 
Lazarus (Trinder) 15 
Lazarus (Frost) 40 
McGillycuddy, L. (Trinder) 46 
Trinder (McGillycuddy, M.) 75 

Crowd: Ann, McGillycuddy Snr

Mansfield Road line up and formation: 3-5-2
Byrne, Jones, Dickie (capt), Burton, O’Connor (Boorman 45), Frost, Kay, ‘Harry Potter’, Trinder, McGillycuddy, L., Lazarus (McGillycuddy, M. 70).

Blacks Head Bletchingdon 6 v 2 Mansfield Road (R) (ht: 1v2)

“Wheels” the acrobat 3 Oyston (Cannon) 10 
David Brent 40 Oyston (unclaimed) 20 
David Brent 43 
Young-un 65 
“Wheels” the acrobat 75 
David Brent 85 

Referee: Jon Mills

Crowd: a bunch of locals and at least one thief

Mansfield Road Reserves line up and formation: 4-4-2

Oxford Amateur League
Division One Results
Charlton 1 v 8 Hinksey 
Eynsham Rs 0 v 2 Kidlington 
Freeland 1 v 1 North Oxford 
Garsington Rs 0 v 1 Yarnton 
Manny Road 5 v 0 Watlington 
Middleton Cheney 0 v 2 Slade Farm 
Oakley 1 v 3 Broughton

Autoglass Upper Thames Valley League
Division 3b Results
AFC Jericho 2 v 6 Railway Wheatley 
Bicesterlona 7 v 2 Leys Wanderers 
B.H. Bletchingdon 6 v 2 Mansfield Road 
Donnington 8 v 1 Freeland Yeoman 
Witney Exiles 2 v 2 Mason Arms 
Yellow Eagles 0 v 2 Northway 

Did not play (13 teams): Iffley Harriers.