

## Chapter 4 - Sunday 21/4/19

*Match report from The Knaresborough Bell - local newspaper focusing on youth football.*

*By Tanya Swain, youth reporter.*

### **Victory stolen at the death**

*Sunday morning saw the two teams at the top of the North Harrogate under-eleven league – Lingerfield F.C and SLS United – come head to head.*

*Lingerfield F.C topped the table at the start of play, and with a game in hand, were many peoples' favourites to go on and lift the title. However, SLS United – inspired by their heroic goalkeeper Yonis Ganim – were not going to give up on the title without a fight.*

*This paper has learnt (and asked permission to share this information) that Yonis' father is currently recovering in hospital from a cardiac attack suffered the week before. Brave, young Yonis decided to play in their must-win match regardless, and his decision was certainly justified by the performance he produced.*

*Lingerfield F.C. were enthused before the match by the return of their star striker, and current league top-scorer, Sarah Saunders. Sarah has been in blistering form this season and many fancy her to go on and snatch the golden boot for the year. Sarah had missed the previous match with a bruised leg, but after a good rest, she was back to her tenacious self and put Lingerfield ahead within the first ten minutes. She produced a cool, calm finish when passed the ball by her classy captain Nareem – there was nothing SLS United's goalkeeper could have done to stop it: sometimes a finish is just too composed.*

*Lingerfield F.C. then tried to put their foot down and force more goals. Their dynamic winger, Pavel Glik on the right, looking particularly threatening. What followed was a peppering of the SLS United goal, who simply could not get out of their own half. If it were not for the brilliance of Yonis Ganim between the sticks; SLS United could have found themselves at least three goals down before the break.*

*Then, on the stroke of half-time, SLS United were handed a goal on a plate when usually dependable Tara Goldsmith played a precarious back pass to her keeper. SLS United's striker Jonas Bloon was too quick to pounce of Tara's blunder and buried the ball to put SLS United back on level terms. This despite the fact they had not registered another shot on target the whole half.*

*The second half started much the same with SLS United pinned back by the pace and precision of Lingerfield's passing. Sarah Saunders went close a couple more times, but could not find another way past Yonis Ganim who seemed to have*

*gloves the size of the goal – stopping everything that came at him. Even penalties. With five to go the barraging Lingerfield F.C. won a penalty after a suspected handball in the box during a corner. There was initially some indecision by the referee, but much to their credit, the two sets of players remained calm and waited for him to make his decision – they were a great example to their teams with this behaviour.*

*Eventually, the referee – on advice from his assistant linesman – awarded the penalty. The linesman who advised him was actually one of the parents of an SLS United player, so his honesty had to be applauded. When Sarah Saunders placed the ball down on the spot, it was actually her, and not Yonis Ganim in goal who looked the more nervous. Yonis knew if he did not save the penalty, it would effectively be giving the title with Lingerfield F.C. with so few games left.*

*Giant Gloves Ganim though was in no mood to concede another goal and dived majestically to his left to palm Sarah Saunder's weak effort.*

*With five to go, the score still stood at one-one though it seemed that only Lingerfield might snatch the game. Then, they were dealt another piece of cold-luck. Yonis Ganim, hoofing the ball from his hands to try and reach the far corner to help his team hold on for a point, managed to win them a corner after Tara Goldsmith's header was misdirected and went out behind.*

*It was SLS United's first corner of the game, and really the only time that they had been in Lingerfield's half during the second period. However, they do say that it is not statistics that win a football but goals. A goal is precisely what SLS United got as their own captain-fantastic Patrick O'Reed scored a bullet header past the rooted Noah Walker in goal.*

*Unbelievable scenes of celebrations followed, and once the referee had got the players back for the kick-off, SLS United only needed to hold on for a few minutes to grab a priceless, yet extremely fortuitous, win. That they did. The SLS United players mobbed their heroic goalkeeper at the end and their inspirational captain. The Lingerfield F.C. players were shell-shocked at what had just happened after being so dominant throughout the match. The managers and players shook hands after an incredible ending, and we here at the Knaresborough Bell cannot wait to see what awaits the rest of the season.*

*Next up for SLS United, a tricky fixture at home to Ripley Albion. Meanwhile, Lingerfield F.C. will be playing a double-header next Sunday to catch up for their game in hand away against AFC Farnham (who they narrowly beat a few weeks back at home). Before heading back to their own ground for a late-afternoon kick-off against FC Scriven.*

*What a chase for the championship there is going on in the North Harrogate under-eleven league.*

### Follow-up questions

1. What is different about this week's chapter?
2. Who won the match and what was the score?
3. The headline says that the victory was "stolen". Why?
4. Why do you think Yonis was inspired to have such a good match?
5. What is happening next week? Why is it a key week in the chase for the championship?

**Chapter Four of Chase for the Championship will be published next week.**

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions, please email **hello@jamesseptowe.com** or tweet me **@jamesseptowe**

You can also visit my website: **jamesseptowe.com** for more updates on **Chase for the Championship**, and my **debut full-length children's book: Raid of the Ratskull Rodents coming May 2019.**

Thanks for reading - see the updated table, results and next week's fixtures on the next page.

### Results Sunday 21/4/19

Lingerfield F.C. 1-2 SLS United  
South Stainley F.C. 1-1 Nidd Rangers  
Killinghall United 3-2 Ripley Albion  
Ripley United 3-1 AFC Farnham  
Brearton Town 2-2 FC Scriven

### Table standing after weekend of 21/4/19 fixtures:

Position	Teams	Played	Wins	Draws	Losses	Goal Difference	Points
1.	SLS United	16	11	3	2	+30	36
2.	Lingerfield F.C.	15	11	1	3	+34	34
3.	Ripley Albion	16	8	4	4	+17	28
4.	Nidd Rangers	16	7	6	3	+17	27
5.	Killinghall United	16	6	7	3	+1	25
6.	Brearton Town	16	8	1	7	+3	24
7.	AFC Farnham	15	7	1	7	-11	22
8.	FC Scriven	16	5	6	5	-7	21
9.	South Stainley F.C.	16	4	7	5	-15	19
10.	Ripley United	16	4	6	6	-15	18

### Fixtures Sunday 28/4/19

SLS United v Ripley Albion  
AFC Farnham v Lingerfield F.C (morning kick-off)  
Lingerfield F.C. v FC Scriven (afternoon kick-off)  
South Stainley F.C. v AFC Farnham (afternoon kick-off)  
Nidd Rangers v Ripley United  
Killinghall United v Brearton Town