

Borough close in on safety

Harrow Borough manager Steve Baker believes the turning point in their season came after their 6-0 friendly defeat to Hendon in February.

The Reds were thrashed by the Greens six weeks ago but Baker believes the home truths which came out of the defeat sparked their unbeaten nine-game run which has lifted them out of the Ryman Premier Division relegation zone.

Baker said: "After we lost to Hendon we had some very strong words and an open conversation. Even though it was a friendly, it was still embarrassing.

"We spoke to everyone and made it clear that this could not go on. But since then, the reaction from the boys has been absolutely brilliant.

"Everything seems to be right from the team spirit to the attitude and I couldn't fault them."

Boro moved a step closer to avoiding relegation after extending their impressive form with a 3-1 win at AFC Hornchurch.

The Reds have been battling to avoid the drop from the Ryman Premier Division all season but have been transformed under new manager Baker.

Boro have strung three successive wins together and are currently 20th in the table after a superb run which has seen them pick up 15 points from their last seven games.

Baker said: "Taking nine points over the last week has been absolutely massive. It's been unbelievable and with the way other results have gone it's felt like it was worth even more than that."

Their latest victory came at Hornchurch as they moved five

points clear of their third bottom opponents.

It did not go to plan early on though as the home side took the lead after just four minutes.

Kameron English gave away a free-kick 25 yards out and George Purcell drilled his strike past the four-man wall and into the net.

A deserved Boro equaliser arrived five minutes after half time when Hope's cross was flicked on by McCall and English fired a low strike past goalkeeper Sam Mott.

The Reds took the lead after 64 minutes when Lewis Driver netted before Marc Charles-Smith sealed the points with an emphatic finish.

Baker said: "It was probably my most satisfying result since I've been here. The response to going behind was absolutely fantastic and we scored three very good goals.

"The celebrations summed it up with how well it is going for us at the moment."

Boro face a trip to Lewes on Saturday before hosting Met Police on Easter Monday. Baker believes two wins will go a long way to securing their status in the league.

The Reds manager said: "When I came in we were on 25 points and I set a target of 50 points to stay up. If we get two wins and a draw that will put us on that which should be enough.

"Every game is massive for us and if we could get two victories over Easter then we would nearly be safe."

● Wealdstone eased to a 4-2 win at Basingstoke Town in the Conference South on Saturday.

The Stones opened the scoring after just 19 minutes when Wes Parker netted from close range after goal-



Harrow Borough extended their unbeaten run to nine games after victory at AFC Hornchurch.

keeper Stuart Moore parried a header from Daniel Brown.

But Wealdstone conceded a penalty when Parker brought down Liam Enver-Marum in the area and Manny Williams fired past Jonathan North.

Gordon Bartlett's side regained the lead when Ryan Watts set up Luke O'Nien to bundle the ball home.

The Stones extended their advantage when Jefferson Luis raced clear

and finished past Moore.

Lloyd Macklin pulled one back but Wealdstone sealed the points when Tom Hamblin fired home from close range.

The victory leaves them 16th in the table with just four games remaining this season.

Wealdstone travel to Farnborough on Saturday before hosting Ebbsfleet United on Easter Monday.

Smith sets sights on British title

Mitchell Smith followed the most emphatic knockout of his career by stating he is the best featherweight on the British scene, writes *Frank Smith*.

With Lee Selby stepping up to world level, Smith is confident he will be British champion by the end of this year and showed his class with a sixth-round knockout of Antonio Horvatic at York Hall, in Bethnal Green.

The 22-year-old Harrow Weald boxer has won all 11 of his professional fights and is stepping down to featherweight after picking up the English title and WBO European belt at super feather-weight.

And Smith told IFL TV: "I don't do calling out names but I think I can beat any featherweight out there [in Britain]. Yes Lee Selby is at the top and is ready to fight for a world title but below him there is no one I can't beat.

"I would fight (British, European and Commonwealth champion) Josh Warrington in my next fight. I'm not putting the kid down and he is a good fighter but I don't think he will win a world title and I think I will."

Smith controlled proceedings from the start on Friday night and his Croatian opponent did not land a punch of note throughout the contest.

After two rounds where Smith dominated, trainer Jason Rowland instructed his charge to "get rid of this geezer" and that is exactly what he did 35 seconds into round three.

A powerful right was followed by a thunderous left hook to the jaw which appeared to do most of the damage, and another right-left were to come before Horvatic hit the canvas.

The celebrations had to be muted for a minute as Horvatic remained on the canvas but once he returned to his feet, he lifted up Smith in recognition of the devastating finale.

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