WEALDSTONE v EASTBOURNE
<<<<<<<<<REWIND

40 YEARS AGO

STONES

# The day we took on Udinese in the mud

**Saturday March 26, 1978, Anglo-Italian tournament: Wealdstone 0 Udinese 1**

YOU may remember that three years ago we carried a couple of special Rewinds on this memorable tournament that took place 28 years ago - they are in the Gosport and Weston-Super-Mare 2015 programmes (still available I believe in the Megastore) for those who want a to read a bit more about the Stones' one and only competitive trip overseas.

It was staged on a group basis, with us playing two home games (against Paganese and Udinese, from Italy's Serie C (their top non-League division) and two away, against Reggiana and Arezzo. Paganese were beaten 4-2, and we lost both games in Italy 1-0 and 2-0, but the game everyone remembers is the Lower Mead clash with Udinese.

Partly because the Italians were very, very good (and were in fact promoted to Serie A within two years, and remain one of the country's top-flight clubs); partly because the game was played in a hailstorm that saw referee Tom Bune take the players off the field for five minutes; and partly because it was one of the most spiteful games ever witnessed at our old ground.

Long-time fan Bob Dugard (brother of General Manager Nick), has found some pictures he took that day and they perfectly illustrate the shocking weather and appalling playing surface. I asked George Duck earlier this season what he remembered of the Udinese game and he stated that it would not have been played if it were a league match. "The Italians were only over for a short time so it had to be played that day" he said. "The pitches these days are so much better - mainly because the players don't train on them between matches - whereas in our day they were always mud or sand heaps with hardly any grass after September time. Udinese were tough and non-nonsense, they took no prisoners and man marked us in a way I'd not experienced before. They didn't look at the ball, they just looked at you; holding, pulling, even spitting! But they were a good side too, you could see that. Nobody was surprised that they ended up winning the tournament."

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*Bob Dugard's picture sums up the spiteful contest on the mud-heap that was Lower Mead that rainy March afternoon. Bobby Moss (yellow shirt, left) marches into the fray with the always combative Willie Watson and Steve Brinkman the other Stones players. Below left: George Duck puts pressure on the Italian keeper with Pat Ferry (9) and Moss (7)*

Wealdstone had been invited because of our high-profile that season - along with the other top Southern League sides Bath City, Maidstone, Nuneaton and Mine-head- while Bangor City represented the Northern Premier League. Udinese won the competition easily, only dropping one point in a 2-2 draw at Maidstone, and beating Bath 5-0 in the final on their own ground in June in front of a 15,000 crowd.

**●AN INTERVIEW with Udinese players before they played Liverpool in the Champions League six years ago was all about previous matches against English opponents.**

**And of course they talk about Wealdstone! In particular it is mentioned that after a clash between the Italian keeper and the "Wealdstone centre-forward", a lone Stones' supporter tried to enter the pitch to tell the keeper what he thought of him and that policemen were fortunately on hand to stop him doing just that....**
**(Rumour has it that one of our ex-stewards is the gentleman in question. You'll have to ask Don Cross if he is related - Ed)**

ANARCORD FRIULANO

**Bonora e Leonarduzzi «Che battaglie nelle notti inglesi»**

Gli ex bianconeri rivivono l'anglo-italiano vinto nel '78: la rissa di Della Corna, la parata in rovesciata di Paleari

di Massimo Meroi

Il difensore dell'Udinese Franco Bonora con l'allora presidente Pierro Brunello. In alto, Valentino Leonarduzzi