

Stones eye FA Cup lift

Wealdstone manager Gordon Bartlett believes this weekend's FA Cup second qualifying round tie at home to Concord Rangers will be a welcome respite from their league struggles as they bid to turn their season around.

The Stones remain bottom of the Conference South after their 3-0 home defeat to St Albans City last weekend but Bartlett hopes a break from the league can take the pressure of his side and help them find their form.

Bartlett said: "The cup is always different and it will hopefully give us a bit of respite from the league.

"It will give the players a chance to go into the match with a totally fresh outlook.

"We need to nip our bad run in the bud now and hopefully it will provide a spark in our season."

Wealdstone recently played Concord Rangers and suffered a 4-2 away defeat. Bartlett is very familiar with their opponents and knows their strengths heading into the tie.

He said: "They are a hard working side and we have pitted our wits against them many times over the years.

"They have a siege mentality over there and work really hard as a unit. They're a very strong and determined side and we know that we're going to have to match that to have a chance of overcoming them."

The Stones boss added: "We want to progress but more importantly we want to start winning matches regularly. There is so much frustration around the club but we have to turn it around."

Their latest loss came on Saturday at Grosvenor Vale. Sean Cronin gave John Frendo too much space and the prolific striker fired home from a tight angle.

Lee Clarke doubled St Albans' lead before Frendo wrapped up the points with penalty.

Bartlett said: "We won last Tuesday and were looking to build on it but then we gave



Wealdstone remain bottom of the Conference South after losing at home to St Albans City. Picture: STEVE FOSTER/WEALDSTONE FC

away a silly goal on Saturday.

"For an hour we gave as good we got but the goal knocked the stuffing out of everybody. It was a real body blow but we need to have a better reaction.

"The players need to roll their sleeves up and work hard. We are talking about good players making mistakes."

But the manager has praised the backing

of the fans as they bid to get out of trouble.

He said: "There has been an awful lot of support and backing for the team and I'm confident it will be the same on Saturday.

"But the fact is we are where we are for a reason. I will take the brunt of the criticism but collectively we need to do better. We all need to improve but we will get through this together."

AFC Hornchurch shock Borough

Harrow Borough slumped to a dismal 3-0 home defeat to struggling AFC Hornchurch on Tuesday night in the Ryman Premier Division.

AFC Hornchurch were bottom of the table heading into the match at Earlsmead but the win lifted them off the basement and left the Reds looking over their shoulders following their sixth defeat in eight league matches.

Dave Anderson's side got off to a dreadful start when they conceded after just two minutes.

George Purcell's shot took a big deflection and wrong-footed goalkeeper Charlie Horlock.

The visitors doubled their lead after 25 minutes after a major blunder by the Boro keeper.

Horlock raced out of his goal to the touchline and cleared the ball straight into the path of Purcell leaving him with a simple finish into the unguarded net.

Former Watford and Northern Ireland international winger Michael Bryan made his debut as a substitute at half-time after joining the club this week. The 24-year-old has moved to the Reds after leaving Hampton & Richmond Borough.

But it did not take long for the visitors to kill off the match with their third goal.

Courtney Homans sent in a cross which was bundled past his own keeper by Michael Peacock.

The Reds were awarded a penalty when Lewis Driver was brought down in the area but their night was summed up when Daniel May's effort was fired tamely at Sam Mott.

Substitute Bryan came close with a 20-yard chip which required Mott to tip the ball over the bar while the keeper also made an excellent save to keep out Anthony Maisiat's flick.

There was more positive news last Saturday after Boro claimed a 2-0 home win over Leiston.

All the action came in the final 16 minutes as the Reds left it late to defeat their opponents. The opening goal came when May's delivery picked out Driver and he headed powerfully home from eight yards.

Boro sealed the points when Ryan Hope's header forward released Driver and he kept his composure to chip over the visiting keeper.

The Reds face a break from the league this weekend when they travel to bottom side VCD Athletic in the second qualifying round of the FA Cup.

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