

MEMORABLE MATCHES No. 6

ALTRINCHAM 0

WEALDSTONE 1

Alliance Premier League

14th August 1982

attendance: 1,198

The moment of truth had arrived for rejuvenated Wealdstone.

The Southern League glory-boys, who the previous season had swept all before them to win the Southern League, Shield and Cup, faced up to the side who had at the time been closest to winning acceptance into the Football League in recent times, Altrincham.

The match at Moss Lane would be Stones first league test of the new season and would prove a useful barometer on how Allen Batsford's side would do in their return to the Alliance Premier League.

It was a tough test by any standards, but Stones knew they had a chance with the Alty clearly in a process of rebuilding.

Around 300 Stones fans travelled up to the suburbs of Manchester in great expectation and little could they have foreseen what did occur.

Wealdstone made a triumphant return to the Alliance Premier League with a goal from new signing Mark Graves giving them their first ever win against Altrincham.

Stones showed little respect for the then current FA Trophy finalists' reputation as they took control of the game from the start.

In fact for the first half hour it was all one-way traffic with Ray Goddard a spectator in the Wealdstone goal.

Graves came close to opening the scoring in the 13th minute when he narrowly shot wide and Neil Cordice saw a fine effort saved after he had jinxed past the home defence.



Wealdstone continued to press forward but had to wait until the second half to see the fruits of their labour. The game had barely restarted when a neat pass from Johnson put through Graves who ran through to clinically slot past the Altrincham keeper to send the large travelling support into ecstasy.

Minutes later a similar move saw Johnson on the break but the keeper did well to parry his shot. Johnson was again in the thick of the action seeing a powerful header saved from a Cordice cross.

The home side launched a series of counter-attacks in an attempt to avoid defeat, bringing out a string of fine saves from Goddard. His defence held out determinedly until the final whistle earning their side a well-deserved victory and ovation from the mass ranks of Wealdstone fans.

Ron Smithson