

SPORT

Read the latest sports news at
harrowtimes.co.uk/sport

FOOTBALL: Postponements delay landmark



Wealdstone boss Stuart Maynard is set to take charge of his 100th match for the club. Pic: Gavin Ellis/TGS Photo

Stones boss Maynard waiting for milestone

FOUR fixture postponements have kept Wealdstone manager Stuart Maynard waiting for his 100th game in charge.

The Stones gaffer was set to take charge of his 100th game for the club earlier this month but the continued postponement of games, due to wet and cold weather, prevented him from reaching his outstanding milestone for the time being.

The National League club were set to face Chesterfield and Oldham Athletic at Grosvenor Vale, but saw those fall victim to waterlogged pitches, before Saturday's trip to Halifax Town was frozen off, followed by the midweek date at Yeovil Town,

By Will Beaman

with the wintry conditions in the UK making countless pitches around the country unplayable.

Having just beaten play-off rivals Eastleigh 3-1 at home before suffering a string of postponed fixtures, Maynard will be hoping his side can carry on their run of good form when the time comes for his 100th game in charge.

Maynard joined the club on the May 21, 2019, initially as an assistant manager to Dean Brennan, and the pair led the club to promotion from the National League South.

And when Brennan left his position in early 2021, Maynard

took on the interim role as manager before being offered the permanent role on March 11, 2021.

Maynard led the club to 16th place last season, the Stones highest league finish in 35 years, and earned himself and assistant manager Matthew Saunders a two-year contract extension on May 12, 2022.

His side currently sit ninth in the National League, just one-point off the play-off places, and his current success in the league has seen him become an early contender for manager of the season, having won 10 and drawn seven of the opening 25 league games.

The attacking brand of football utilised by Maynard has seen his side score 32 goals already this season, and with the recent addition of striker Corie Andrews, who has previously scored a brace at the Vale for Aldershot, the Stones will be hoping to keep the goals flowing as they prepare for a tough second half to the season.

With the next scheduled fixture a home tie against struggling Gateshead, the Stones boss will be praying for sunny skies as he looks to take his side back into the play-off places with another victory this Saturday.

England hit by injuries to Saracens

DALY AND GEORGE WITHDRAWN

ENGLAND'S injury-hit preparations for the Guinness Six Nations Championship have continued, with Elliot Daly and Jamie George the latest casualties. Saracens back Daly has a hamstring injury and his club colleague, hooker George, is suffering from concussion.

Both players have been withdrawn from England squad training, with Bath centre Ollie Lawrence and Newcastle hooker Jamie Blamire called up for Tuesday's session at Twickenham, the Rugby Football Union said.

Northampton forward Courtney Lawes (calf) and Gloucester hooker George McGuigan (knee) are also out of training, with England kicking off their Six Nations campaign against Scotland on February 4. Owen Farrell, meanwhile, insists he has emerged from an uncomfortable period of his career that has seen his build-up to the Six Nations disrupted by the spotlight on his tackle technique.

Farrell will be available against Scotland after completing a three-match ban for a dangerous challenge on Gloucester's Jack Clement earlier this month.

The suspension was reduced from four games after he completed a tackle course and it is the third time England's captain has been sidelined on disciplinary grounds for the same offence.

Adding to the furore was the RFU's insistence that Saracens' clash with Bristol on Saturday could form part of the ban, even though England internationals do not play in the final club game before the Six Nations.

"It's not nice to be in that situation, it's definitely not. Especially in that period when you don't quite know what is happening," Farrell said.

"Whatever decision was made, I would've accepted and made sure I came ready to get on with what's in front of us.

"I've been on the tackle course. It makes you look at what you could do better from the situation you were in in the first place and I've had time to step back and have a look at that and learn from it. It's where the game is going in terms of making itself safer and making sure it's played in the right way."

Farrell was speaking at the Six Nations launch in central London, where Steve Borthwick was appearing for the first time having been appointed England's new head coach.

A dire 2022 brought about the end of Eddie Jones' seven-year reign, leaving Borthwick with a race against time to shape the team into a force for the Calcutta Cup clash.

While Jones revelled in provoking opponents, Borthwick will adopt a different approach shaped by his own experience as an England second row, adding: "I'm not going to play mind games. I'll leave that to other coaches. My strategy is to be very up front."