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FOOTBALL: Successive wins boost hopes



Wealdstone goalkeeper Sam Howes and teammates walk out with mascots before their game against Maidstone United. Image: Jon Taffel

Howes hails Wealdstone for maximum home haul

WEALDSTONE'S Sam Howes said there could be no complaints after picking up a maximum six points from successive National League wins at Grosvenor Vale this week.

A first-half brace from Micah Obiero set them on the way to a 4-0 victory over Altrincham on Saturday, with Corie Andrews and Alex Dyer also on target after their midweek mauling at FC Halifax Town.

And Stuart Maynard's men followed that with a 2-1 triumph over Maidstone United in midweek, which left them five points off a play-off place with a game in hand.

Jack Cook slotted home his fourth goal of the season after just six minutes, with Brooklyn Ilunga crossing for Andrews to double the lead midway

through the first half.

Other chances went begging, before the visitors hit back against the run of play through Josh Shonibare on 51 minutes.

But Howes denied James Alabi with a superb save and Wealdstone had further chances to add to their tally, ahead of the long trip to Torquay United this Saturday.

"It was a bit more of a gritty performance," Howes told the club website.

"First half we popped the ball around, the usual style we've been playing and second half we just needed to grind and get three points.

"If you look at the two performances, Altrincham was a completely different game to this, but we got the three points which is the main thing.

"The gaffer said at the moment it's about picking up the points, so six points in the last two, can't really complain, now we go on to Saturday at Torquay."

Howes was also celebrating after being called into the England C squad to face Wales C at Altrincham on March 21.

Having played for England from under-16 to under-20 level, he added: "It's an honour to be called up to represent your country. I've been fortunate before to have that opportunity at a younger age.

"It shows the good work we're doing here as well. So thankful to the gaffer and Jase [Jason Scannell] as well for the hard work they're putting in and also my teammates.

"The boys are doing a job in front of me, I'm only having to make one or two

saves maximum now, which is fantastic for myself really, believe it or not.

"The boys are all digging in and we're going in the right direction so fingers crossed we can keep it going."

Stones are back at home to host Chesterfield on Tuesday and Howes called for fans to keep up their support.

"Now we need them more than ever. If we're supposed to have a season that's going to be a memorable one, we need everyone on board, like they have been," he added.

"They've been fantastic through the whole season when we've been away or when we've been at home.

"Now we just need that extra 10 per cent from everyone, including us boys, to see where we can end up at the end of the season."

Harrow hit back for a league point

HARROW showed character to come back from another awful start for a 2-2 draw with Tiverton Town on Tuesday.

But they have now gone nine games without a win as they look to get out of trouble in the Southern League Premier South.

Keegan Bloom returned as Anointed Chukwu dropped to the bench, with Shaun Preddie back at centre-back alongside Sonny Hart.

But Jaden Sharman had to make a desperate clearance over his own bar before bringing down a visiting forward in the box for Niall Thompson to convert the penalty.

Preddie made a great tackle on Lucas Vowles and two more crucial blocks, while Dylan Jones shot wide as it looked like the visitors would double their lead. Harrow's first attack saw Billy Leonard's shot blocked from a Kai Omoko Brosnan cross but against the run of play they levelled on 27 minutes, as Bloom sent George Moore away in the inside-right channel and his shot beat the right hand of Oliver Saunders.

Samuel Adenola cleared Tom Purrington's far-post header off the line with Jacob Knightbridge beaten, and Quaine Bartley turned onto Brosnan's pass to put a left-foot shot wide.

Knightbridge then saved Thompson's shot through a crowd of players, before Harrow went ahead on 35 minutes as Moore collected a good ball from Marcel Campbell, cut in from the left and placed a low right-footed shot into the far corner. Tiverton rallied with Thompson's shot blocked and Sharman clearing off the line, before Jones saw a tame shot from the left roll into the corner of the net. Harrow ended the half with Leonard heading just wide from Bloom's left-wing cross, but Knightbridge got in the way of Thompson's shot after the restart.

Campbell drove into the Tivvy box on the left, with Saunders saving his shot with his leg, before Pedro Borges drove across goal from a corner and Knightbridge pushed Thompson's effort behind. Bartley shot wildly across goal before Steve Baker removed him, having already been booked, with Sharman's dangerous curling free-kick just eluding teammates, before Adenola lost the ball and Vowles sent in Thompson and Knightbridge made a fine, brave save.

Campbell shot wide from Chukwu's pass, before Knightbridge palmed away a late Tiverton shot as the points were shared. But after a 2-1 home loss to Merthyr on Saturday, Harrow have taken just five points from eight games and have nine league fixtures left to save themselves.

They make the long trip to Plymouth Parkway, who have climbed well clear of trouble, on March 18 and hope it allows some injuries to heal, to Ezra Ikebuasi and Ahmet Biler in particular, but visit Enfield Town for a Middlesex Senior Cup semi-final on Tuesday.