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England captain Owen Farrell has been told to work on his tackling style by new head coach Steve Borthwick. Pic: PA

## Farrell told to adjust tackling technique

OWEN Farrell has been told he must adjust his tackle technique after being entrusted with the England captaincy for the Six Nations.

Farrell will complete a reduced three-match ban for a dangerous challenge in time to lead Steve Borthwick's team into their Championship opener against Scotland at Twickenham on February 4. Borthwick has dismissed the controversy generated by Farrell's availability given that the final match of his suspension has been allocated to Saracens' clash with Bristol on January 28, a fixture he would never have played in because of its proximity to the Six Nations.

Instead, England's new head coach has said it is his responsibility to pick the best available players having been given the green light by the Rugby Football Union to use his former Saracens team-mate against Scotland.

But the nature of Farrell's high tackle on Gloucester's Jack Clement is

the latest example of his suspect technique and has not gone unnoticed by Borthwick and his number two Kevin Sinfield, the defence coach.

"Right across the sport we know we need to change. Owen fully accepts he needs to change and is willing to work extremely hard at it," Borthwick said.

"Anybody who worked with me at Leicester will know how hard we went after tackle height. I think for the pair of us, and the coaching team, we believe it's the best way to tackle.

"We will work hard right from day one on tackle height within our squad. We are not shying away from the fact that the game has to change. Our elite players will need to make some adjustments."

England have 19 days until they face a Scotland side they have not beaten at Twickenham since 2017 and Borthwick faces the challenge of rebuilding belief and direction after the troubled autumn that ended Eddie Jones' reign.

With time limited and foundations needing to be laid, the game plan will initially be simplified in the quest to revive fortunes.

"As an England supporter watching those autumn series games I was gutted," Borthwick added.

"The reality is that in the autumn series, when the pressure came on and things went wrong, or got challenged, the team did not have the clarity to move forward and that's a point the players have said to me many times.

"The players need clarity on how they're going to play. They need to have the courage to play to their strengths on the field and fight in every single contest.

"We will make tactical changes, we will improve tactically over a period of time, but fundamentally we need to go out onto that field against a Scotland team coming here with a lot of confidence and we need to fight.

"I'm not going to be a coach who sits

here and starts talking about time, or injuries, or availability. I have got the opportunity to coach the England rugby team.

"I have got some fantastic players who are desperate to do well, desperate to build a team that we can all be proud of."

Borthwick has dropped Billy Vunipola, Jack Nowell and Jonny May, but recalled Dan Cole, who was dropped by England after the 2019 World Cup final following the team's dismal scrummaging performance, and Elliot Daly, frozen out since last year's Six Nations despite his superb form for Saracens.

Daly scored a hat-trick of tries as scintillating Saracens beat Lyon 48-28 in their latest European Champions Cup outing at StoneX Stadium on Saturday.

Alex Lozowski, Marco Riccioni, Andy Christie and Ben Earl also touched down in a third successive group A victory ahead of a trip to Edinburgh on Sunday (5.30pm).

## Wealdstone back at it after break

MAYNARD'S MEN SET FOR HALIFAX TRIP AFTER POSTPONEMENTS



New Wealdstone signing Corie Andrews in action for Colchester.

WEALDSTONE will hope to get their National League campaign back on track at FC Halifax Town on Saturday. Stuart Maynard's men have had a two-week break from action due to the weather, with Tuesday's home game against former Premier League club Oldham Athletic postponed due to a waterlogged pitch at Grosvenor Vale following heavy rain in the early hours of Monday morning.

And that came after their January 10 date with Chesterfield also fell victim to similar conditions.

Striker Corie Andrews has joined the club on an 18-month deal from Torquay United since their 3-1 win over Eastleigh on January 7.

The 25-year-old came through the Crystal Palace academy and had spells at non-league clubs Whyteleafe, Margate and Kingstons before joining AFC Wimbledon.

Andrews went on to play on loan at Aldershot and Colchester United, before joining Torquay and had played 14 times for the Gulls this season.

"We're delighted to get Corie as he's a player we've long admired," said Maynard.

"Corie is eager to learn and improve, so he'll be a big asset to the team and this club."

Stones are also set to visit Yeovil Town on Tuesday (January 24, 7.45pm).

\*Harrow Borough were hoping it was a case of third time lucky against FC Halifax Town last night (Wednesday). Borough's FA Trophy fourth-round tie was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch on Saturday and Tuesday, with the winners set to visit Maidenhead United in the last 16 on February 11. Defender Ezra Ikebuasi was named player of the month for December by the vice president's association, sponsored by Willis Motors.