

WEALDSTONE



official matchday programme £3

HOW THEY LINE-UP TODAY

WEALDSTONE
ROYAL BLUE/WHITE/WHITE

G Dante-Astor BAPTISTE 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
G Marcus DEWHURST 31	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jack COOK 2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charlie BARKER 3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ashley CHARLES 4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alex DYER 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mason BARRETT 6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tarryn ALLARAKHIA 7	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nathan FERGUSON 8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Max KRETZSCHMAR 10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corie ANDREWS 11	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charlie SEAMAN 12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Micah OBIERO 14	<input type="checkbox"/>
Luke DREHER 16	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dominic HUTCHINSON 17	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sam BOWEN 22	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jaydn MUNDLE-SMITH 23	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jaiden BARTOLO 25	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aaron HENRY 26	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sean ADARKWA 27	<input type="checkbox"/>
Declan PHILLIPS 28	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tahvon CAMPBELL 29	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brandon MASON 32	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joe CULLIS 36	<input type="checkbox"/>

GATESHEAD
WHITE & BLACK

1 Eddie BEACH G	<input type="checkbox"/>
37 Rob ELLIOTT G	<input type="checkbox"/>
13 Harrison BOND G	<input type="checkbox"/>
45 Mauro ASIKAOGU G	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Robbie TONKLER	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Regan BOOTY	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Callum WHELAN	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Kenton RICHARDSON	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Louis STOREY	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Tom ALLEN	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 Ed FRANCIS	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Marcus DINANGA	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 Greg OLLEY	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 Ben WORMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>
14 Dajaune BROWN	<input type="checkbox"/>
18 Joe GRAYSON	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 Lirak HASANI	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 Connor MCBRIDE	<input type="checkbox"/>
28 Jack STOTT	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 Mamadou JOBE	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connor PANI	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kieron EVANS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kain ADOM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lewis KNIGHT	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Marcus Carmichael
and Ciaran Barlow

4th Official:

Charlie Bullock

Observer:

Paul Rejer

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To be announced

NEXT HOME GAMES

v Hendon
(Isuzu FA
Challenge
Trophy
5th round)
Tuesday February
20, kick off 7.45pm



v Eastleigh
(National League)
Saturday March 9,
kick off 3pm

or

v Solihull Moors
(Isuzu FA
Challenge
Trophy
6th round)
Sat March 9, 3pm



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Inside: Meet
Deon, the
Stones new
loan Ranger



Wealdstone v Gateshead

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 17, 2024, 3PM
VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE

TODAY'S RESULT

WEALDSTONE GATESHEAD

Main club
sponsor:

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MORE OF THIS TODAY PLEASE! Stones' Charlton Iloaene celebrates his goal in the 2-0 win over Halifax here at The Vale... and after seemingly weeks of postponements let's hope we can get it on this afternoon PICTURE: JON TAFFEL



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WEALDSTONE FOOTBALL CLUB SEASON 2023/2024

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Peter Worby, Quentin Fox, Keith Davies
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Club Secretary & Welfare Officer Paul Fruin (07790 038095)
Company Secretary Andrew Lane

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Welsh

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Matchday Catering Dd's Diner
The Vale Bar & Banqueting Sarah Gowdy
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Boardroom & Hospitality Carol Carter, Lynn Evans

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Commercial Emin Alibey,
Richard Hopwood

MAJOR HONOURS SINCE 1950

LEAGUE TITLES
1951 / 1952 Athenian League
1973 / 1974 Southern League Division One South
1981 / 1982 Southern League Southern Division
1981 / 1982 Southern League Championship
1984 / 1985 National League Premier (Gola League)
1996 / 1997 Isthmian League Division Three
2013 / 2014 Isthmian League Premier Division
2019 / 2020 National League South

NATIONAL CUPS

1965 / 1966 FA Amateur Cup
1984 / 1985 FA Trophy

LEAGUE CUPS

1981 / 1982 Southern League Cup

MIDDLESEX COUNTY CUPS

1958 / 1959 Senior Cup
1962 / 1963 Senior Cup
1964 / 1965 Senior Cup
1967 / 1968 Senior Cup
1984 / 1985 Senior Cup
2003 / 2004 Charity Cup
2010 / 2011 Charity Cup

NON TITLE-WINNING PROMOTIONS

1997 / 1998 Isthmian League Division 2 (3rd)
1998 / 1999 Isthmian League Division 1 (3rd,annulled)
2003 / 2004 Isthmian League Premier Division

The legal name of Wealdstone
Football Club is Wealdstone
Football Club (2000) Ltd
(Registered Number 03953962).
Shares in excess of 10% are
held by Peter Marsden Property
Finance Ltd & Wealdstone FC
Supporters Club

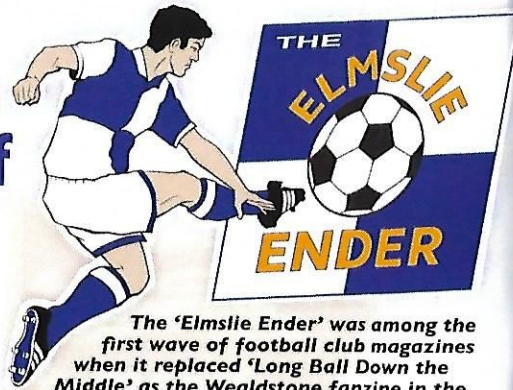
GROUND REGULATIONS

- People are only allowed entry to The Vale on match days subject to the following rules and regulations:
- 1) The club reserves the right to eject from the ground any person who is considered to have committed any of the following acts:
 - Entering the ground through any means other than through the turnstiles or entrances
 - Entering the field of play before, during or after a game without prior authorisation
 - Being drunk, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs
 - Carrying items which may be considered a danger to others, including cans, bottles, or glasses containing alcoholic beverages
 - Throwing any article onto the field of play
 - Climbing floodlight pylons, fences, stands or any structure or building
 - Using obscene or bad language likely to cause offence to others
 - Hitting the side or back panels of the Bulla stand
 - 2) No spectator ball games.
 - 3) The consumption of alcoholic drinks is permitted INSIDE the social club bar, garden and boardroom areas.
 - 4) Vehicles parked on the Grosvenor Vale site are at the owners' risk.
 - 5) Wealdstone Football Club supports the FA's campaign on pyrotechnics (e.g. flares and smoke bombs). Any misuse of such items in and around the Ground will result in those responsible being asked to leave the ground and, in line with football authority guidance, may result in a report to the Police, potential prosecution and a ban from the Club of up to three years.
 - 6) No Smoking or Vaping inside the ground.

Wealdstone FC Board of Directors

Britain's longest-running fanzine column (and it shows it)

Real supporters stick it out to the bitter end, even if it means seeing Matt Ball score the winning goal for Biggleswade



The 'Elmslie Ender' was among the first wave of football club magazines when it replaced 'Long Ball Down the Middle' as the Wealdstone fanzine in the mid-1980s. LBDTM's forerunner 'Wealdstone Whispers' was famously the THE very first football fanzine in Britain when it was published in 1971.



BY MARTIN LACEY
FOOTAGE of West Ham fans (below) leaving the London Stadium in their droves at half time just because they were 4-0 down to Arsenal had me bemoaning the state of modern football fandom.

In a previous column I have stated my distaste for leaving a match, any match, before the final whistle, and my enduring sense of shame about the rare occasions - three in over fifty years - that I have done so myself. As far as I'm concerned you are not a supporter if you only want to stick around for the glory and the triumphs, if you only, as they say, sing when you're winning.

On the contrary, you really need to embrace the disappointments and disasters to fully appreciate the high points. Real supporters will stick it out to the bitter end every time.

So yes, the FA Trophy means that glorious day in Cambridge, it means Britt Assombalonga, Chris O'Leary's bullet header against Dartford, Sean Cronin keeping a clean sheet in goal at Brackley, and

of course Wembley. It also means Finchley (even before they amalgamated with Wingate FC), Needham Market and Biggleswade.

Biggleswade, you remember, is just one entry in the not insubstantial annals of Wealdstone's ignominious cup exits, made worse because the winning goal on that wet, very wet, and miserable, thoroughly miserable, afternoon was scored by one of our own exes, Matt Ball.

Here I would like to buck the trend by saying I wholeheartedly disapprove of players who *don't* celebrate when they score against a former club. When did we all go so soft and get so sensitive and easily offended? Alright, if you score against your boyhood club, that you've supported all your life, you might have an excuse for

being slightly circumspect in your response. But let's be honest. 'Professional footballers' and 'loyalty' are almost by definition polar opposites.

'Loyalty' for a footballer should mean one thing: you give 100% for the club that's paying your wages. Do that and when you move on we all understand and you go with our best wishes. For those who still haven't forgiven George Duck for ending up at

Harrow Borough, first look what he did for us.

Matt Ball was a player who never really lived up to his billing in a Stones shirt and had probably found his level at Biggleswade. And I

admit, when he ran the full length of the pitch to do a kneeslide through the mud right in front of the Wealdstone supporters (and I hear all these years on the Biggleswade groundsman is still trying to fill in those gouges in the turf) I was quite possibly in the forefront of the potential lynch mob giving it back to him over the fence.

But in a sober moment you knew he'd done exactly the right thing. We'd been giving him grief all afternoon and he'd given it back to us six times over in exactly the way a footballer should. If you don't celebrate when you score against a former club, you're cheating the fans that are paying your wages now. Matt Ball, I applaud you.

If you've noticed these substitute Elmslie Ender columns (which the editors sometimes request in moments of desperation) are slightly short on topical and up-to-the-minute commentary it's because this season I have become even more of a part-time supporter than usual.

My exile hasn't really been intentional: the run of bad luck started with our match at Kidderminster on October 6. I had my match ticket, train booked, I was even intending to get there early enough to do a round trip on the Severn Valley Railway before enjoying a pint or three in the station pub. Train, beer, football... and Wealdstone FC. Not quite a religion, but certainly a way of life to aspire to.

Yes, I am a cliché and I don't care (to almost quote the great Poly Styrene...) Sadly I woke up on the Saturday morning feeling decidedly under the weather and train, beer, football was replaced by ambulance, painkillers and the purgatory that is NHS Accident and Emergency, and, sparing you the unpleasant medical details, for the next month I was not fit enough to travel to The Vale or anywhere else. Then I missed a few matches due to work and family commitments and by December, when I finally had the opportunity to get to a couple of matches, Billericay in the Trophy, Southend away, the weather stepped in. I made a round trip of over three hundred miles for the home game with Southend which was called off an hour before kick off, and I



Matt Ball (green) chases the already-forgotten Stones pair of Samzadeh and Kowalkowski in the Biggleswade mud. Picture: STEVE FOSTER

bought a ticket for Rochdale away thirty minutes before the announcement it was frozen off.

On the latter occasion I stayed home and watched Arsenal v Crystal Palace on TNT Sport. The commentator mentioned Arsenal's mid-season break in Dubai so many times I have not the slightest doubt he was expecting a free holiday and handsome backhanders from the tourist board. Curiously I don't think he mentioned whether or where Crystal Palace had taken a mid-season break. Probably Centerparcs.

Even more bizarrely, after Arsenal scored two first half goals from corners he repeatedly mentioned what a brilliant job their set piece coach - who knew such a thing existed? - was doing, especially during their mid-season break in Dubai. I wonder how much they pay the set piece coach to say, 'Look lads, if we get a corner, lob it into the box and somebody try and get their head on the end.' Despite my fifty-three years watching

Wealdstone, or possibly because of my fifty-three years watching Wealdstone, I don't pretend to know much about football, but that's one job I'm applying for. 'If we get a free kick close to the edge of the box, try to score a goal by kicking the ball over or round their wall.' There, I've nailed it.

'If we get a freekick close to the edge of the box, kick the ball over or around the wall to score. There, I've nailed it'

Anyway, I finally got to see Wealdstone kick a ball for the first time in over four months when we beat Halifax here at the Vale; but just to complete the jigsaw of why I've been an absentee fan, and in the hope of getting free tickets on Emirates for my

next trip, I would like to announce that, like Arsenal, I took a midwinter break in Dubai. What a lovely place! Well, I know, any lingering sympathy you had for me has just gone out of the window.

Actually, since my daughter moved there a few years back I try to take a midwinter break every year, also where possible a midsummer break, a mid-spring break and a mid-autumn break. It's possible these breaks will eventually merge, whereupon I will become even more long-distance and part-time than I am now.

I will still be Wealdstone 'til I die, and, rest assured, both these eventualities are some way off.

Below: the iconic Elmslie Stand at the Stones' former ground, Lower Mead in Harrow





THE STONES INTERVIEW BY TIM PARKS

ten minutes with...

DEON WOODMAN

DEON Woodman really was thrown in the deep end of that very wet pitch when he came on just before halftime against Maidenhead after Jack Cook's sending-off.

The just-turned-21-year-old, on loan at the Vale from Queens Park Rangers, hadn't realised at first that the Stones skipper had just been shown a second yellow card.

"It was strange" he said. "When I realised that he'd just been shown the red card I thought *sugar!*"

"I hadn't been involved in the game at Barnet a few days before, when I stayed on the bench, but now I had to step in for what was clearly going to be a very tough game.

"I knew we were going to be under a lot of pressure and just two minutes into the second half I caught an elbow in my face."

I was commentating on the game up in the gantry and said to Stones 'midfielder Luke Dreher (on co-comms): "Welcome to men's football Deon!"

Deon said: "Yes exactly! I knew it was going to

be hard to get on and do anything, but we defended well and just that one mistake cost us a point."

It wasn't the 6ft 5in defender's first taste of National League football though, as he spent March onwards of last season on loan at Dulwich Hamlet.

"I loved it there, it's a great community club and I played in every game.

"We were playing Tuesday and Fridays every week at Dulwich so I'm used to lots of matches in a short space of time... although not for months on end which could be the case here at Wealdstone."

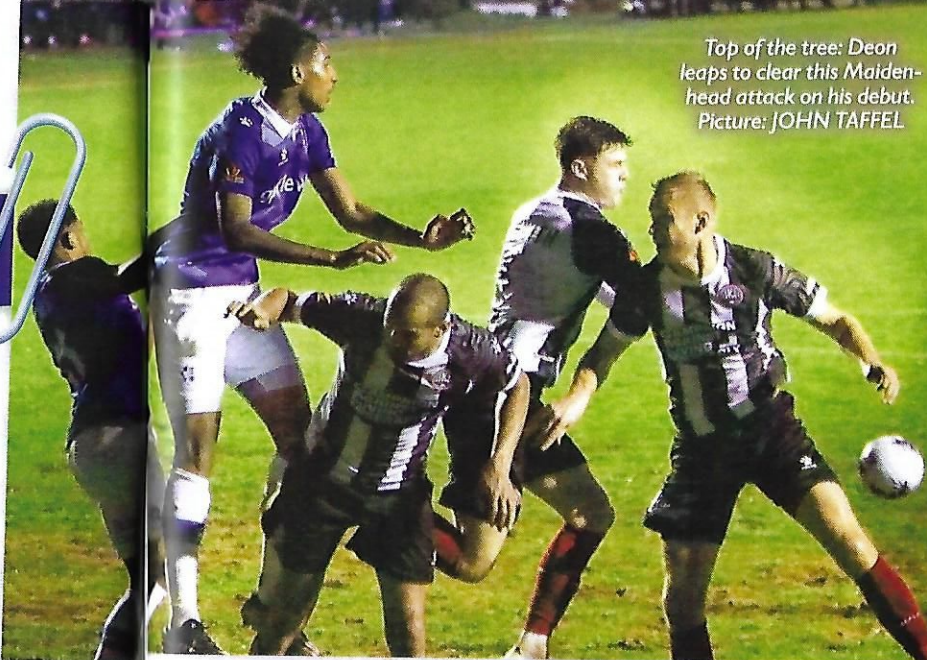
When I spoke to Deon the Stones had just had the FA Trophy match with Hendon postponed - and so he instead had to settle for a training session at Harefield.

"It was a good session" he said. "We did exercises on playing out from the back with Coxy (Sam Cox) and the way we play the game suits me. We also trained at attacking from dead ball situations and we talked about what went wrong, a tidy up from the Maidenhead game".

"So what has been your greatest experience in football so far?" I asked him.

"Well, I think it was when I was at Crystal Palace in the under-16 team and we played a pre-season match at Anfield against Liverpool...and I managed to score a goal, meeting a free kick from the right and seeing my header fly in!"

Deon grew up in Feltham, West London, and began his



Top of the tree: Deon leaps to clear this Maidenhead attack on his debut. Picture: JOHN TAFFEL



"Since then I was in and around the first team - but then I was injured in an under-23s game in August and was out for three months with ankle ligament injuries on both legs in that same game - I ruptured one ligament and had two tears in the other.

"It wasn't until November that I was fully fit again, otherwise I'd have gone out on loan

youth career at Crystal Palace, but he struggled to establish himself with the regimented youth system there and went out on a youth loan to QPR to continue his development.

"I signed for Palace as a scholar, but it was quite tough because I came in late, and everyone already had their scholarships, so I only had three months to perform and earn mine.

"I'd gone from playing as a striker, to a No.4, and then Palace wanted to try me at centre-back. From then, I had three months to learn the position and get my scholarship. It's crazy."

He started off as a striker having grown massively at the age of 15 - then I was converted to a holding midfielder "until I played that one game at centre back and loved it!"

It was the move to Loftus Road that kick-started his career and last summer he played several pre-season first team games for Rangers at Wimbledon, Reading, in Austria at a summer tournament, and at Bedford Town.

much earlier... But I'm delighted to be here at Wealdstone."

Deon now lives at his auntie's house in Brentford, very local for both the Vale and QPR and his dad Robert (despite knowing very little about the game, according to Deon!) came to watch both the Barnet and Maidenhead matches proudly from the touchline

Deon's ambition now is to get more experience in the men's game and fight his way into the experienced Rangers squad - despite competition from men like Steve Cook, Jimmy Dunne, Jake Clarke-Salter, Morgan Fox and Reggie Cannon the US International.

Not an easy task!

He is also keen to improve his record in cup competitions having twice reached the quarter-finals of the under-23s Premier League Cup with Queens Park Rangers... only to lose to Fulham and then West Bromwich in successive

years.

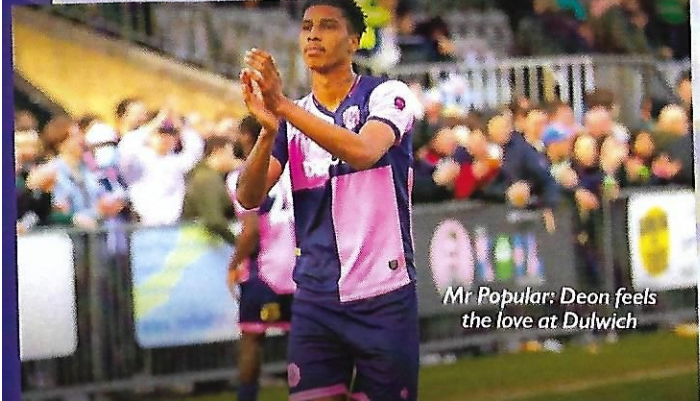
"That's why I am desperate for us to beat Hendon and then make a mark in the FA Trophy. Winning it seems achievable and I'm excited for the live draw tomorrow".



Deon (left) in action v AFC Wimbledon in pre-season

Deon's the big man for the big job: Stones' loan Ranger on his unexpected debut..and that goal at Anfield!

Mr Popular: Deon feels the love at Dulwich



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WFCSC Update

Tony Booth



When it comes to writing these notes, the only place I could possibly start is with our trip to The Hive. To take over 900 fans to Barnet and snatch an equaliser ten minutes into added time will go down as one of the highlights of the season. The away end was roaring from the first whistle until the last, and certainly made for a day I will never forget.

All in all, it's been a busy couple of weeks for the club. The Stones are under new management, with David Noble taking the helm from a departing Stuart Maynard. Coming in mid-way through the season, it has already been a lively start. Nothing makes for a better show of this than his first game against Aldershot. A breathless encounter that ended 3-3, it also allowed us to welcome Phillip Arnold and Peter Coffey, the winners of our December hospitality draw. After the original date got postponed, it was a pleasure to invite them and their guests into the Captain's Lounge.

At the time of writing, we are just preparing to host Hendon in the FA Trophy (still preparing!..Ed).

In the sport of football, there is always something particularly gripping about a cup run. With each win you find your hopes starting to snowball, whispers of "what if" start to grow louder. Whilst the weather may threaten to play spoilsport, spirits will not be dampened. There is a real sense of anticipation around this fixture, which promises to entertain whenever it may be played. A proper cup run is something to cherish, and a win in the fifth

round would go some way to making this into a reality.

For now though I want to extend a warm welcome to our visitors from Gateshead after a long journey down from the banks of the River Tyne. Hopefully we can make it worth it with football and warm hospitality alike.

But the action does not stop there. After a sold out night of Ska and 2 Tone at The Vale on the 3rd February, we have plenty more on offer. For 'A Disco Night of Motown, Soul, and Northern Soul', come down on Saturday 9th March (tickets are £7.50 purchased in advance). If the music of a certain Manchester-based band is more to your tastes, don't miss 'Oasiz' on Saturday 6th April (tickets £15 in advance). For both events, tickets can be bought at the bar or from James on **0797979 5414**.

As expected, this is looking like a popular trip but we do still have some coach seats available for our upcoming trip to Rochdale on Tuesday 27th February. Seats are an affordable £35 for Adults and £15 for U16s with departure from the Vale at 2:00pm. With train travel being problematic for this trip, the coach offers a great alternative. Seats can be booked online at

<https://www.wfcsc.demoed.co.uk>

With a new manager and plenty of football coming up, there is plenty to look forward to for Wealdstone FC. Let's get behind the team, make some noise, and push hard in the second half of the season.

Tony



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All you need to know about... Gateshead FC

Opposition in focus



The original Gateshead AFC was formed in 1930 when neighbours South Shields – members of the Football League's old Third Division North – moved to Gateshead because of financial difficulties

The newly formed "Tynesiders" almost capitalised immediately on their good fortune when only Lincoln City's superior goal average denied them promotion to the second division in just their second season of League football. However, it was to be the FA Cup that was to provide the club with its finest hour when cup fever gripped the Tyneside town in 1953. After accounting for Liverpool in the Third Round, Gateshead progressed to the quarter-final only for their Wembley aspirations to be denied by a single Nat Lofthouse goal for eventual finalists Bolton Wanderers. A sell-out Redhough Park crowd of 17,692 had witnessed the spectacle, but within five years the North Easterners were founder members of the newly formed Fourth Division after they missed the cut for the Third Division by just one point.

Despite an average placing of ninth in 21 Third Division North campaigns – interrupted by the Second World War – two years after the introduction of the Fourth Division came Gateshead's shock dismissal from the Football League. The club had applied for re-election only once before in a relatively successful 30-year period, but were unceremoniously cast aside in favour of the more geographically favourable Peterborough United in 1960. Gateshead had finished third-bottom with both Oldham Athletic and Hartlepool United below them, but polled only 18 votes and were unjustly voted out of the League. An unsuccessful bid to join the Scottish Football League was followed by a brief spell in the Northern Counties League and then six years in North Regional League.

In 1968, Gateshead became founder members of the Northern Premier League, but their stay in the new competition lasted only two years. Their place was, ironically, taken by another demoted Football League outfit, Bradford Park Avenue, and Gateshead were forced to replace their own reserve side in the Wearside League.

Finishing as runners-up, the Tynesiders then had two seasons in the Midland League until – in 1973,

seven leagues and 43 years after its inception – Gateshead AFC ceased to exist.

A new club called Gateshead Town played the following season in the local Northern Combination League but, astonishingly, history was soon to repeat itself. South Shields, then members of the Northern Premier League, sold their Simonside headquarters and moved to a new home at Gateshead Stadium.

Renamed Gateshead United, the club soon became a force in the Northern Premier League. However, in 1977 – after only three years of operation – came the shock announcement that United were to disband. It looked like the end of senior football in the town until another phoenix, this time in the form of the current Gateshead FC, rose from the ashes in 1977. Replacing Gateshead United in the Northern Premier League for the 1977-78 season, the new club won the title in 1983 with a record 100 points and 114 goals. After two years in the Conference,

the Tynesiders returned to the Northern Premier League and were crowned champions for the second time in 1986. Their second spell in the Conference lasted just one season, though they were quick to bounce back, and reclaimed their place at the top table of non-league football in 1990.

A productive period ended in 1998 when the club was relegated back to the Northern Premier League after eight consecutive seasons of Conference football.

The Heed's very existence was then threatened early in the new millennium when long-time sponsors Cameron Hall Developments pulled out. Relegation to the Northern Premier League First Division followed but, after one season, Gateshead were back in the top-tier of the NPL following the introduction of a geographically split First Division. The future for a club with a proud, if somewhat chequered, past took a turn for the better when wealthy Gateshead-born businessman, Graham Wood, took over in 2006.

Gateshead finished third in the renamed UniBond Premier Division in 2008 & seeing off Buxton in the play-off final. Back-to-back promotions were achieved when the rejuvenated Tynesiders claimed the runners-up spot in the Conference North and then overcame AFC Telford United in the Conference North play-off final.



Gateshead marked the 50th anniversary of their harsh expulsion from the Football League by again becoming a full-time professional club in 2010.

The 2013 campaign, however, saw chronic pitch problems at the International Stadium, which resulted in half of the club's home games being staged away from Tyneside. The following year, however, Gateshead recorded their highest placing in English football since their Football League days and made it to Wembley for the first time in their history. The Heed finished third. Hopes of reclaiming their League status were quashed, however, as Gary Mills' side were edged out by Cambridge United.

After ending the 2014 season in tenth-place, Mills departed for Conference rivals Wrexham before Wood's total shareholding was acquired by Consett-

based business duo Richard and Julie Bennett. Former Sunderland manager Malcolm Crosby was sworn in to replace Mills, but – despite a promising start – the 61-year-old was sacked after less than six months in the role. Crosby's replacement was ex-FC Halifax Town boss Neil Aspin, himself born and bred in the Tyneside town. Under Aspin, the Heed finished ninth in the renamed Vanarama National League, while they also made another appearance in the quarter-finals of the FA Trophy.

An encouraging start to the 2017/18 campaign saw Aspin's Gateshead keep five clean sheets in their opening seven matches and occupy a play-off place before gradually sliding down the table with just one win in nine. With the Heed sitting in 15th position in the National League, manager Neil Aspin opted to join his former side Port Vale in League Two, bringing assistant manager Lee Nogan along with him. Under-19s head coach Micky Cummins took charge on a caretaker basis before former Newcastle United, Aston Villa and

Everton star Steve Watson was named as Aspin's successor. The highlight of the 2017/18 season was undoubtedly their remarkable FA Trophy run which saw them see off National League opposition in every round en route to the semi-final.

The Tynesiders missed out on a second Wembley trip when they were beaten by Bromley over two legs but still equalled their best ever finish in the competition.

In April 2018, owners Richard and Julie Bennett confirmed their intention to sell the club after three years in charge. They agreed a deal with an overseas consortium the following month but that later collapsed. Gateshead remained up for sale until just over a week before the start of the 2018/19 National League season when Hong Kong based

businessman Dr Ranjan Varghese completed his takeover of the club with Michael Williams taking over as operations director. Gateshead were taken over once more in the summer of 2019, this time by a fan-led consortium with Neil Pinkerton and Trevor Clark installed as club owners. That wouldn't prove enough to save the club's National League status however, with the Heed demoted to the National League North for the first time in 10 years as a result of the prior season's financial situation.

Mike Williamson and Ian Watson returned to the club as player/manager & prior to the COVID-19 pandemic that ground football to a halt, we found ourselves two points outside of the play-offs with games in hand on those above us following an 11-game unbeaten run.

The 2021/22 season proved a historic one for Williamson's men, who defied 20/1 odds to become Vanarama National League North champions and return to the National League three years after their demotion.

ALL TIME

P 9 W 4 D 3 L 2 F 17 A 11
LAST SEASON

SAT 28TH JAN 2023 (H) L 1-2

SAT 22ND AUG 2022 (A) W 0-1

Gateshead FC Greatest Seasons CLASSIC CAMPAIGNS

1949/50

Gateshead finished Third Division (North) runners-up in 1949/50. They kicked off with a 3-1 win at Rochdale, then Ernie Passmore netted four goals in a 7-1 demolition of Halifax, a hat-trick against Chester and five in a 5-3 victory at Hartlepool. But Gateshead slipped from top to mid-table before a 3-2 win at Darlington on Boxing Day sparked an improvement. They gained two consecutive 5-1 wins over York City and Tranmere, then a 5-0 victory over Accrington in mid-March heralded seven successive wins. George Wilbert was leading marksman and Johnny Ingham ever-present as Gateshead finished just two points behind champions Doncaster Rovers.

1952/53

Gateshead reached the FA Cup sixth round for the only time in 1952/53. Bill Tulip's side beat Crewe Alexandra and Bradford PA before Ian Winters' goal clinched an epic 1-0 third round win at home to Liverpool, then won at Hull City and Plymouth before losing 1-0 to eventual finalists Bolton watched by 17,692 at Redheugh Park. Gateshead were the North-East's last survivors in the FA Cup that season. George Wilbert was top scorer and the two Callander brothers, Jack and Tom, both ever-present as Gateshead finished a disappointing ninth in the Third Division (North) despite hammering Crewe 6-1 and slamming five goals past Darlington and Accrington.

1982/83

Gateshead won the Northern Premier League title with a club record 100 points in 1982/83. Ray Wilkie's side included skipper Terry Hibbitt, goalkeeper 'Player of the Year' Kenny Dodds, Steve Higgins, Gordon Hindson, Kevin Pugh and strikers Jim Pearson and Bob Topping who scored 47 of Gateshead's 114 Northern



52/53 FA Cup 6th Round and Gateshead lose to eventual finalists Bolton

Football historian LEIGH EDWARDS selects ten post-war Gateshead FC 'Classic Campaigns'.

Premier League goals between them. Gateshead trounced Netherfield 8-0, both Goole and Worksop 6-0 and Matlock, Oswestry and Tamworth 5-0. They emerged from the pack around Christmas when they started catching up with the games in hand and finished 16 points clear of runners-up Mossley, losing just once at home, 2-1 to Chorley.

1985/86

Gateshead were Northern Premier League champions in 1985/86. They began with a 2-0 win at Witton and lost just one of their first ten games. Injury and loss of form caused a mid-season slump during which they suffered their only two home defeats, against Macclesfield and Workington. They were rocked when chairman/manager Ray Wilkie quit in March to take charge of Barrow but, inspired by Ian Donaldson, Gateshead lost just three of their last 17 games, gaining a 4-2 win at home to Morecambe. They pipped Marine to the title with a 3-2 victory at Rhyl in their final match. Keith McNall was top scorer with 23 goals, while Simon Smith was ever-present.

1989/90

Gateshead went close to the Northern Premier League 'double' in 1989/90. Despite an early 3-2 victory over eventual champions Colne Dynamos, Dave Parnaby's side were just above mid-table at Christmas, but won 11 of their last 15 games, losing just once. They finished runners-up after a 3-1 win at South Liverpool on the final day and regained Conference status after Colne were denied promotion by ground grading. Gateshead were also League Cup finalists for the first time but lost 1-0 to Hyde United at Maine Road. Simon Smith and Gary Hays were ever-present, while other key players included Derek Bell, Paul Doolan, Bobby Hulse and Keith McNall,



2007/08

Gateshead won the Northern Premier League play-off final in 2007/08. Ian Bogie's side began with six straight wins and remained in the leading pack throughout the season, despite three successive defeats, completing the 'double' over eventual champions Fleetwood Town. They finished third behind Fleetwood and Witton Albion after winning nine of their last ten unbeaten matches, scoring 29 goals and conceding just two in the process. Gateshead beat Eastwood Town 4-1 in the play-off semi-final, then clinched promotion with a 2-0 play-off final victory over Buxton. Leading marksman Graeme Armstrong and David Southern netted 39 goals between them.

2008/09

Gateshead won the Conference North play-off final in 2008/09. The Tynesiders were mid-table before Lee Novak's four-minute hat-trick in a 5-2 victory at Hyde United in early November sparked a marvellous run of 14 wins in 17 games. They trounced Hyde 6-3, Tamworth 5-1 and Hinckley United 5-1 and were top at the start of March but finished runners-up, five points behind Tamworth, after losing three of their last nine matches. Ian Bogie's side defeated Southport 2-1 on aggregate in the play-off semi-final, then secured promotion with a 1-0 play-off final win over Telford United. Top scorer Lee Novak and Graeme Armstrong netted 48 goals overall.

2013/14

Gateshead reached the Conference National play-off final in 2013/14. The Tynesiders lost their opening four matches and Gary Mills replaced Anthony Smith as manager in early September. They climbed the table with just two defeats in 11 games and took Oxford United to an FA Cup first round replay.

Gateshead lost only twice after Christmas and qualified for the play-offs in third place. They beat Grimsby Town 4-2 in the semi-finals, with late goals from James Marwood and JJ O'Donnell in the second-leg, but lost 2-1 to Cambridge United in the Wembley final. Marcus Maddison joined Peterborough United for a club record £250,000 that summer.

2021/22

Gateshead stormed to the Conference North title in 2021/22. They won 29 of their 42 games and lost only twice at home under player-boss Mike Williamson. Leading marksman Macaulay Langstaff and Cedwyn Scott netted 52 goals between them as Gateshead were the highest scorers with 99 goals. The Tynesiders gained 94 points, finishing seven ahead of runners-up Brackley Town. They beat Bradford (Park Avenue) 6-2, Runcorn Linnets 3-2, Marske United 3-2 after a 0-0 draw and Altrincham 3-2 after a 2-2 draw to reach the FA Cup second round proper, losing 2-0 to Charlton Athletic in a televised match watched by 3,746 at the International Stadium.

2022/23

Gateshead reached the FA Trophy final for the first time in 2022/23. Mike Williamson's side beat Gloucester City 5-1, Oldham Athletic 3-1, Banbury United 1-0, Farsley Celtic 4-2 on penalties after a 0-0 draw and Barnet 4-1 on penalties after a 3-3 draw to reach the FA Trophy final. The following team lost 1-0 to FC Halifax Town at Wembley Stadium: James Montgomery, Robbie Tinkler, Kenton Richardson (Will Harris), Louis Storey, Carl Magnay, Kamil Conteh, Owen Bailey, Greg Olley, Adam Campbell, Dan Ward, Aaron Martin (Oli Thompson). The Tynesiders finished a lowly 14th in the Conference National despite winning eight of their final 11 games.



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Martin Read's original take on this beautiful game

the world of ball



Introducing blue cards but still having VAR? Behave



"How does it feel, to treat us like you do? When you're selling us 'Blue cards' now, and you've taken it too far?"

Yes, it was a very Blue Monday indeed when they announced the idea of a new kind of referee's card for fouls and dissent; a way of keeping discipline on

the pitch, supposedly. And you know what? Initially I quite liked the idea of this blue card and ten minutes of associated sin bin for offending players. After all, other sports use one; and having just seen the majority of one game ruined for spectators by an ill judged early red card - you can probably guess which - the idea of giving referees a less game-changing weapon seemed a sound one.

The problem, of course, is interpretation. Interpretation is what sustains football's landfill phone-ins and pump primes football's gigantic, ever-revolving 'who's he / she again?' pundit economy. God knows I can tune in for an hour's televised highlights and spend half of it screaming 'put the next game on, you utter melons' as Stephen Warnock or is it Micah Richards or please not Roy Keane babbles on and on. Myriad levels of interpretation is fine inasmuch as it keeps the wolves from those poor pundits' doors and affords our public service broadcaster endless hours of the cheapest possible content, but it's fatal for those tasked with the actual bloody decision making out there on the pitch.

To be fair, it's likely that most of the negative reaction we've seen to the blue card concept is a result of the now thoroughly reviled VAR and, to per-

haps a lesser extent, the borderline surreal interpretations of whatever the handball rule happens to be on any given afternoon. Admittedly, these two issues of interpretation are most dramatically amplified at the top level of the game, with referees' trial by television having ruined the traditional flow of games. But so toxic has the conversation become around the sheer range of interpretations in these two areas that any more tinkering with football's format, at whatever level, just comes across as another splurge of arrogant job justification from the people in charge of the game. Hence the out-of-hand dismissal of those suggesting blue cards as much as the blue cards themselves.

Blue isn't the colour

There has, however, been much excellent coverage of the potential for this idea in the excellent Non-League Paper (the very existence of which in 2024 seems, by the way, like some kind of modern miracle). This is because sin bins have been an experiment down at Steps 5 and 6 for some time now. The NLP reports various opinions (ominous in itself) about

the success of the idea, with some saying the threat of a player being temporarily sidelined has indeed cut down on dissent, but others moaning about how refs at that level simply can't be bothered and just hand out the yellows as per usual. You can see the issue here. A recurring theme is that at Steps 5 and 6 the ref and Linos have more

than enough on their plate without having managers spitting in their face to indicate the ten minute sin bin shouldn't have been given, the ten minute sin-bin is surely over by now, or the ten minute sin-bin should have been given to an opposition player, not theirs. At a more senior level, the experiment would have had more people involved to scrutinise the decisions made, for good or ill. But at Step 5? Most refs just want as easy a life as is possible, given how little support they have. One inter-



viewee equated the lack of interest in enforcing the sin bins to the lack of interest in enforcing the six second rule for goalkeepers holding the ball. That one's particularly damning because, yes, whenever is that enforced at any level these days?

Cardy yak event

So here's where your World of Ball column continues with a studied critique of the blue card proposal, taking a forensic, academic analysis of the scheme's potential and pitfalls. Or actually... does it? Does it instead throw out some more outlandish rule change nonsense, in fact going the full Infantino and suggesting a whole rainbow of cards that could be placed in the poor referee's pocket? Well then, let's take a quick look.

White card

For anyone cupping their ears to the opposing fans or in fact doing anything needlessly to rile the opposition and their fans. Two white cards would oblige the referee to show the offending player a 'whatevs' sign with their hands to indicate he or she has to leave the field of play and sit next to an opposition fan for ten minutes before Interpretation is what sustains football's landfill phone-ins and pump primes football's gigantic, ever-revolving 'who's he / she again?' pundit economy, being allowed to return to the field.

Green card

For overly dramatic histrionics in pursuit of a supposed foul or perceived injustice. Any player deemed by the ref to have exceeded standard norms by staring madly into his or her face with splayed hands on their foreheads in apparent absolute shock at what in fact was the most obvious of fouls will get a green. Punishment? Hands tied behind their back for the remainder of the game. They'll be safe from any hint of handball, at least. (Although, as per a few paragraphs back, you never really know these days...)

Above: Why stop at blue? There's an entire spectrum out there. Below left: it's only ever referees who 'brandish' things, isn't it? And the only things ever 'brandished' are cards



Black card

This one would be for any player skewing a free kick so badly that the ball a) needs retrieving from someone's garden, b) needs the ball to be recovered from behind a stand, or c) hits a three week old baby. Two black cards and the manager is obliged to substitute you.

Purple card

Shown for a goal celebration that is so flamboyant, so overly exuberant, so obviously rehearsed and so dramatically performed that you question whether the player in question is in the wrong profession. Player

is punished by being forced to look at themselves in a mirror for ten minutes before returning to the field of play.

All complete nonsense, you say? Well yes, of course it is. But I remind you that we've had experiments in the past including 'kick-ins' instead of throw-ins, something with a vague hint of sense to it that, in practice, was the stuff of football nightmares that would have changed the game entirely. Who's to say that something as ridiculous on the surface as a green card might just be the leap forward in football discipline we've all been craving? Just let's not suggest it yet. Not until VAR has been expunged from the face of the earth.

"Interpretation sustains football's landfill phone-ins and pump primes it gigantic pundit economy"

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TIM PARKS' TIME MACHINE

OVER ON the opposite page is an article that genuinely surprised me when I was leafing through some old programmes from the 1982-83 season.

I'd forgotten that I had occasionally helped out Steve 'Hughie' Marshall - editor of our programme four decades ago - with a few contributed articles that probably contravened journalistic ethics at the time. For this Enfield Gazette sports editor was (shamelessly) a Stones fan.

Well this was something that didn't sit happily with the Enfield FC manager and, indeed, about 1,000 fans of our greatest Middlesex rivals at the time. He even complained to the Gazette Editor and the reference at the foot of the page was one of several means that Eddie McCluskey had around that time.

But the Es ended up Alliance Premier League champions that season so Eddie had the last laugh!

The thing that really surprised me, though, was the overriding sense of gloom in my article. Football had not quite reached the tipping point of the mid-80s, post-Heysel and pre-Hillsborough, but it was a strange decade when people were actively looking at different ways of spending their leisure time.

The 1960s was a boom time, with the winning of the World Cup while the 70s, as televised football stirred a new interest in the game, kept crowd levels high. But the 'cloth cap fans' - mainly men who had dutifully flocked to games in the post-War period - were now being replaced by folk who weren't happy standing on cold terraces, watching indifferent footballers fail to entertain on muddy, rutted pitches.

Eighties football was played out to a backdrop of dilapidated stadi-

41 years on, such a huge difference in the game's popularity... but what lies in store for Wealdstone of the 2060s?

ums with the most basic of amenities, and the threat of hooliganism ever-present... and when the disasters of Hampden and Heysel occurred the game had nowhere to turn.

"Video Killed the Cloth Cap Fan" was a fair reflection on the state of football in 1982 as its traditional fanbase decided it didn't want to be taken for granted.

Wealdstone were playing at non-League's top table but the Alliance Premier League was a different beast to today's Level Five.

Up to Christmas that season there were only a few instances of crowds over a thousand: 1,198 at Altrincham on the opening day and 1,100 at Nuneaton in November. Our first crowd of four figures, 1,242, at Lower Mead came on December 27 when Allen Batsford's side walloped Barnet 6-0.

We finished third in the table behind Enfield and Maidstone but of course the 'glamour' of ex-League clubs dropping into Level Five was still half a dozen years away. When

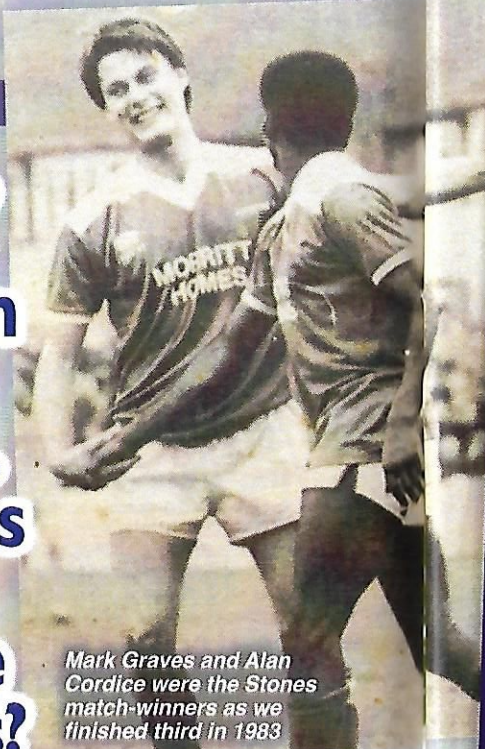
Mark Graves and Alan Cordice were the Stones match-winners as we finished third in 1983

you look at the clubs in that 1982-83 APL season it's no real surprise that the numbers we expect to be watching National League football today were conspicuous by their absence. Runcorn, Northwich, Bangor City, Frickley, Trowbridge Town and Stafford Rangers weren't going to get the pulse racing and the only clubs in the intervening 41 years who have been promoted to the EFL (but since dropped back down) are Maidstone, Boston United, Scarborough, Dagenham, Yeovil, and of course Barnet.

Barrow, who finished second bottom in 1983 and were relegated, are the only club to have been promoted to League Two in the following four decades who are still in the EFL!

So you youngsters reading this today - how will football look in 40 years' time? Wealdstone solidly in the EFL at the Hillingdon Super Dome? The Barrow of the 2060s?

That doesn't sound too glamorous but it will do for me, even though I probably won't be around to see it!



Guest Writer – Tim Parks
(Sports Editor – Enfield & Southgate Gazette)

Video Killed the cloth cap fan

THIRTY years ago it wouldn't have been thought possible.

If you'd gone up to the average fan on the terraces in those days and informed him that, come the 1980s, football would be dying out as a spectator sport he'd have sneered at you from under the rim of his cloth cap.

"Oh yeah, and what's gonna replace it then, mate? Bloomin' tiddleywinks?" would be the retort. The more thoughtful fan might have scratched his Brylcreemed head and observed: "There's nowt wrong wi't game now, and there'll be nowt wrong wi't in 1982."

And he'd have been right. There is nothing wrong with football now. In fact, thanks to a long-overdue change in most club's attitudes there is more to enjoy on the pitch this season than for a long time.

No, the game hasn't changed - it's just that social trends have altered almost beyond belief in the last ten years. And why should football be immune? Cinemas are closing down all over the country and it's got nothing to do with the quality of the films.

The fact is that people have got lazy and blasé about all forms of entertainment. Why should they bother to go out in all weathers, risking the chance of watching a bad film, a bad play or a bad football match when they can stay comfortably indoors and be entertained by the cathode ray - television.

Or, of course, nowadays by video.

People generally have become more insular, preferring the company of their family or a small group of friends than to take part in the community spirit of watching a football match. That is why the days are gone when you had to seriously consider whether or not you'd be able to get in the ground for an important First Division match - or, these days, whether you'd be able to get a ticket for the FA Cup Final.

The way things are going it won't be too long before Wembley has its first sub-100,000 Cup Final crowd.

We are all sick of reading how attendances at football grounds have plummeted to new lows this season. How Arsenal are averaging 25,000 when they need 10,000 more to break even. How Liverpool are well under their target crowd and how Darlington's faithful few have got even fewer.

Here at Wealdstone there is some alarming news. Crowds have actually gone up this season, making the 'Stones almost unique in their sphere. Looking around the successful non-League clubs, I would guess that only Enfield (funnily enough) can boast similar news.

It is only a small increase, of course. And the 700 or so who regularly pass through the Lower Mead turnstiles would be a poor crowd for the club just six or seven years ago.

But it does show that Wealdstone are on the right track. They are giving the local crowd what they want: goals, action, and a high standard of football right here in the centre of Harrow.

It's just as good as the Football League stuff - minus high admission charges, high transport costs and the high risk of hooliganism. And, in the dressing room, the players are more likely to be asking for a new pair of boots, please, than a £5,000 a year wage rise.

If Wealdstone have a target to aim for it must be average crowds of 1,000 by the end of the year. Given the current rate of progress in the APL and, hopefully, long, lucrative and well-publicised runs in the FA Cup and FA Trophy, that could be a reality by Christmas.

So, next time there's something good on television when 'Stones are playing at home, don't just settle further into your armchair. After all, what's that video recorder for?

Who told Eddie?

SEVERAL weeks ago, in this programme, I compared the relative merits of Wealdstone and Enfield and offered the view that the 'Stones resilience and will to win will carry them through when the clubs meet in the league (Date for your diary, January 1st). I ended by writing: "But don't tell Eddie McCluskey (the Enfield manager) I said it."

But somebody ~~did~~ tell him. Next time I saw Eddie he was brandishing the programme in question and was not a very happy man. It was just a personal opinion I expressed, but one he took exception to from the Sports Editor of the Enfield local paper. He also pointed out that I saw more of Wealdstone than I saw of Enfield. "You never come to away games," he said.

So, there I was three days later at Dagenham for the Bob Lord match and, funnily enough, who should I bump into outside the dressing room than Mr. McCluskey.

"Blow me down" he said (actually he said something rather stronger, but we won't print it here). Then Eddie turned to John Ford, his assistant manager, covered his eyes and said: "Where am I? I could have sworn it was us playing Dagenham tonight. They must have been playing Wealdstone."

Nice one, Eddie. Suddenly, I seem to be the only one taking anything seriously.





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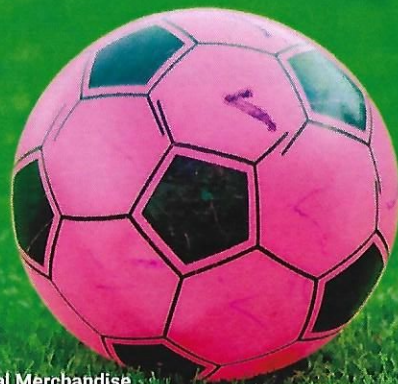
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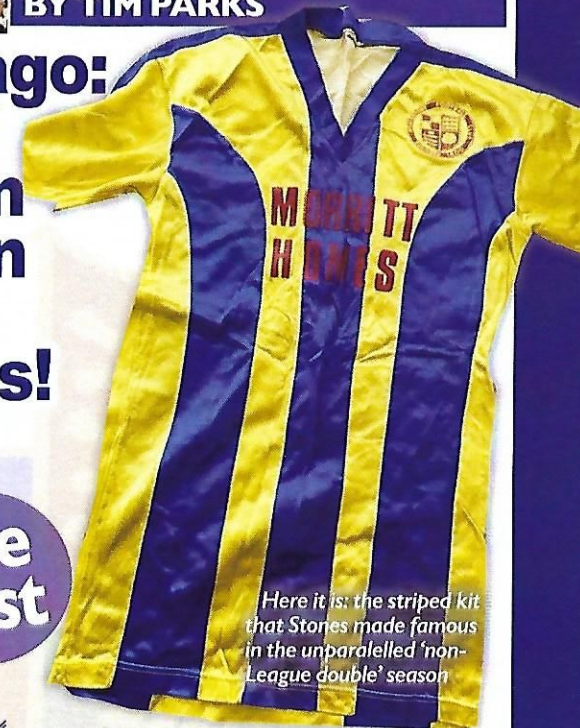
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WE'VE MET YOU BEFORE  **BY TIM PARKS**

Over 40 years ago: Stones kick off the new season at Gateshead in garish yellow and blue stripes!



the first

Here it is: the striped kit that Stones made famous in the unparalleled 'non-League double' season

GATESHEAD used to stick in my mind as being a club we always beat - and indeed we hadn't lost a single game in seven meetings until the 2-1 defeat here at the Vale to the Heed last January - but the most glorious memory of previous clashes was the opening day of the 1983-84 season when the Stones trotted out in yellow and blue pyjamas.

Well, maybe not jim-jams exactly, but the effect was pretty similar. We rubbed our eyes in disbelief!

August 20 1983: The season kicked off a little later in those days and it was a genuine shock for the 150 or so Wealdstone fans to see our heroes emerge from the tunnel at Gateshead's international stadium in that lairy outfit.

With the athletics track separating us from the players, the Stones were in the far distance and we presumed they were wearing some garish tracksuit tops. But pretty soon it became apparent that this was the new strip for the 83-84 season.

In Jon Taffel's Stones *Alphabet* feature last season he spent a lot of time mulling over the worst Wealdstone kits of all time - and the red shirts won the prize for 'most distasteful'

with the white 'Enfield' shirts of the early 90s coming a close second.

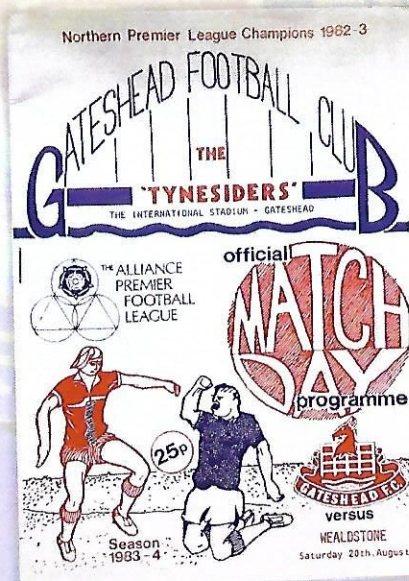
It was no secret that our manager Allen Batsford was a devotee of blue and yellow, from his days as Wimbledon boss, but this was a real knock-your-socks-off moment. No big Twitter or Instagram build up in those days. No canvassing of supporters or online voting.

Just a wham-bam here-you-go debut for the Yellow & Blue that would become a backdrop to the club's most memorable moments in history...

So nobody's complaining now, nor indeed five years ago when we kicked off the 2019-20 season in bold blue/yellow stripes and won the National League South!

It's worth lingering a moment over that first game, four decades ago. It was the Stones' second season back in the Alliance Premier

Continued overpage



Interesting cover! The Gateshead programme that day in August 1983 was a charming, hand-drawn rustic affair

WE'VE MET YOU BEFORE, CONTINUED

From previous page

League (the fore-runner of the Conference, now the National League) and we were a powerful force. Batsford and Brian Hall, his assistant, had steered us to third place in the first season and it was to be November until we suffered our first defeat.

A record of 13 wins and four draws in the next 17 games after this opener at Gateshead was amazing considering that we kicked off the season without stalwarts Robin Wainwright, Dennis Byatt, Neil Cordice and Steve Perkins...and were even without boss Batsford who went into hospital three days later for a heart bypass operation!

We had signed ex-Arsenal Cup winner David Price but his debut was

so quiet that, if you squint carefully at the team in the Harrow Observer match report (above right) he isn't even listed as playing! But it was central defenders we were missing, so Stones had to go to Wimbledon on the scrounge for loans the day before the game and came back with centre-back Mark Morris, who was excellent at Gateshead alongside skipper Paul Bowgett.

The home side had won the Northern Premier League (and promotion) by a street the previous season and were a dangerous proposition. But we weren't to know quite what a formidable outfit the Stones were going to be... the reshuffled side coped admirably with everything. The Heed could throw at us with former Division One misfielder Terry Hibbitt their main man.

Stuart Pearce was growing into the left-back that top-flight Coventry were to sign just a couple of months

A point for starters

Gateshead 1, Wealdstone 1
MAKESHIFT Wealdstone, missing four first team regulars, battled bravely against Gateshead to earn a point at the International Stadium on Saturday.

'Stones were without the injured Steve Perkins, Neil Cordice and Robin Wainwright, and the suspended Dennis Byatt.

General manager Allen Batsford was more than happy with the point as 'Stones opened their Alliance Premier League programme.

"We have had terrible problems putting together a side and to come away from home and get a draw can't be bad," he said after the match.

'Stones survived early Gateshead pressure to take a fifth minute lead. A 30 yard free kick by Stuart Pearce was fumbled on the slippery surface by keeper Dodds and the ball bounced free to Gary Donallan who had the easiest of tasks to slot home.

Gateshead continued to pressurize 'Stones but had to wait until midway through the second half before they pulled back the goal — skipper Terry Hibbitt, the former Newcastle United player, scoring from a 22 yard free kick.

Wealdstone: Iles, Waddock (Waites 83), Pearce, Morris, Bowgett, Donallan, Barwick, A. Cordice, Graves, Johnson.

later, and the midfield (despite the strutting Price) was rock solid with Gary Donnellan, Fred Barwick and Nigel Johnson carrying on their good form of the 1982-3 season. Mark Graves and Alan Cordice were a reliable front pairing and it was no surprise when this side started purring in September with the squad back up to strength. Gateshead finished 16th out of 22 teams.

What happened next?

Well, Allen Batsford returned from his convalescence in a new role as General Manager only to find out that the club could no longer afford to pay both him and team boss Brian Hall... so Batsford had to bite the bullet. It reflected poorly on the club as a whole, although the team rallied to finish fourth in the table. Then, in 1984-1985, with Hall solely at the helm, came the title!



Rhys Browne peels away to take the applause of the far-distant fans as Stones win 1-0 at Gateshead in August 2022 to go top of the table!
 PICTURE: JON TAFFEL



Top: Max Kretzschmar celebrates the goal that put us 1-0 ahead last January while (above) Tarryn Allarakhia does the same at Gateshead this season

Just one win in the last three meets...but what a table-topping moment that was at Heed!

OKAY, we've been beaten 2-1 by Gateshead in our last two clashes but what a game it was at the International Stadium at the end of August 2022 when the clubs first met in the National League.

I was unable to get to the game, having an impacted tooth removed and woke up from the anaesthetic to check FootballWeb Pages on the phone (as you do)...and I thought I was hallucinating when the Stones were top of the table! The match report (above right) shows how the ten-man Stones hung on for an amazing three points... four wins from the first five games! The Heed

GATESHEAD 0 WEALDSTONE 1

Browne 44

HEADS UP: Gateshead clear a Wealdstone ball into the box for Rhys Browne to score.

MATCH STATISTICS

9	SHOTS ON TARGET
7	SHOTS OFF TARGET
10	CORNERS
2	OFFSIDES
4	FOULS CONCEDED
10	YELLOW CARDS
0	RED CARDS

LINE-UPS

1	Goalkeeper	1	Goalkeeper
2	Defender	2	Defender
3	Defender	3	Defender
4	Defender	4	Defender
5	Defender	5	Defender
6	Midfielder	6	Midfielder
7	Midfielder	7	Midfielder
8	Midfielder	8	Midfielder
9	Striker	9	Striker
10	Striker	10	Striker

GATESHEAD: Goalkeeper 1 & 11
 Defenders 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6
 Midfielders 7, 8, 9 & 10
 Striker 11
WEALDSTONE: Goalkeeper 1
 Defenders 2, 3, 4 & 5
 Midfielders 6, 7, 8 & 9
 Striker 10
 Subs not used: 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

Stones go top on the Tyne

By Jeff Bowron

TEN-MAN Wealdstone produced a smash-and-grab raid on Tyne-side to move to the top of the National League after a fourth win from the opening five games.

Stones defender Ayode Elereweke was sent off for holding back Heed striker Paul Blackett, who would have been through on goal, just seven minutes into the second half.

The game's only goal on the stroke of half-time, well

taken by Rhys Browne, came from a bad error from Heed captain Greg O'Leary. Stones boss Stuart Maynard delighted with his side's resilience. "For 115 fans to make the head with everything that's going on at the minute was brilliant, and for us to give something back to them was great," he said. "The lads gave absolutely everything and I think we got what we deserved." "Huge credit to Gateshead, they are a very good footballing team, similar to us in a sense of their philosophy. It just wasn't their day and our work ethic got us through." Gateshead had never beaten Wealdstone in six meetings between the two clubs.

the first for 33 years again going Wealdstone's way. Tarryn Allarakhia, released by Don Hutchinson, Stones an early lead but was denied by Heed keeper Dan Langley's leg. It took 54 minutes for the home side to threaten, Tom Allan racing clear only to be undone by good defence from Heed, the strongly. But after a marathon spell of passing O'Leary's misdirected pass in midfield saw the Heed ghost past Heed centre-backs Carl Maynard and Keaton Richardson to finish with aplomb. Blackett then headed against the bar and hit the inside of the far post on the stretch as Gateshead raced out of the blocks after the break. Elereweke's red card then saw Gateshead try to siege to the half. Sam Howes making important saves while Heed with Will Harris went close with two headers. "The lads gave everything physically," said Gateshead boss Mike Wilkinson. "We kept pushing until the last moment but we were found wanting." "Look at the statistics, the chances and possession we had. It's not tallying up and we have got to find a way collectively."

...and the most recent

STAR MAN: Rhys Browne (Gateshead); ATE: 1/104; ENTERTAINMENT: 4/100; REFEREE: Mark Dobson

managed to puncture our good form with a 2-1 win at the Vale at the end of January in the return game, while the match at Gateshead in October was technically one of the best I've ever seen at non-League level.

Stones took the lead with a beautiful Tarryn Allarakhia strike after 73 minute, only for Connor McBride to snap in an equally impressive leveller just a few minutes later. As the game ebbed and flowed it was Gateshead who snatched the points in the 80th minute with McBride's unstoppable 30-yarder past Jed Ward. Scant reward for the 54 Stones fans who had travelled by trains, planes and automobiles that evening.

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F.A. Challenge Trophy preview

Wealdstone to beat this Shields side

Wealdstone P.R.O. Colin Pope travelled to South Liverpool on Friday to see South Shields, who meet Wealdstone in the F.A. Challenge Trophy on Saturday at Lower Mead, play a Northern Premier League game.

Shields were beaten 1-0, and Pope reports:

I saw nothing in this match at Liverpool on Saturday to even remotely suggest that Wealdstone will not reach the quarter-finals of the FA Challenge Trophy by beating South Shields at Lower Mead.

We all know that the Cup is a great leveller, but if the 'Stones can strike the form we all know they are capable of the Durham side's journey must surely be in vain.

This match certainly rose no higher than Division One (South) of the Southern League, and there was only one noteworthy player in the 22 — and that was South Shields centre-half John Peverell, signed from Darlington in the close season.

Over 6 ft, with a frame to match, he dominated the middle of the park, being equally adept in the air or on the ground.

On this evidence, 'Stones path to goal must be via the wings, where Shields full-backs White or Dale were never inspiring, even though they were

full-time professionals with Hartlepoons last season.

South Shields, a full professional side composed entirely of ex-league players have scored an incredible 69 goals in 32 league matches this season, but on this game, more a sign of inferior defences rather than brilliant striking power.

Their twin strikers of Riby (ex-Middlesbrough) and Derek Corner are both over 6 ft. but never looked like scoring, and their best front runner was left-winger Ken Helsop, signed from Newcastle two seasons ago.

A small midfield trio includes Ron Young who made 210 League appearances with Hartlepoons.

Peverell, the Shields skipper, told me after the game that heavy grounds did not suit them, and blamed this for their recent loss of scoring ability.

I hate making predictions, but South Shields will have to raise their game considerably on last Saturday's form to make further progress.

Footnote: On Sunday Shields beat Buxton 1-0 at home in a Northern Premier League game. COLIN POPE

from previous page

this a good idea? Probably not, in retrospect. Colin was a lovely man, very affable but surely one of the coaching staff - or manager Sid Prosser himself - could have jumped on a train and unearthed the sort of gameplan that would have given Shields more problems than ultimately transpired? Spoiler alert!

All will be revealed in the next programme, which could, coincidentally, be for an FA Trophy quarter-final tie.

Apologies for missing Ramsgate mention... Sorry

for not giving the 1-0 home defeat by Ramsgate more than a passing mention in the previous episode of this 1973-74 story. Four successive home wins and a draw with Bognor brought 1,200 through the Lower Mead turnstiles but we hit a Kentish brick wall - and Ramsgate completed a league double having chalked up a 3-2 home win over Stones the previous September.

Body blow to promotion hopes

No excuses, Wealdstone you gave it away

By Phil Sugden

Wealdstone 0, Ramsgate 1

IF YOU happened to be among the approximately 1,200 spectators who watched this fiercely contested Southern League game at Lower Mead on Saturday and you purchased a programme — I suggest you place that eight-page production among your souvenirs.

It may well be that next season you will tell your sons, grandsons, or other interested parties — this was the day we lost promotion.

Forgetting, for the moment, games in hand and the fact that this was only 'Stones fourth Division One South defeat, it was a staggering, unbelievable result which pin-points the fact that there is still a very long way to go.

It was 'Stones second home defeat by a team in the lower half of the table and there is no doubt that the result has made the committee, management and the players think very hard indeed.

BEGGING

Allowing for the fact that speedy John Henderson was kicked out of the game early in the proceedings, chances went begging like ripe olives.

sometimes a little too strongly, and Burgess swept up well at the back. The midfield still worries me, not so much for lack of ability, but mainly because it

National League plan: just a matter of time

THINGS move slowly in the reorganisation of soccer. We must not expect too much, too soon. That is plainly the lesson to be learned from the scrapping of a National League plan for, at least, a few years.

A National League might well have taken in Hillingdon Boro and Wealdstone and both clubs were enthusiastic not so long ago. Events have changed their thoughts. The entire idea is based upon a pyramid of clubs leading to the Football League and isn't the weakness of the Football League itself the thing which holds back further progress?

Former referee, Bill Dellow, secretary of the Southern League, blames the Lytham St. Anne's men for not showing more enthusiasm. I can, however, see the point of Alan Hardaker's executive. Dellow argues that a change could have been made towards a National League for the 1974-75 season when amateurs become a thing of the past. On the other hand, there will be so much confusion and jockeying for position amongst the senior amateurs, it might well take more than another season to sort out the situation.

The plan to amalgamate Southern League clubs with Northern Premier League clubs to form a 'Fifth Division' of the Football League has its obvious attraction. The biggest is that successful clubs would be admitted to Division Four of the Football League. But, Hardaker's executive could not find it in their hearts to positively approve such a plan. They will have had two thoughts in the backs of their minds. The financial aspects from the viewpoint of the smaller clubs concerns Lytham St. Annes and the 'old boy' system amongst Football League members in voting back in the 'dead' clubs who finish

TALKING POINT

at the bottom of Division Four—or very close to it.

Sometime in the not too distant future, Hartlepool will just have to be told they can't remain in Division Four. I pick out this unfortunate club because they have applied for and won re-election on seven occasions which means that only Peterborough, Oxford United, Cambridge United and Hereford United have won Football League places since the war.

Our local clubs affected by reorganisation created by a National League will have mixed feelings. Wealdstone, not so long ago amateurs themselves, have survived in the Southern League, first in Division One (North) and now Division One (South). As things are they could well get to Premier Division status at the end of this campaign. But, they would hardly be ready for a national league, admits public relations officer, Colin Pope. 'We'd like a season or so in the Premier to find our feet', he says.

Hillingdon, on the other hand, should be racing away towards a national set-up. But, not as things stand at the moment. It is the club's worst season for years. No wonder they are silent on the prospects for the future. At the foot of the Premier Division table, Boro lack just about all the things which make a successful club. As well as success itself. Boro, thought, have the ground and the facilities to bridge the gap better, at this point of time, than Wealdstone, who wait to know if the EMI project which includes development of their ground and facilities, will get past the Borough planners.

So for very different reasons, neither of the local

Southern League sides will be crying overmuch on the delayed project for the bridge over soccer's troubled waters. And, yet, the idea has so many attractive virtues, it is my honest opinion it will not be shelved. Bill Dellow is wise to keep his committee together, the gallant band who spent seven hours typing out the rules of the new project. Disappointment there must be, especially when the Football League gave a nod of approval in principle. They will, again, I forecast when the time is riper.

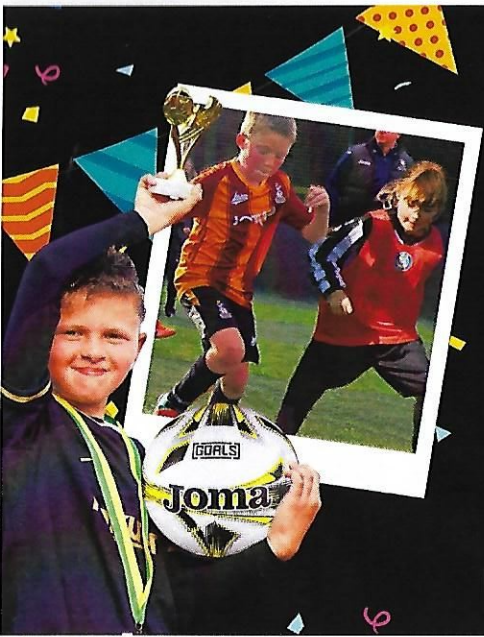
The work Mr. Dellow and his committee have done will not go to waste. The pyramid idea is the best we have had in the game at any time. It literally means there is a legitimate way to the top of the tree for EVERYONE without exception. Remember, the years it took to get agreement on substitutes and yet now, we forget a time ever existed when teams played with 10 men. Remember, the years of heart-searching on the amateur classification. We are making progress. The National League will help even if it does not come into being for a few years. Keep at the Football League Mr. Dellow. I know you'll win in the end.

I'd rather forgotten how good the Ruislip and Northwood Gazette could be occasionally. It spent most weeks applauding Hillingdon Borough and totally ignoring Wealdstone (mainly because the Stones were across the borough border in those days.) Here is an article within its sports pages from the turn of the new year 1974, and which prove to be rather prescient, although of course it took another 13 years before automatic promotion to the Football League occurred



Left: Ramsgate's Richard Bourne (No.5) is beaten by Bill Byrne but (right) there is no way through their packed defence





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GIS graduate, First Team Analyst and Coaching Assistant at **Watford FC Women**

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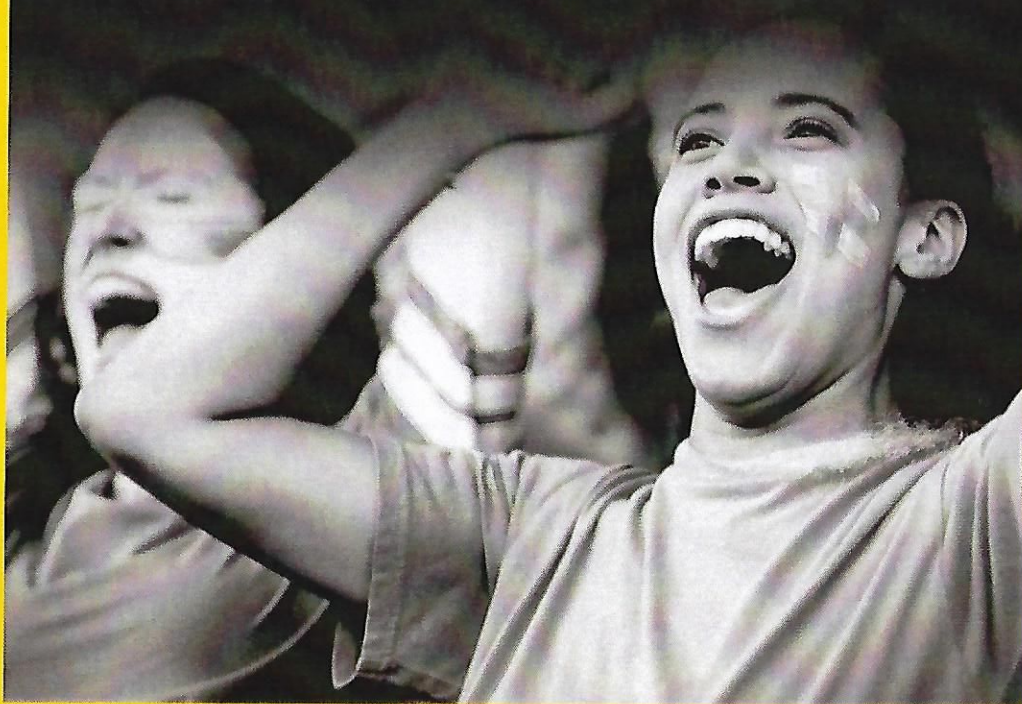
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31 20.03.21 | 1.9m GK
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5 11.6.90 | 1.80m DM
IC PROPERTY

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25 10.02.06 | 1.84m CF
ROGER SLATER

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28
JIM SORRELL

Sam BOWEN
22 14.01.01 | 1.8m CM
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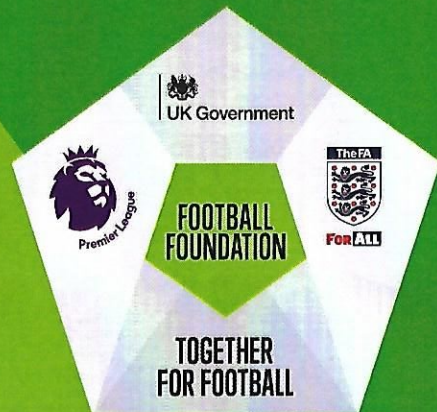
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VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE TABLE AS AT SUNDAY 13/2/2024

	ALL						HOME					AWAY					GD	PTS	RESULTS			
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L			F	A	(H)	(A)
1 Chesterfield	32	26	3	3	79	38	17	15	2	0	50	21	15	11	1	3	29	17	41	81	2-3	
2 Bromley	32	16	10	6	53	35	16	10	3	3	33	18	16	6	7	3	20	17	18	58		1-1
3 Barnet	31	17	5	9	59	45	15	10	3	2	30	17	16	7	2	7	29	28	14	56	3-2	1-1
4 Altrincham	30	14	10	6	57	38	15	9	4	2	37	16	15	5	6	4	20	22	19	52	0-0	
5 Solihull Moors	31	14	8	9	48	42	16	6	5	5	24	17	15	8	3	4	24	25	6	50		0-1
6 Aldershot Town	31	14	6	11	56	57	15	8	5	2	32	22	16	6	1	9	24	35	-1	48	3-3	1-3
7 Gateshead	30	13	8	9	54	41	15	6	5	4	28	21	15	7	3	5	26	20	13	47		1-3
8 Oldham Athletic	30	12	10	8	45	39	15	5	5	5	23	17	15	7	5	3	22	22	6	46	1-1	
9 Halifax Town	32	11	11	10	37	37	15	4	7	4	17	17	17	7	4	6	20	20	0	44	2-0	0-1
10 Rochdale	31	11	8	12	48	47	15	6	4	5	26	19	16	5	4	7	22	28	1	41	3-2	
11 Hartlepool United	33	12	5	16	50	59	16	7	1	8	23	27	17	5	4	8	27	32	-9	41	4-4	1-2
12 Dagenham & Redbridge	33	11	7	15	47	46	17	6	0	11	26	27	16	5	7	4	21	19	1	40	0-2	2-0
13 Boreham Wood	32	9	13	10	41	51	17	5	7	5	21	22	15	4	6	5	20	29	-10	40	1-1	
14 Maidenhead United	32	9	12	11	32	39	16	5	7	4	14	14	16	4	5	7	18	25	-7	39	0-1	2-0
15 Eastleigh	32	10	9	13	53	64	16	7	4	5	30	29	16	3	5	8	23	35	-11	39		0-0
16 Wealdstone	29	10	8	11	40	41	15	8	5	2	28	21	14	2	3	9	12	20	-1	38	---	---
17 York City	31	8	13	10	41	48	14	3	7	4	22	22	17	5	6	6	19	26	-7	37	2-1	
18 Fylde	31	9	8	14	47	54	16	5	6	5	25	26	15	4	2	9	22	28	-7	35	3-2	
19 Southend United	30	13	5	12	44	33	15	9	0	6	29	13	15	4	5	6	15	20	11	34		
20 Woking	32	9	7	16	32	40	16	3	4	9	16	22	16	6	3	7	16	18	-8	34	1-0	
21 Dorking Wanderers	31	10	4	17	37	53	17	5	2	10	19	28	14	5	2	7	18	25	-16	34		1-3
22 Kidderminster Harriers	32	8	8	16	29	41	16	4	5	7	17	19	16	4	3	9	12	22	-12	32		0-1
23 Ebbsfleet United	33	8	8	17	40	58	16	5	3	8	19	19	17	3	5	9	21	39	-18	32	2-1	0-2
24 Oxford City	33	7	6	20	45	68	16	5	2	9	24	27	17	2	4	11	21	41	-23	27	3-1	

Follow Stones on the road:



Woking

National League
Saturday
24th February
3:00pm

WokingFC.co.uk



Rochdale

National League
Tuesday
27th February
7:45pm

RochdaleAFC.co.uk



York City

National League
Saturday
2nd March
3:00pm

YorkCityFootballClub.co.uk



Wealdstone FC's first team travel is sponsored by Osmo, specialists in the supply of wood finishes

Wealdstone FC Supporters' Club often runs subsidised coach travel to our away games. Check online for full details.



Official Sponsors of Wealdstone FC

gpflewis^{plc}

Maintaining Excellence

GPF Lewis is an award winning national contractor providing Construction, Maintenance & Facilities management services.

gpflewis.co.uk