

CUP MAYHEM

Six pages this week

John Player Cup Final



Reports and pictures p28-29

BIG HITTER

STANMORE's post-war scoring record was shattered on Saturday when 17-year-old Mark Harcourt crashed an unbeaten 188 runs including 12 sixes and 14 fours.

For details and the rest of the cricket see page 27.
 Cricket scores reports are available from the Observer offices at 24 Greenhill Way, Harrow; and 427A High Road, Twickenham. The deadline for all reports is first post Tuesday.

Cheers — Lions make it a double



Report and pictures p25

More sport on 25-29

SPORT OPINION

Scrum of the earth

THE DISGRACEFUL scenes at the end of Saturday's John Player Cup final were the worst ever witnessed at Twickenham.

When drunken hordes of Bath supporters twice swarmed on to the pitch to "celebrate" their team's success both sets of players were forced to head for the safety of the dressing rooms and the RFU took the unprecedented step of abandoning the game, with two minutes still left to play.

Bath claim the disturbances were caused by Bristol soccer fans. But the blame lies squarely at their door. They were their supporters and they must be controlled.

There may have been no violent intent to the invasion, but the mindless minority clearly besmirched the good name of rugby, marred a great sporting occasion and soured Bath's moment of glory.

They must not be allowed to do it again.

The RFU now says that fences may have to be considered at Twickenham. If Bath do make it back for a fifth successive final next year cages may be the only solution to curb the moronic fringe.

Whatever happens, the yobs must not win.

Double invasion ... at Twickenham sours the celebrations

WASPS' courageous John Player Cup challenge ended in disappointment as Bath lifted the trophy for a record fourth successive year at Twickenham on Saturday.

But the West Country giants had their moment of glory loutishly soured by a mindless section of their supporters.

Hundreds of fans, many of them clearly drunk, poured onto Twickenham's hallowed turf after Nigel Redman's injury time try had put the result beyond doubt.

The pitch was cleared but after Stuart Barnes converted, the yobboes returned to dance, sing, steal the match ball and grapple with astonished Twickenham stewards.

Both sets of players headed for the tunnel and, although there were still two minutes left to play, Rugby Football Union Secretary Dudley Wood ordered the match to be abandoned.

Bath players and officials claimed afterwards that the disturbance was caused by groups of soccer fans from Bristol.

The RFU, however, is likely to lay the blame squarely at Bath's door.

Their officials accepted that there was no violent intent to the invasion but one said afterwards that fences may still have to be considered for Twickenham.

Another went so far as to



MOMENT OF GLORY ... Richard Hill lifts the John Player Cup, but Bath's celebrations were soured.

suggest that the four times cup winners should be ejected from the competition next season.

The man in the middle, 37-year-old Liverpool referee Fred Howard, refused to be drawn into the controversy.

He said: "I took the players off for safety reasons and was then advised by Mr Wood that it would be unwise to take them back onto the field."

Bath Captain Richard Hill, who helped stewards clear fans off the pitch, took his players to the Wasps

dressing room afterwards to apologise.

"It was such a disappointing way for the final to end," he said. "There really is no excuse for behaviour of that sort."

Wasps Secretary John Langley said the club would not be objecting to the abandonment because their situation by then was irretrievable.

But he added: "It would have been a different story if the scores had been closer."

There would not have been any pitch invasion if Wasps had managed to hold

onto the 12-4 half time lead given them by a Rob Andrew drop goal and conversion and a Huw Davies try and penalty.

Bath, however, turned on the power in the second half to add two converted tries and a penalty to their first half try.

The holders knew they had been in a battle, though, as Hill admitted after the game: "We were all shocked at the way Wasps played today, they made it extremely hard for us and did not let us play."

"We are going to have to sit down and take this one in. It was so physically and mentally taxing."

"Every final we have played in we have had to show character. We have confidence in each other's ability and managed to claw our way back — but only just."

Wasps Captain David Pegler remained cheerful despite the defeat. "We all thoroughly enjoyed it," he said.

Old Gayts gunning for glory

OLD GAYTONIANS have a tough first hurdle to overcome in Saturday's Middlesex Sevens at Twickenham.

Gayts, competing for the first time at the finals, meet Wakefield in their first round match.

But if they can overcome this formidable ob-

stacle, they face a much easier second round tie against either Askeans or High Wycombe.

That would put Gayts into the semi-finals.

The matches last seven minutes each way, except for the final, which is ten minutes each way.

Even the fittest of

teams will find the going tough on the wide open space of Twickenham and Gayts will be more than happy if they do reach the semis.

Their team is: Ian Abbott, Steve Rigby, Doug Maxted, Dave Thomas (Captain), Nick Earnshaw, Nick Dickens, Alan Yarrow.

SOCCER ROUND UP

Seaside special for Boro

Bognor Regis Town 1
Harrow Borough 3

HARROW BOROUGH ended the season on a high note by gaining swift revenge over Bognor Regis Town on Wednesday last week.

Boro, who had lost 1-0 at home to Town the previous Saturday, made amends with a fine display, much to the delight of manager Keith Chamberlin, who drove all the way from Oxford to Sussex for the match.

Teenaged midfielder Phil Dicker celebrated his call up by signing a contract with Boro — and netting a brilliant debut goal in the 56th minute.

Seizing on a Colin Payne through ball, the 19-year-old rounded two defenders and the keeper before sliding home a delightful shot.

Bognor, however, were level within ten minutes, Dell clearing a Gill header off the line only for

Price to nod the ball home.

Chances came and went for both sides before Boro went back in front in the 73rd minute. Matt Lody, who looked as if he was about to be substituted fired home the rebound after setting up a chance for Holmes which was blocked.

Holmes put the icing on the Boro cake in the 83rd minute by thumping a Dicker cross high into the roof of the net.

The result leaves Boro with a final placing of sixth in the VOL Premier Division.

They were level on points and goal difference with fifth placed Bognor but had scored less goals.

Wembley ended their VOL Division One campaign with a 3-0 defeat at Maidenhead and a 1-1 draw with Hampton.

Wembley finished with 72 points from their 42 matches.

Beringslade 0, Edgware 1
Colin Little scored the 27th minute winner that assures Edgware of at least fourth place in the London Spartan League.

The week before Wares slipped to a disappointing 1-0 reverse at home to Northwood.

Harrow Boro Reserves clinched third spot in the Suburban League with a 4-1 home win over Uxbridge.

Before that, Boro went down 3-0 to Hounslow and 1-0 to Hendon in a hectic finale to their season.



Lawrence Holmes — happy ending

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