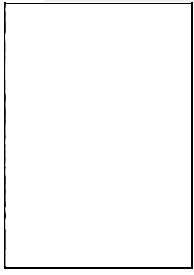




Current Issue



Issue # 180 Nov '07

Be  the ball with
paddypower.com
poker • casino • betting • games

GOONER SHIRTS
T-SHIRTS ONLINE


JDSPORTS.CO.UK
Famous
Sport - Movie - Music Memorabilia
click here▶

NEW
Arsenal
Away Shirt
2007/08
PRE-ORDER
NOW..



Online Exclusive

All (Arsenal) Back To Mine!

Tales of a hospitable San Francisco Gooner when powercuts threaten a live broadcast

By Mark Barbeau

Being an American Gooner presents its own unique challenges. The quizzical looks from people when you tell them you support an English football team, "Uh, you mean, like rugby?" or the derision from American football fans. The advent of the internet and satellite television has of course been a boon, allowing us to see most if not all the matches, keep up-to-date on all the team news, and read the latest Online Gooner (though I still maintain my overseas subscription). Still, telling co-workers you were sitting in a pub at 6am on a weekend morning to watch a sport most of them don't know the first thing about tends to raise more than a few eyebrows.

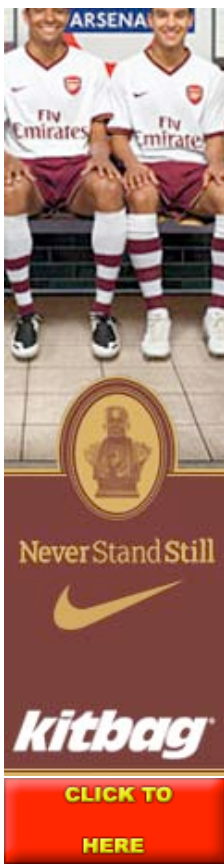


Reading v Arsenal as experienced a few thousand miles west of the Madejski (photo by Andrew Faulkner)

Of course, supporting "by far the greatest team, the world has ever seen" is its own reward. The joys of seeing the young Gunners come of age this season has certainly put a spring in my step lately, though singing, "we are top of the league, we are top of the league" to yourself, makes the person sitting next to you on public transit shift uncomfortably in their seat.

Arsenal America supplies a lifeline for stateside Gooners, providing not only a thriving community of like-minded individuals, but as the Official U.S. Supporters Club of Arsenal FC, offering their members visiting the UK the opportunity to see their team in person. My trips to Highbury and Ashburton Grove remain etched firmly in my memory, as some of the best times of my life.

As the San Francisco Branch Manager, I've been able to organize and meet regularly with a great



**NOVEMBER'S
POSER
CLICK HERE**



group of Bay Area Arsenal supporters. But for me, possibly the greatest reward has been meeting Arsenal supporters visiting San Francisco from all over the world.

I've been able to soak up the memories of folks like Paul Hagen, a third-generation (or was it fourth?) Gooner, with over 40 years following the team, who now resides in Vancouver. I'm proud to say, I've entertained season-ticket holder and regular contributor to The Gooner, Mark Vallis (and his lovely Ginny) on numerous occasions in my own home. At the beginning of December, our local contingent was joined at the pub by visiting season-ticket holder, James Faris, as we cheered the 2-1 victory over Aston Villa.

Then there was the excitement that surrounded the recent Reading match. Season-ticket holder and lifelong Gooner, Robert Dyer and his wife Chris, on holiday in San Francisco, contacted me, seeking advice on a location for watching matches. We arranged to meet at Maggie McGarrys, a pub in the city's North Beach neighborhood, that has become a gathering place for local Arsenal supporters.

However, upon arriving I found the normally stalwart bartender, Patrick in a state of much consternation. The entire neighborhood had been hit by a power outage, the pub and its televisions were dark and the supporters who had turned up were looking quite grim. Many who had turned up for the match had already departed in despair.

So I did what any self-respecting Gooner would do in a time of crisis, I invited everyone in the pub back to my small Nob Hill apartment to watch the match. We piled into taxis, bid the drivers make haste, and the day was saved for the happy few. Many of our group, like Jason, the two Kevins, and Jim Giles, a British journalist, I'd met prior, while some like Rachel Joseph of Kentish Town, going to school in S.F., were complete strangers at the start, and old friends by the end. Such is the wonder of Arsenal.

For anyone in the area, Mark can be contacted via email – info@sfgooner.com

[GOT A COMMENT OR OPINION ON THIS ARTICLE? DISCUSS IT FURTHER HERE](#)

Posted 3rd Jan 2008

[home](#) - [current](#) - [archives](#) - [gallery](#) - [win](#) - [shop](#) - [well played](#) - [laugh](#) - [library](#) - [match view](#) - [forum](#) - [contact](#)