

No luck in the Shield for Bank

FOOTBALL

HESKETH BANK'S first team took a break from league action as they entertained AFC Monton from the Manchester Premier League in the first round of the Lancashire Amateur Shield last Saturday – but fell to another defeat.

Manager Evergreen introduced three new signings to the squad who all started.

Within 20 seconds of kick-off one of the new players, Mark Mullen, opened the scoring to give his new team a dream start.

Centre-forward Dimitri Aembi sent him clear with a delightful pass and left him with just the keeper to beat which he did clinically.

The visitors were stunned but gradually they got into their stride, forcing keeper Stefan Dill to be at his best making two fine saves.

However with half time approaching he could do nothing to stop Jamie Baguley levelling from close range.

Josh Cliff did have a chance straight after but he shot over the bar.

The second half began with the visitors having most of the possession and it wasn't long before they made this count as in the 55th minute they went in front from a well-placed shot from Rob Whatmough.

Manager Evergreen brought on all three substitutes with 20 minutes to go.

AFC Monton took advantage of a near miss from Jack Cocking when Dill tried to take a quick free-kick inside his own box only for the ball to ricochet off the heel of skipper Tony Sergeant straight to Baguley who tapped-in his team's third from close range.

They added a fourth nine minutes from time when a cross was diverted into his own net by Daryl Grant after fine work by Dalton McLaughlin.

In the final couple of minutes tempers boiled over when Matthew German appeared to have brought down one of the visitor's midfielders and after a melee the referee gave him his marching orders although he can count himself unlucky to be the only one punished.

This Saturday they return to the league and a long away trip to Cumbria to face Dalton based side Crooklands Casuals (kick-off 3pm).

Skem advance in the Cup but lose first league match of the season

BY NEIL LEATHERBARROW

**SKELMERSDALE UNITED 4
RADCLIFFE BOROUGH 3**

DESPITE conceding three late goals Skelmersdale United had long ago done enough to see off the challenge of the men from North Manchester at Stormy Corner in the FA Cup first qualifying round on Saturday afternoon.

Manager Tommy Lawson made six changes to the side that beat Blyth Spartans on Tuesday, but it made little difference as his side galloped into a 2-0 lead inside 17 minutes.

Aidan Kirkbride fired home the first. Then Michael Monaghan provided the finishing touch to a flowing move for the second.

Kenny Strickland made it 3-0 just before the hour mark with one of his now trademark free-kicks into the top corner of the Radcliffe net.

Skelmersdale then appeared to ease off after the third goal, Dave Sherlock pulling one back for the visitors.

However, United's Dan Mitchley restored the advantage via a header.

However, it was a case of too little too late to matter when Michael McGinley and Dan

Laverty netted in added time for Radcliffe.

**CURZON ASHTON.....2
SKELMERSDALE UNITED0**

BUT for the width of a crossbar and a superb save from a goalkeeper who has seen European nights with Liverpool, United would very likely have retained their nine game unbeaten start to the season.

But having gone a goal down in the 12th minute of Monday night's match, they were thwarted in the fight back, before conceding a rather unique late goal that gave the game a bit of a lop-sided look about it.

In the 12th minute, the crucial opening goal went to Curzon. Initially Skelmersdale goalkeeper Martin Fearon saved well from Matthew Warburton and the ball went for a corner. From the flag-kick, Warburton flicked the ball on from a position advanced from the near-post and sent it into the far corner of the Skelmersdale net.

Curzon had been the better team through the opening exchanges, but gradually Skelmersdale got going and Dan Mitchley brought a save out of home goalkeeper Hakan Burton with a header from a Danny Wisdom free-kick.

Curzon finished the half

strongly and Fearon made a superb save from Ryan Watson after he ran onto a chipped through ball.

United began the second period well and were unlucky when a Rob McIntosh header rocked the bar on 57 minutes.

Deep into added time, Skelmersdale won a free-kick on the right and everyone except goalkeeper Fearon took up position in the Curzon penalty area.

However, the free-kick was frustratingly poor and the ball was cleared to Jordan Wright, on the halfway line he was met by Fearon and sent the ball low and bouncing past him into the Skelmersdale net from 55 yards.



● The Merseyside Nighthawks players celebrate winning the national title after a dramatic overtime success against the Edinburgh Wolves and (right) action from the game
Photos: JOHN MAHER

Glory for Nighthawks with national crown

**EDINBURGH WOLVES.....34
MERSEYSIDE NIGHTHAWKS.....41**

THE Merseyside Nighthawks finished off an unbeaten season with a 41-34 overtime win against the Edinburgh Wolves in the British American Football National League Final to be crowned British national champions.

The John Charles Stadium in Leeds saw a tense and exciting contest as the two teams, who were level at 34 points each after regular time, entered overtime.

Quarterback Adrian Rodgers hooked up with Ben Barker for a converted touchdown putting the Nighthawks firmly in control.

**BURSCOUGH.....0
CURZON ASHTON.....1**

BY STUART ROOD

ON a bright autumn afternoon at Victoria Park, Burscough were looking to get back to winning ways and progress in the FA Cup – unfortunately that was not to be the way.

The Linnets' Liam Caddick had the first chance to score,

And when their defence halted the Wolves' offence from scoring in their turn with possession, the title was secured.

Hodgers, a student at Liverpool John Moores University, was the game's Most Valuable Player with 21 completed passes, five touchdowns and a total of 442 offensive yards.

The win completes a long and successful season as the Skelmersdale-based Nighthawks were also North West Division Champions and won the annual Bierkeller Bowl against local rivals Manchester Titans in July.

In the final, the Nighthawks found themselves trailing 13-0 early on.

However, Rodgers threw a touchdown

pass to Alex Eager and another to Barker giving the Merseyside outfit a 14-13 advantage.

The Wolves, though, stayed resilient and hit back with another score before half-time, quarterback Jamie Morrison finding Andrew MacIver in paydirt to head to the locker rooms 20-13 to the good.

Joe Douglas's one-yard touchdown run put the Nighthawks ahead once more in the third quarter before the Wolves responded again, Lloyd Dignan catching a pass for a touchdown thrown by Morrison.

But in this topsy-turvy final, back came the Nighthawks as Liam Holebrook grabbed a pass for a converted touch-

down by Rodgers.

Dignan then scampered 94 yards after a pass from Morrison for another Edinburgh touchdown, and with a two-point conversion successful they then led the encounter 34-27.

Merseyside responded in the best possible way as Rodgers somehow found Barker and he scored another touchdown to knot the game at 34-34 at the end of regulation setting up the dramatic overtime finish.

● Anyone interested in getting involved with club's preparations to retain the trophy in 2015 can find all the details at www.merseysidenighthawks.co.uk or on Facebook at [facebook.com/merseysidenighthawks](https://www.facebook.com/merseysidenighthawks)

Linnets are left Curzon their luck as their FA Cup dreams are dashed

**BURSCOUGH.....0
CURZON ASHTON.....1**

FOOTBALL

finding himself with only the keeper to beat. However, Hakan Burton made a save at close range and then was on hand to put the follow up chance around the post for an unproductive corner.

At the other end Curzon had their first chance of the game which fell to Niall Cummins, but Tim Horn stood tall and the

Curzon man fired over the bar.

After that it was a defensive battle as both teams stood strong and chances were few and far between.

At half-time the game remained goalless and Burscough boss Derek Goulding looked to his bench to try and find a way through the Curzon defence.

He brought on Joe Camozzi and Dennis Lartey for Eddie

Pegler and Chris Dykes.

Curzon opted for a double substitution in the 68th minute, bringing on Matthew Warbuton and Luke Horrocks, which proved to brighten them up.

On 70 minutes they created a chance which Horn saved.

Two minutes later, though, Curzon took the lead via Warburton, who had only been on the field for short period of time.

Burscough looked to get back into the game and threw men forward trying to create more chances, which was helped when the opposition's Darren Thornton was sent off the 85th minute for an off the ball incident near the corner.

In the final minute Burscough had one last chance to score and take the game to a replay, but it went begging and their FA Cup run was brought to an end.