

WEALDSTONE



official matchday programme £3

HOW THEY LINE-UP TODAY

WEALDSTONE
ROYAL BLUE/WHITE/BLUE

- G Dante-Astor BAPTISTE 1
- G Marcus DEWHURST 31
- Jack COOK © 2
- Charlie BARKER 3
- Alex DYER 5
- Mason BARRETT 6
- Tarryn ALLARAKHIA 7
- Nathan FERGUSON 8
- Immanuelson DUKU 9
- Max KRETZSCHMAR 10
- Corie ANDREWS 11
- Charlie SEAMAN 12
- Micah OBIERO 14
- Jack YOUNG 15
- Luke DREHER 16
- Dominic HUTCHINSON 17
- Kyle SMITH 18
- Dillon De SILVA 19
- Reo GRIFFITHS 20
- Kallum TRACEY SESAY 21
- Sam BOWEN 22
- Jaydn MUNDLE-SMITH 23
- Jaiden BARTOLO 25
- Aaron HENRY 26
- Sean ADARKWA 27
- Declan PHILLIPS 28
- Trae COOK-APPIAH 29
- Brandon MASON 32
- Sam COX 34
- Joe CULLIS 36



KIDDERMINSTER H
RED/RED/RED

- 1 Tom PALMER G
- 21 Christian DIBBLE G
- 2 Alex PENNY
- 3 Caleb RICHARDS
- 4 Nat KNIGHT-PERCIVAL
- 5 Krystian PEARCE
- 6 Reiss McNALLY
- 8 Todd MILLER
- 9 Amari MORGAN-SMITH
- 10 Ashley HEMMINGS
- 11 Jack LAMBERT
- 12 Christian OXLADE-CHAMBERLAIN
- 14 Zack BROWN
- 16 Max PRESTON
- 17 Gabriel ROGERS
- 18 Kai LISSIMORE
- 19 Sam BELLISS
- 20 Sam ROBINSON
- 21 Seb THOMPSON
- 23 Shane BYRNE
- 24 Regan GRIFFITHS
- 25 Luke BASTABLE
- 26 Owen HESKETH
- 27 Gold OMOTAYO
- 28 Ben KRAUHAUS
- 30 Jay EMMANUEL-THOMAS

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- 1) The Lower Mead Four
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- 1) In memory of Rowland Edwards

NEXT HOME GAMES

- v Solihull Moors**
(National League)
Easter Monday
April 1, KO 3pm
- v Southend United**
(National League)
Tuesday April 9,
KO 7.45pm

TODAY'S RESULT

WEALDSTONE **KIDD'MINSTER**

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**INSIDE:
Meet the
Manny
of the
moment**



**Wealdstone v
Kidderminster H**

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE
SATURDAY 23 MARCH 2024, KO 3PM

MANNY ON THE MONEY! Stones striker Manny Duku is mobbed by the travelling fans after his stunning strike had settled the 2-1 win at AFC Fylde last Saturday... his first goal for the club **PICTURE: JON TAFFEL**

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BY TIM PARKS

Written in Stone

AFTER Wednesday's hastily-arranged National League game with Bromley ended in a 1-0 defeat it seems extraordinary that we now haven't won any of our last five home games.

After many months of seeming unbeatable at the Vale that form has been turned on its head - yet our away record has suddenly been transformed with just one defeat in the last seven games on the road!

David Noble, Neil Banfield and Sam Cox were visibly proud of the players as the full-time whistle sounded at AFC Fylde last Saturday with the Stones victors by 2-1. It was a crucial three points with so many clubs bunched up in the middle and lower reaches of the table... that result saw us climb four places to 16th and with games in hand there is every prospect of this current form carrying us to safety and above.

But every game at a time.

The Bromley defeat was particularly galling as we didn't seem to have the wit or invention to open up a team forced onto the defensive by that early dismissal of goalkeeper Grant Smith. But you had to admire the high-flying visitors for clinging manfully onto their 1-0 lead - 19-goal Michael Cheek scoring with their only shot of the game.

Today we welcome Kidderminster Harriers for our first home clash with the Worcestershire side for an astonishing 36 years.

We were rivals back in the days of the 1980s GM Vauxhall Conference but were beaten by a single goal in the dying seconds of the away game at Aggborough back in October.

Since then, the Harriers have changed manager and improved immeasurably so we'll have to be on our mettle as we surge into this congested period of ten games in the final 28 days of the season. One game every 2.8 days!

Hopefully, the fact that we had six players missing on international duty for the Bromley game on Wednesday (thanks, National League) and again today will not prove insurmountable.

On Tuesday night we travel to another improving side, Altrincham and it will again be a real test of the squad's depth - but we'll be hoping to repeat last season's 1-0 win. Three days later it's another away trip to Oxford City for a 3pm Good Friday kick-off before we face Solihull Moors here at The Vale on Easter Monday (3pm)... the first in a whole welter of

home games.

Five of the last seven are here at The Vale (weather permitting!) and we've probably missed a trick by not allowing our fans to camp out on the outer pitches as an alternative to nipping home between each game. Four in a row in the space of seven days... that will tax the resources of the playing

Hold onto your hats as we head into a manic last few weeks!

squad and also your programme team. We've resisted the temptation of publishing a 'quadruple' issue, even if League rules allowed it!

● Congratulations to the Stones Academy with the U-19 Tactics T3 League team winning the Central Division with a month or two to spare after beating the Watford FC/Samuel Ryder side this week.

The 'T3s' have lost just two games all season... and the Stones' under-19s F2 division team are poised to make it a double as they lead the way with just four games left. No wonder academy director Dale Welch has applauded the massive progress made this season.

● A big thanks as always to our sponsors today: Rolfe East, wonderful serial supporters of the club, and The Lower Mead Four (Hughie Lindsay, Charlie Townsend, George Duck and John Morton) are match sponsors while the ball donor is *In Memory of Rowland Edwards*. Rowland, father of long-time Stones fan David Edwards and grandfather of Megastore stalwarts Adam and Guy, set his family on the way to a happy life in Blue & White!

● Our mascots today, meanwhile, are players from Wealdstone Youth FC Soccer School's SEND session, which is run specifically for children between 4 to 11 years old with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Through Wealdstone Youth FC, these children have been given the opportunity to play the sport they love in a safe environment, whilst making new friends and helping to boost their self-confidence. The Soccer School currently runs four sessions and along with their SEND session, they have another for boys and girls aged 4 to 6 years old, who are currently in Reception or Year 1 at school, plus a Girl's Only session for girls aged 4 to 11. The 130 Soccer School players, who train every Saturday, contribute to the 650 boys and girls aged between 4-18 who make up this season's 49 teams.

To find out more about joining their Soccer School and Wealdstone Youth FC, visit the website wealdstoneyouthfc.co.uk.



WEALDSTONE FOOTBALL CLUB SEASON 2023/2024

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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 • Using violence of any nature
 - 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.

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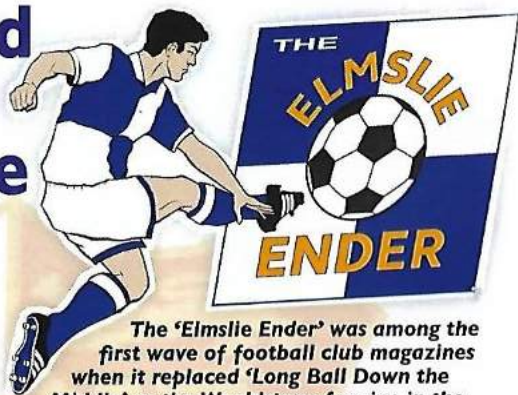


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Britain's longest-running fanzine column (and it shows it)

Watching England or watching the Stones? I think we all know where my loyalties lie



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

Can I extend the warmest of welcomes to all present this afternoon, and in particular any England fans who have stopped off at the home of football en route to that other place down the road.



We hope you leave here singing 'It's just like watching Brazil' and come back soon.

Now, if you ask me to list the Wealdstone line-up that started our last game I admit I would probably get stuck six or seven names in. In fact, there are only two football line-ups in history that still trip effortlessly off my tongue: one is Morton, Kinnear, Watson, Fairclough, McCormick, Moss, Lewis, Godfrey, Byrne, Duck and Henderson (Sub: Eglite, as always).

This, a handful of you will guess, is the Wealdstone eleven that took to the field at Aldershot in the FA Cup first round in 1975. It was the first time in my Wealdstone-supporting existence that we had progressed that far in the competition and has therefore always generated a disproportionately warm glow of nostalgia in me, even though we lost.

The other one may be rather more familiar to rather more of you: Banks, Cohen, Wilson, Stiles, Charlton, Moore, Hunt, Ball, Charlton, Hurst, Peters. I know this (even though I was a six-year old from a determinedly unsporting family) and never even saw the 1966 World Cup Final until I bought a VHS of the match sometime in the 80s. Like many



of my generation it was the World Cup Fever of 1966 that set me off on a lifelong obsession with the beautiful game. Wealdstone, I admit, came later. Never mind kings and queens of England or presidents of the United States. This is the list kids ought to learn in school. This is the part of our history that matters.

In the 1980s I did actually watch England at Wembley many times. The point came, however, when I tired of standing next to neanderthals racially abusing our own players volubly and with total impunity. I concluded that a substantial part of England's supporter base (pictured left) were not like me.

My enthusiasm for the national side declined further with the onset of the Premier League era. I just struggle to think of someone earning ten million pounds a year, employing an agent, a financial adviser, a full time social media manager to make them look half-literate and probably someone to wipe their nose, whose toughest daily decision is which luxury car to drive to training today, and who appear to have not the slightest empathy with the working people that pay their wages, as being in any way representative of me. And judging by some of England's performances that feeling is mutual.

I have only ever met two England players and I have to say those two are exempt from any criticism explicit or implied in the rest of this column. One of those is Stuart Pearce. I am a huge fan of Stuart Pearce, partly because he played 176 times

for Wealdstone, but more because he is recognisable in a crowd photo on the sleeve of the first Lurkers album.

Oddly enough, despite having seen many of those 176 games and attended a couple of personal appearances I had never met Stuart Pearce until a few weeks ago when he attended our match against Halifax. I took the opportunity to press a business card into his hand and asked if he'd be interested in doing an interview, in his capacity not as the acclaimed ex-England captain with an MBE, but as a celebrity Lurkers fan. I have yet to hear from him, but I'm sure that's just an oversight.

The other England international of my acquaintance is the late Sir Stanley Matthews. In the 90s the great man graciously agreed to be guest of honour at the launch of a book of MPs writing about football that I was publishing on behalf of the Child Poverty Action Group. I met Sir Stanley at Watford Gap services and drove him to and from the launch at the House of Commons. For those younger readers, should we have any, Stanley Matthews' career spanned the Second World War and extended into the 60s, during which he became the oldest player ever to play for England, and the oldest player ever to play in England's top flight. The man was a picture of humility and grace, and the deference shown to him by the people that run our country that day was thoroughly disarming.

Some England players - and there are of course honourable exceptions - seem to think pulling on an England shirt is like a medal, a footballing OBE, a reward for success rather than an opportunity to achieve success; it carries no obligations.

You just long for Gareth Southgate to stand up in front of his squad and say, "Look, the Premier League made you rich and famous, but playing for England can make you immortal. Which would you prefer?" Except you fear, to a man, they'd say, "I'll have the fame and fortune please - immortality won't buy me a Ferrari."

Now don't get me wrong. I'm a patriot. When England get to the knockout stages of a major tournament I'm jumping up and down with excitement like all the other part-timers who don't know the offside law from coleslaw and belting out 'Three Lions' (except I can't help laughing when it gets to the line 'Jules Rimet still gleaming...'. Did the esteemed former president of FIFA die in an unfortunate nuclear accident?)

I desperately want those players to prove me wrong. Maybe this year? Probably not.

Meet two new exiles Steve Smith and Iain McTaggart

IF YOU thought Wealdstone FC operates in some kind of some small parochial bubble, be warmed by the ever-growing group of exiled Stones fans that Peter Thompson has brought to our attention.

And Pete isn't even a long-time fan! He worked with supporter Chris Cone in Edinburgh and by the end of the noughties was invited down for the weekend to take in a game.... he liked it so much this Hearts fan is now a regular, coming down by plane or train to home and 'nearby' away games (think Gateshead). He was then introduced to Stones fan of the 70s and 80s Jim Sorrell, also exiled in Edinburgh and now the pair of them travel down together!

And now, to extend the happy band, Peter tells me about two more converts: cricketing mates Steve Smith and Iain McTaggart who visited the Vale on a pilgrimage the day before the AFC Fylde trip. Both played with Pete for Kirk Brae Cricket Club in Edinburgh during the 80s and 90s before emigrating in the early 2000s (Steve to Hobart, Australia and Iain to Tokyo, Japan). The trio have stayed in touch via Zoom and the get-together last weekend included a visit to the Vale, beer tasting at the bar, and pictures in the ground (below).

They went on to the Luton v Nottm Forest Prem match the following day as Steve - a retired Professor of Botany at Tasmania University, aged 72 - is originally from Luton and actually related to the Hatters' fifth all-time goalscorer, Herbert Moody !! Iain, 60, is originally from Bishopton near Glasgow but supports Aberdeen through family connections in the north. He is now Associate Professor in Soil Science at one of Tokyo's Universities. Maybe he can help advise on our drainage!

Both have now joined the unofficial "Wealdstone Exiles Supporters Club" and plan to visit in the future when we're actually playing a game... **Tim Parks**



Visit to the home of football for Iain (left) and Steve...



...before joining Chris Cone (left) and Pete (2nd right) for an old pals' meal



...then on to Kenilworth Road for the trio

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





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THE STONES INTERVIEW BY TIM PARKS

ten minutes with...

MANNY DUKU

IF THE Stones manage to build on those brilliant away performances at York, Southend, Woking and AFC Fylde, Manny Duku's winning goal last Saturday may prove to be one of the most famous strikes in Wealdstone history.

His calm finish, hitting the top corner unerringly from 20 yards, sealed an unexpected 2-1 win and was rich reward for the 31-year-old Dutchman.

For Immanuelson Duku - to give him his full title - has a young family living back home in the Netherlands and grabs whatever chance he has to fly back and see them - and it is no surprise that Manny softly says: "People don't understand the sacrifices that many footballers make to have a career".

He has a four-year-old daughter and a one-year-old son, and in recent years has been playing as far apart as Inverness in

Scotland and Torquay in the south west. From the top to the bottom of Great Britain!

Most recently, of course, Manny found himself in the eye of the FA Cup storm earlier this year when Maidstone United parachuted the 6ft 2in striker into their team for their 3rd Round tie at Ipswich's Portman Road. He played the full 90 minutes up front as the other Stones pulled off a sensational 2-1 win over the Championship side!

Maidstone went out at Coventry City in the next round but it was still quite an experience. More of that later...

Manny, of Ghanaian descent, began his

Manny (No.9) tucks away one of his two goals in Raith Rovers 5-2 win at Queen of the South in his first few weeks in Scotland



FA Cup glory... a commute to his family back in Netherlands ...the unusual life of Stones' hot-shot Duku

career as a teenager in Amsterdam but admits that at the age of 18 - having failed to make it at top-flight Dutch side Heerenveen - he decided to concentrate on his sports management studies.

"The bubble had burst for me and I just started playing Sunday football with my mates while carrying on with my Uni stuff.

"It was my mum who really forced me to go to England and try to resurrect a footballing career ... my uncle was living over here in Aylesbury, so I flew over and my one real contact in England, Mark Jones, the Oxford city assistant manager, put me in touch with some local clubs."

At this point, having noticed Manny's long career list of 17 clubs in English football from Hemel Hempstead to

Hayes and Yeading, I asked him if he'd ever heard of Jefferson Louis... who also lives in Aylesbury!

"Why yes! Isn't he the striker who's had lots and lots of clubs?" said Manny. "Well, even more than you" I laughed. Jefferson's quite a few years older, but he stayed at Wealdstone longer than any of his other 40-odd clubs. And he has a similar playing style, big and awkward and difficult to mark.

"I didn't want to have so many clubs, but in football things happen that make you leave. The hardest thing was to get established in the first place when you arrive in this country, not really knowing anybody."

Manny's first stop in England was not at Oxford City, as expected, but at Southern League Chesham United.

Then it was off to Dean Brennan's (and

go to England and try to resurrect a footballing career ... my uncle was living over here in Aylesbury, so I flew over and my one real contact in England, Mark Jones, the Oxford city assistant manager, put me in touch with some local clubs."

At this point, having noticed Manny's long career list of 17 clubs in English football from Hemel Hempstead to



A delighted Manny Duku celebrates his stunning strike at Fylde with the also-excellent Jaydn Mundle-Smith
Pictures: JON TAFFEL

Stuart Maynard's) Hemel Hempstead, then Kings Langley, Banbury United, and Hayes and Yeading, where he made his name in the 2017-18 season with 33 goals in 39 games.

"That was when the confidence really kicked in under manager, Paul Hughes, who was terrific help for me, a mentor really.

"Cheltenham then bought me on a two-year deal but it wasn't long before the manager, Gary Johnson, was sacked and I went out on loan to Barnet and then Halifax. That was a difficult time living in Milton Keynes (which is where I now live) while Halifax gave me a place to stay in the Yorkshire town.

"Then it was down to Torquay! Gary Johnson brought me to Devon, and we stayed there, me, my wife and daughter... it was great in the summer, like being on holiday, but bleak in the winter.

"It was stressful when my son was born, and we



Get in! Duku strikes at Fylde

needed to sort out schools for the kids, so they moved back to Amsterdam while I tried to sort out my career."

Manny's agent came up with another local move: to Raith Rovers in the Scottish championship! "I started well with five or six goals in the first dozen games, and it was a good standard, the highest that I played, although probably comparable to the National League.

"My mum is half Scottish, which sort of helped me fit in, but to be honest, I suffered a bit of depression in Scotland, even after I'd moved again to Inverness Caledonian Thistle.

"To be honest, I wasn't really feeling like my true self and it was a relief to get a move back down to the south coast at Havant and Waterlooville."

Manny had an excellent start to his Havant career as they set off on a long winning run... only to narrowly miss out on the playoffs in the National League South.

York City had been interested in signing Manny during his spell in Scotland, and now took the opportunity to pounce ... and he scored on his debut against Middles-

brough in a summer 2022 pre-season friendly, a last-minute winner against Bromley, and of course a towering header against Wealdstone although we hit back to win 2-1 after Manny had been substituted in November that year.

There was also a sweet moment when he came off the bench in injury time against Wrexham and struck an angled equaliser from outside the box with his first touch. A goal often repeated on TNT Sports.

"Niggling injuries stopped me having a run in the team, and when John Askey, the manager, was replaced by David Webb I was clearly not his kind of guy."

Then came an adventure, unusual even by Manny's standards!

"My agent knows Anthony Limbrick, coach of Manchester 62 in the Gibraltar League. There are

continued over page >>





THE STONES INTERVIEW CONTINUED

<< from previous page

only eight clubs in that league, all using the same plastic pitch, but there was a chance of playing in Champions League qualification, and I thought it would be a nice experience to go abroad."

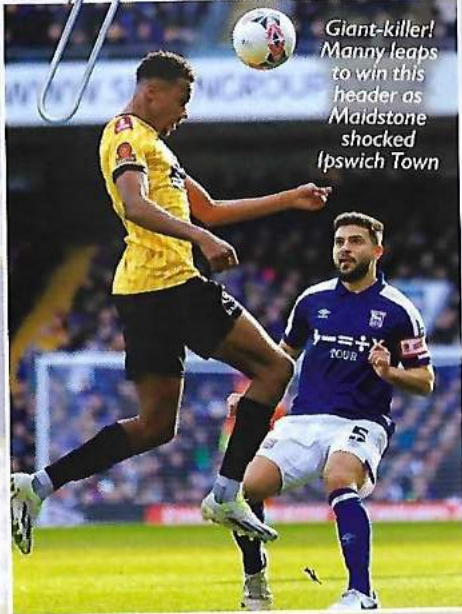
The family relocated there for what proved to be just a few months' holiday... Manchester 62 (formed by a group of Manchester United fans in 1962, unsurprisingly) got into financial difficulties, and the Duku family found themselves heading back to England for another new club, Maidstone United.

"Maidstone had lost their main striker just before the visit to Ipswich Town in the FA Cup, so I found myself making my debut against a team near the top of the Championship! It was an amazing occasion (Maidstone won 2-1 if you've been living under a rock -Ed), although I'm not sure how I got through the 90 minutes having barely played for over a month."

A few National League South games later, Manny was lining up against Coventry City in the next round, but The Other Stones FA Cup odyssey ended at the Ricoh Arena.

"After that game, I was on the bench for back to back matches – and then my agent called to say that Wealdstone were interested in signing me to the end of the season.

"That wasn't a hard decision! Wealdstone had been interested in signing me while I was at York but now it was the ideal move, closer to home and in a higher division. I've got lots of thanks for what George Elokobi did for me, opening the door back



Giant-killer! Manny leaps to win this header as Maidstone shocked Ipswich Town

started so well with an assist for Max's goal... But then both of us involved in that goal missed from the penalty spot.

"My only excuse is that my legs had gone! My last start was at Coventry a fortnight earlier, and we put so much into the Solihull game, so it was a very sad finish."

"Are you a regular penalty taker? I asked him.

"Oh yes, I've taken penalties at other clubs and scored in a shoot-out for York in the FA Trophy the previous season. My goal at AFC Fylde was a lot harder, a lot further out but there was definitely less pressure on me at that moment."

Just as I was speaking to Manny news came through of the hastily-rearranged game with Bromley on Wednesday night.... but the striker was confident about a repeat of the team's heroics last weekend.

"I really think we can get a winning run going and then who knows how much higher up the table we can finish?"

into the English game, and I really enjoyed that cup run.

"But this Wealdstone group are a great bunch of players, very welcoming and with a strong winning mentality. The bonding on the way to AFC Fylde was really important, plus the chance to rest up the day before the game and prepare properly. We knew we had to win the game and I was really pleased to score that goal, a real training ground move with Tarryn running 30 yards with the ball, Alex Dyer also involved, then Max and Sam Bowen setting me up on the edge of the box."

"I know what you're going to ask next!" said Manny with a laugh.

"The Solihull trophy game... well I was pleased with my performance and it

High-flyer! Manny climbs above the Fylde defence (left) and then celebrates his winning goal Pix: JON TAFFEL



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All you need to know about... Kidderminster Harriers

Opposition in focus

As one of the most prestigious and widely-recognised names in all of non-league football, Kidderminster Harriers is rightly proud of its past – the 'Harriers' name still paying homage to the club's early years in athletics and rugby before football as we know it began in 1886 with the birth of the club that still does the town proud.

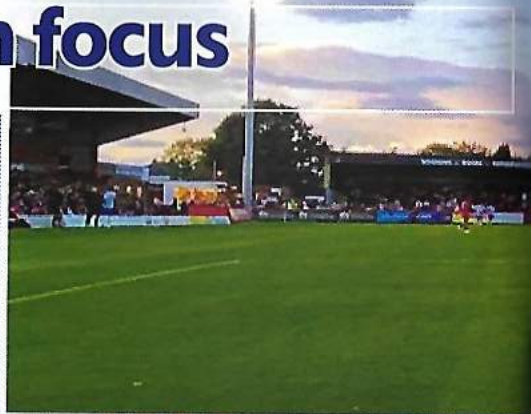
The Birmingham and District League was formed in 1889; Kidderminster Olympic pipping Harriers to the title before the two clubs merged in 1890 under the Harriers banner. Harriers continued in the Birmingham League until 1939, winning the Championship in consecutive seasons (1938 and 1939), clinching a league and cup double in the latter campaign.

The club's move to the Southern League for 1939-40 proved short-lived as the Second World War intervened after only three games. Immediately after the war

Harriers played in the Birmingham League and Birmingham Combination before re-joining The Southern League in 1948-49. That Season the record attendance was registered for a game at Aggborough, when 9,155 spectators saw Harriers lose 0-3 to local rivals Hereford United in an FA Cup tie.

In 1951-52 the revolutionary use of floodlights by the club gave Harriers the distinction of staging the first floodlit games in the history of the FA Cup at Aggborough. Harriers' next championship was the Birmingham Senior Cup in 1964, and a further 23 trophies – including four League Championships – were won before Harriers re-joined the Southern League in 1972. Promotion to the Alliance Premier League (Football Conference) was clinched at the end of 1982-83.

The club's elevation to the Alliance Premier League (Conference) ushered in a quarter of a century of unprecedented success for the Harriers that would see them win every major honour in the Non-League game and ultimately become the 21st Century's first newcomers to the Football League. Away from league action, 1987 saw Harriers qualify for a Final at Wembley Stadium for the first time. The fixture was the FA Trophy against Burton Albion. After a 0-0 draw, Kidderminster went on to win the replay 2-1 (after extra time) at the Hawthorns. Harriers have since graced the



Wembley turf on three further, heart-breaking occasions; losing to Wycombe (1991), Woking (1995) and Stevenage (2007) in finals, the latter in front of a record crowd of 53,000 at the newly-rebuilt national arena.

In the FA Cup, Harriers remain perennial headline makers. The team's most memorable cup run was perhaps that

of the 1993/94 season when giants aplenty came head to head with Worcestershire's premier side. Chesham United, Kettering and Woking were all downed as Harriers entered the Third Round draw – paired with Birmingham City. The reds secured one of the most memorable victories in its history at St Andrew's, winning 2-1 in front of almost 20,000 fans thanks to Jon Purdie's clincher. More joy followed in the Fourth Round and Preston North End were duly dispatched at a packed Aggborough, the mazy run only coming to an end at the hands of top-flight West Ham United, who sneaked an agonising 1-0 victory on the day.

Further runs since have kept Harriers up there as a true giant killers – they gave a true fright to then Premier League neighbours Wolves in 2003 before being knocked out in a Molineux replay, while Darren Ferguson's Peterborough were beaten on a memorable night at London Road ten years later, setting up a plum tie at Premier League Sunderland, where Harriers were beaten by a single goal in front of more than 4,000 travelling fans.

The turn of the millennium signalled undoubtedly one of the most memorable periods in the club's illustrious history. Under the stewardship of former Liverpool legend Jan Molby, Harriers clinched promotion to the Football League for the first time in 2000, where they enjoyed five seasons.

Memorable victories over mainstays of the



Premier League like Swansea City and Football League big-hitters like Hull City were each in their own way a significant milestone as Harriers created a very brief but very memorable history in the highest echelons of professional football in the country.

Harriers returned to a very different non-league scene in 2005 after hard times on and off the pitch ended in relegation to a then Nationwide Conference that saw Harriers as far from the giant fish they once were.

Under various managers, including former Captain Mark Yates and ex-Macclesfield Town legend Steve Burr, there were plenty of memorable moments for Harriers fans to enjoy but, despite one shot at the play-offs in 2013, the team never quite managed to recapture the glory days of old – leaving the club to suffer off the field as just as many Chairman and Directors came and departed, ultimately resulting in the 2016 relegation to the National League North – the second step of non-league football.

But under the management of former Derby County favourite John Eustace, a carefully-crafted, youthful team rallied well and carried the charge for Kidderminster Harriers to get back on an upward curve, finishing inside the playoffs during two consecutive seasons. The attractive style of football and highly placed finishes caught the eye of QPR, who appointed Eustace amongst their management team, a huge endorsement of his terrific work during his time at Aggborough.

The club endured a turbulent period in the following few years – unsuccessful management tenures, instability off the field and the devastating impacts of the COVID pandemic leaving their

mark. Amongst it all, though, hugely popular former Captain and Assistant boss Russ Penn was handed the managerial reigns. While Russ and his number two, Jimmy O'Connor, helped re-shape the club's playing fortunes, so a new ownership set about stabilising the club off the field and building for success.

The 2021-22 season would turn out to be a memorable one. A 52-match campaign saw Harriers reach the play-offs once again before falling just short of promotion, while an iconic FA

Cup win saw the Reds knock out three higher-graded teams, including Championship outfit Reading, before losing to Premier League giants West Ham in the dying seconds of extra time.

With the club's fanbase reenergised and the club's fortunes reversed, the team went one better in 2022-23, shrugging off some below-par form in the middle part of the campaign to storm to an incredible promotion at the climax of the term. The Reds surged into the play-offs on the final day, winning promotion via the play-offs thanks to an incredible nine-match winning run.

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Taking it to the



Our striker/midfielder Max Kretzschmar reflects on the topsy-turvy nature of football, and the injustice of forcing teams to play while missing international players...

Hello again Stones fans and welcome back to The Vale! A week is a long time in football isn't it?

That's going to be a working title for my latest vlog on *Max Talks Football*, my YouTube Channel. A devastating penalty loss in the FA Trophy one week, fast forward to a gutsy win in far away Lancashire vs AFC Fylde the next.

National League - and professional football for that matter - are filled with highs and lows. As a 30 year old, your experience as a professional allows you to ride these waves of emotions a little easier. I found it a lot stormier when I was younger. After a defeat or a poor performance I'd be very down. I'd replay every action from the Saturday in my head. I'd think about all the ifs, buts and maybes all Sunday and return to training on Monday subdued.

What a waste of time and energy that was! Analyse and learn from your mistakes of course. But return energised and positive. This is what this squad has in abundance.

Returning from Lancashire with three points was hugely satisfying considering the 7-8 hour journey up there. A somewhat ugly win in trying conditions (the pitch wasn't too dissimilar to the nearby Blackpool beach in places). I know you fans want to see more wins like this.

I say an ugly win because we were wasteful in possession first half, especially in transition. I felt there were big gaps to exploit when the ball turned over to us but for whatever reason we were inaccurate. Second half, the

inaccuracy was in front of goal. We created numerous chances but didn't put the ball in the back of the net.

What may have gone under the radar was the impact of the substitutions. Every single one made an impact. Brandon Mason secured our left hand side with Fylde's dangerous right back Barrett being subdued after his introduction. Jack Cook did his usual thing and increased our solidity at the back.

Finally, Sean Adarkwa gave us respite with his hold up play and threatened to score every time he got the ball facing their goal.

A mention to the goal-scorers too. Dillon De Silva has injected real pace and skill to our attack. What I love the most though is his willingness to press and defend behind the ball. An undervalued skill for a winger.

And Manny Duku capped his performance off with the fantastic winning goal. He must've hated me up until that point! I was constantly shouting at

him, "Press here! Press there! Cut this off! Cut that off! Manny just smiles and dispatches the ball top corner. Great stuff.

With five internationals playing overseas this week, we are going to need the bench and even the lads beyond that to perform. With the fixture backlog as it is, the National League has deemed it fair for us to play without arguably five 'starters'.

So be it. I love these moments. Our backs against the wall. Big underdogs. We've been doing it for the whole two years I've been here! Let's hear you Stones again today. We will give it everything we've got and more! UTS



Every sinew: Max effort from Max at Fylde

Five internationals away so we'll need the whole squad to perform...but how I love these backs to the wall moments!



Dillon De Silva celebrates his goal with Manny Duku Pix: Jon Taffel

Follow Max's vlog youtube.com/@maxtalksfootball

OPPOSITION IN FOCUS

Kidderminster Harriers

1. TOM PALMER - GOALKEEPER

Very much part of the Aggborough furniture, Tom Palmer is an Academy graduate who has progressed to being a regular part of the first team. A highly thought-of shot-stopper Palmer made his first-team debut in 2017 and went into the 2023-24 season with almost 50 senior Harriers appearances to his name.

2. ALEX PENNY - DEFENCE

This former Nuneaton, Peterborough and Boston man arrived in DY10 in 2020 and has since endured serious injuries, two seasons curtailed through COVID and a painful play-off defeat – those just being the setbacks. The forward-thinking defender has also been Player of the Season, netted one of the most iconic goals of the club's history against West Ham in front of a sell-out crowd and 4 million BBC tv viewers, and played in almost every minute of the nine-match winning run that saw us win promotion.

3. CALEB RICHARDS - DEFENCE

First joining on loan from Norwich City, Caleb's stay became permanent soon after as this outstanding professional quickly set about establishing himself in non-league.

4. NAT KNIGHT PERCIVAL - DEFENCE

Nat ended a ten-year stay in the EFL to sign for Harriers last summer having left Tranmere Rovers. He made 22 starts in his first season in DY10, where he'd battled Harriers during the formative years of his career while at Histon. In the interim, Nat played extensively for the likes of Shrewsbury Town and Peterborough United.

5. KRYSSTIAN PEARCE - DEFENCE

A winner of two key End of Season awards, Krystian Pearce made 52 starts for Harriers in an impressive first term at Aggborough. The former Mansfield Town Captain, who has also featured for Notts County, Solihull Moors and Hereford, was a dominant figure at the heart of defence for the Reds.

6. REISS McNALLY - DEFENCE

Reiss is a versatile defender who turned a loan move to Aggborough into a permanent switch in the summer of 2023. He'd previously been in DY10 on a temporary basis from Solihull Moors

7. KIERAN PHILLIPS - FORWARD

A talented finisher, Phillips is a product of the Bristol Rovers Academy. After signing a professional contract

with The Gas, he picked up non-league experience with loan spells at Chippenham, Dorchester and Swindon Supermarine – the latter seeing him net 17 times in 2021-22. After leaving Bristol he joined Gloucester then Kiddy in the Summer.

8. TODD MILLER - MIDFIELD

Miller, 21, linked up with Bromley after leaving Brighton in the close season. In addition to 13 appearances for Bromley this season, Miller's previous experience also includes time with Colchester and Doncaster. He arrived at Aggborough on loan in February 2024

9. AMARI MORGAN SMITH - FORWARD

With over 150 appearances and 43 minutes to his name and 43 goals going into this season, striker Amari Morgan-Smith has seen a few sights in his time at Aggborough. A former Cheltenham, Luton, and York City man is in his third spell as a Harrier, having previously played in both the National League and National League North for the club.

10. ASHLEY HEMMINGS - MIDFIELD

With almost 150 appearances to his name ahead of this term, Hemmings is a firm favourite with the Aggborough faithful thanks to his eye-catching displays since joining the club back in 2019.

11. JACK LAMBERT - MIDFIELD

Newcastle-born Lambert joined following a spell of just under two seasons with Darlington. The 24-year-old counts Dundee and Scunthorpe among his other former clubs, as well as having spent time playing in Iceland.

12. CHRISTIAN OXLADE CHAMBERLAIN - MIDFIELD

As well as his time at Kings Lynn, the Portsmouth-born player has featured for Aldershot Town, Notts County, Oxford City and Eastbourne.

13. JOSH BISHOP - MIDFIELD

Shot-stopper and Academy graduate Bishop continued his progress in 2022-23 by combining his studies and Academy football with regular first team action at Stourport Swifts.

14. ZAK BROWN - MIDFIELD

Zak Brown joined Alvechurch for the 2021-22 season after impressing as a youth prospect at West Bromwich Albion. Zak joined the Harriers in 2022

15. GERRY McDONAGH - FORWARD

Powerful Irishman Gerry brings plenty of National League experience to Aggborough, having featured for FC Halifax, Scunthorpe United and Eastleigh in recent seasons.

16. MATT PRESTON - DEFENCE

Matt needed little introduction to Reds fans in returning to Aggborough this summer following a memorable loan spell during the 2021-2022 season. Earlier in his career, Matt featured for Solihull Moors, Mansfield and Walsall among others.

17. ETHAN FREEMANTLE - FORWARD

Now in his fifth season as a professional with Harriers, Academy graduate Ethan Freemantle bagged his best goal return in 2022-23.

18. KAI LISSIMORE - MIDFIELD

Academy graduate Kai Lissimore came through the Aggborough ranks and has also enjoyed a fruitful loan spell with Bromsgrove Sporting.

19. SAM BELLIS - FORWARD

Saim Bellis was a first Harriers signing as Manager for Aggborough chief Phil Brown in January 2024, joining on loan from Barrow.

20. SAMMY ROBINSON - DEFENCE

Having progressed through the ranks at Manchester City before a move to Port Vale, Robinson left Vale Park at the end of the 2022-23 season.

21. CHRISTIAN DIBBLE - GOALKEEPER

Christian joined Harriers in early 2023 after spending five years at Wrexham. A former Chorley and Boston shot-stopper, Dibble got play-off and FA Trophy Final experience while with The Dragons.

22. COLE KPEKAWA - DEFENCE

27-year-old Kpekawa is a former QPR youngster who has featured for the likes of Colchester and St Mirren previously, joining Bromley from Maidenhead in the summer.

23. SHANE BYRNE - MIDFIELD

A cultured midfielder, Shane has also featured for Brackley, Nuneaton, Bury and Corby during his career.

24. REGAN GRIFFITHS - MIDFIELD

Regan is a product of the Crewe youth system and,

having risen through the ranks there, he went on to make in excess of 50 first team appearances in the EFL and cups. Regan's other experiences include loan spells in non-league with Notts County and, earlier this season, Boreham Wood

25. SAM HEWETT - MIDFIELD

Hewett has been with the club since his early teens, featuring in FA Youth Cup campaigns as well as being named in four first-team squads in the 2022-23 season, as well as being Academy Player of the Season.

26. OWEN HESKETH - MIDFIELD

Owen Hesketh joined Harriers on loan from Premier League side Wolves in January.

27. GOLD OMOTAYO - FORWARD

Harriers boosted their forward line in December 2023 with the signing of Gold Omotayo from AFC Fylde. The former Yeovil and Wrexham man was then snapped up by The Coasters in the summer. He then made the switch to Aggborough on a deal until the end of the 2024-25 season

28. KOBE HALL - FORWARD

Harriers Academy forward Kobe Hall broke into the first team picture during his first season within Harriers' U19s programme during 2022/23. Hall made his first team debut aged 16 years and 135 days in January 2023 against Leamington.

30. JAY EMMANUEL THOMAS - FORWARD

Harriers signed experienced forward Jay Emmanuel-Thompson in February 2024. The former England U19 International counts Arsenal, Ipswich and Bristol City amongst his previous clubs.

35. SEB THOMPSON - FORWARD

Young front man Thompson, 21, is local to Harriers and spent time in the Aston Villa Academy as a youth, before spells at Liverpool and Derby. He's also featured for Leicester and most, recently, Burnley. He left the Turf Moor outfit after a busy 2022-23 season of Academy football, and spent time with Macclesfield earlier this campaign to maintain his readiness.



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Kidderminster Harriers Greatest Seasons

CLASSIC CAMPAIGNS

1968/69

Peter Wassall scored a club record 67 goals as Kidderminster Harriers stormed to the West Midland League title in 1968/69. Newcomers included Les Cocker, Vic Cockroft, Terry Jewkes, Colin Smith and Brian Taylor, with Harriers losing just twice and scoring 124 goals as they won the title by a nine-point margin. Goals by brothers Brendan and Peter Wassall gave Kidderminster a 2-2 draw at Brighton in the FA Cup first round, only the second time they had taken a Football League club to a replay, which was lost 1-0 in front of 8,442 at Aggborough. Harriers also shared the West Midland League Cup with Cinderford Town.

1979/80

Kidderminster Harriers won the Southern League Cup for the first time in 1979/80. New signings included John Powell, Dave Clements, Gary Fleet, Alex Travis and Phil Nicholls. Harriers defeated Witney Town 5-3, Milton Keynes 2-0, Bridgend Town 2-0, Cambridge City 3-1 and Alvechurch 2-1 in the Southern League Cup before two goals by John Powell plus others from John Griffiths and Phil Mullen secured a 4-1 victory over Dartford in the two-legged final. John Chambers also guided Kidderminster to the FA Cup first round for the first time in 11 years but Harriers lost 2-0 to Blackburn Rovers watched by 4,030 at Aggborough.

1982/83

Kidderminster Harriers won promotion to the Alliance Premier League in 1982/83. John Chambers added Graham Jones, John Horne, Ron Skinner and Barrie Vassallo. Harriers kicked off with a 2-1 win at home to Hastings United and were destined to lead the Southern League



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

Premier Division for most of the season, at one stage by 14 points. Top scorer Phil Mullen, Graham Jones and John Powell scored 75 goals between them as Kidderminster eventually finished runners-up to AP Leamington. They also defeated Worcester City 5-2 in the Worcestershire Senior Cup final and Willenhall Town 2-1 in the Staffs Senior Cup final.

1985/86

Kidderminster Harriers celebrated their 1985/86 centenary season by reaching the Welsh Cup final for the first time. Graham Allner signed Kim Casey and Mark Buckland, then added Adrian O'Dowd, Clive Boxall and Trevor Campbell. Spearheaded by Kim Casey, Paul Davies and Mick Tuohy, Kidderminster had a magnificent 18 match unbeaten run that took them to the FA Trophy quarter-finals and they finished third in the Gola League. Harriers beat Shrewsbury Town 3-1, Newport County 2-1, Swansea City 4-0 and Hereford United 5-4 to reach the Welsh Cup final. They drew 1-1 with Wrexham but lost the replay 2-1.

1986/87

Graham Allner guided Kidderminster Harriers to FA Trophy final glory in 1986/87. The arrival of Jim Arnold, Colin Brazier and Kevin Collins strengthened the squad and Harriers beat Mossley 1-0, Worthing 2-0, Cheltenham Town 3-2, Dagenham 3-0 and Fareham Town 2-0 en route to their first FA Trophy final. They drew 0-0 with Burton Albion at Wembley and triumphed 2-1 in the replay at The Hawthorns. Despite England Semi-Pro star Kim Casey scoring 38 goals, Harriers finished in a disappointing mid-table position in the Conference but trounced Cheltenham Town 5-1 in front of



1,750 at Aggborough on New Year's Day.

1990/91

Kidderminster Harriers were FA Trophy finalists for the second time in five seasons in 1990/91. Graham Allner's side beat Sutton United 4-2, Dover Athletic 1-0, Bath City 3-1, Emley 3-0 and Witton Albion 2-1 en route to the FA Trophy final before losing 2-1 to Martin O'Neill's double-chasing Wycombe Wanderers at Wembley. Harriers also reached the Bob Lord Trophy semi-finals before losing 6-2 on aggregate to Barrow and took that season's FA Cup giantkillers Woking to a first round second replay. Brilliant young goalkeeper Paul Jones moved to Wolves at the end of the season and was destined to win 50 Welsh caps.

1993/94

Kidderminster Harriers won the Conference title and reached the FA Cup fifth round in 1993/94. They earned national headlines by beating Kettering Town 3-0, Woking 1-0, Birmingham City 2-1 and Preston 1-0 en route to the FA Cup fifth round, narrowly losing 1-0 to Premier League side West Ham in front of a capacity 8,000 crowd at Aggborough. Paul Davies and Delwyn Humphries netted 27 goals between them as Harriers won the Conference title for the first time, managing eight successive Conference wins during a 13 match unbeaten run. A total of 8,376 supporters watched the two matches against local rivals Bromsgrove.

1996/97

Lee Hughes was leading scorer with 30 goals as Kidderminster Harriers so nearly achieved a Conference 'double' in 1996/97. Graham Allner's side were early pace setters and triumphed 5-0 at Dover, then bounced back from a 2-1 home defeat

by Bromsgrove in front of 6,081 on Boxing Day to hammer Bath City 6-0 at Aggborough. They had an 11 match unbeaten run and managed seven straight wins, with the 2-2 draw at title rivals Stevenage in January watched by the season's biggest crowd of 6,489. Harriers were pipped to the title by Macclesfield, but beat the Silkmen in the Conference Cup final on away goals after a 1-1 draw.

1999/2000

Kidderminster Harriers won the Conference title with a club record 85 points in 1999/2000. They lost six of their opening eight Conference matches under new manager Jan Molby, including a 5-3 defeat at Rushden & Diamonds. Mark Druce grabbed a hat-trick in a 5-0 victory over Southport in November and Harriers soared to the top of the table with just one defeat in 23 Conference matches. Kidderminster beat title rivals Rushden & Diamonds 2-0 in the return match watched by 6,250 at Aggborough in April. They clinched the title despite losing 1-0 at Woking to secure the Football League place denied them six years earlier.

2006/07

Mark Yates guided Kidderminster Harriers to the FA Trophy final in 2006/07. Harriers defeated Vauxhall Motors 4-0 in the first round replay, Exeter City 1-0, Braintree Town 3-1 after a third round replay, Halifax Town 3-1 and Northwich Victoria 4-3 en route to the final. Two goals by James Constable gave Harriers a 2-0 half-time lead over Stevenage Borough but the following team lost 3-2 at Wembley Stadium: Scott Bevan, Jeff Kenna, Michael Blackwood, Gavin Hurrant, Mark Creighton, Stuart Whitehead, Simon Russell, Russell Penn, lyseden Christie (Andrew White), James Constable, Brian Smikle (Luke Reynolds).



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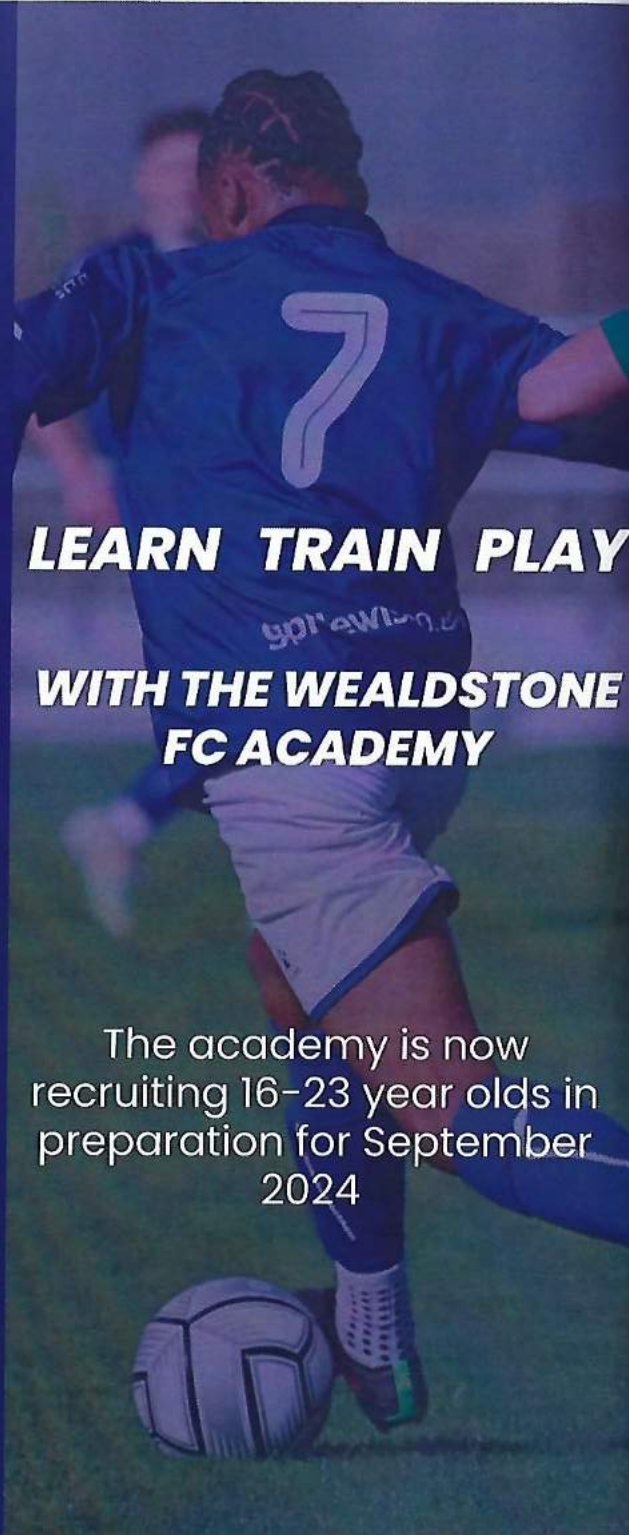
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Tiers 4 souvenirs - how long have we been in non-league's top flight?



Worries about relegation bring our position in the non-league world into focus, including just how long we've enjoyed 'Tier 1' status

First up this time out, a word to today's opposition. Kidderminster Harriers' Aggborough stadium was one of the last stops on our 1984/1985 National League campaign. It was the second of five games for us in ten days at the end of what would turn out to be the greatest in the club's history.

Our trip to the West Midlands was the first of two Monday games in that run of five crucial fixtures between Saturday 27th April through to the final league fixture at Barnet on Bank Holiday Monday 6th May. We'd drawn 0-0 with Dagenham on the previous Saturday, and most of us had stayed up until the early hours of Monday morning to see Dennis Taylor beat Steve Davis to the World Snooker championship title (that sport being nothing less than a national obsession back then).

After the Kidderminster game we were then due to entertain Frickley Athletic on the Wednesday before travelling to Kettering Town on what we hoped would become a May Day bank holiday weekend of no little celebration. Understandably, the aim was to secure the title ahead of visiting Barnet at Underhill and our 'noisy neighbours'.

So it was that on Monday April 29th 1985, goals

from Andy Graham (2) and Lee Holmes saw us to a 3-0 win with Stones fans making up a decent proportion of the 607 people in Aggborough stadium that evening.

Following a 1-1 draw with Frickley, our 1-0 win at Kettering Town's Rockingham Road secured for us the first part of what

would go on to be non-league football's first ever double of National League and FA Trophy.

Kidderminster were no lightweights that fateful season, finishing eighth. Beating them so resoundingly was huge for us; an away win sandwiched between two home draws helping to put the title firmly within reach. The result was especially valuable given that, back then, away wins got us 3 points but home wins yielded just 2.

It was a bright spring Monday evening and for some reason I recall a pint of bitter costing 69 pence, one of the first physical manifestations of the London price differential I'd experienced.

Anyway, for reasons that surpass all kind of understanding in 2024, I had about my person my Lloyds Bank cheque book. In all the celebrations I dropped it on the terraces. About a week later, an envelope arrived to my home address with the cheque book and a compliments slip from KHFC. Given the importance of cheque books back then, how great that they'd gone to the trouble of finding out my address from the bank and then sent it on back to me. Accordingly, I've always had something of a soft spot for the Harriers.

Tier One Six Pointer

Not to today, of course. The state of play being as it is, we'll be desperate to take the points this afternoon, as will they. It's a classic six pointer.

What's really good is to see both clubs duking it out at Tier One of non-league football, both of us

having ventured up and down the divisions in the years since our double. Kidderminster, of course, have even been in the EFL itself, while our National League win in 1985 came a couple of years before such a feat conferred EFL status automatically on the champs.

Anyway, it's that very subject on my mind in recent weeks, the skirting of the relegation zone bringing in to sharp focus the value of our Tier One non-league status.

Pitch perfect?

When we returned to the National League in 2020, the magnitude of the achievement was well documented in these pages. We'd spent no fewer than 32 years in the leagues below. We'd also experienced two seasons at Tier Four (the 1995/96 and 1996/97 seasons in the Isthmian League's third division). Our choice, of course - we either endured that enforced relegation to the Isthmian League or ended up with no Wealdstone Football Club at all.

We then got promoted again in 1997/98, taking us back to what was then Their 3. A third consecutive promotion in 1998/99 was annulled due to reasons that still anger me intensely, and so we stayed at Tier 3 (the then Isthmian League Division One) until 2004, when the introduction of the Conferences North and South saw us playing off against Dulwich Hamlet to secure our position in the Isthmian League's premier division - that now being at Tier 3, below the two conference divisions.

That play-off win meant that we can draw a line from 1999 until our 2013/14 Isthmian League title win in which we played seventeen consecutive seasons at Tier 3. That's the longest stretch of Wealdstone FC being at such a "lowly" level. In the 1970s we'd played in the Southern League's southern division, but that was technically Tier Two, with the Southern League's premier division being of equal value to the Northern, Northern Premier and Isthmian leagues.

Go back further and we played in both the Athenian and Isthmian Leagues when both had the one division. You could argue that these two leagues were more lowly than the Southern or



Left: the programme from our 1985 visit to Aggborough. Above: Aggborough as it looks today

Northern leagues of those times, and a roll-call of clubs plucked from non-league (never then 'promoted' competitively) shows how those two leagues were the most technically proficient.

Back even further and there was the Spartan League, even Willesden & District League. But as to

We've spent two seasons at Tier 4, twenty one at Tier 3, thirteen at Tier 2 and seventeen at Tier 1

where these fitted into the non-league firmament, and thus Wealdstone's place in it? You could argue it until the cows come home, the various leagues up and down the country differing in quality considerably.

Logically, we should probably take the club's move to semi-professional status in 1970/71 as a marker. Since then that's a total of 53 seasons,

of which we've spent two at Tier 4, twenty one at Tier 3, thirteen at Tier 2 and now seventeen at Tier 1. Essentially, a third of our existence since turning semi-professional has been in the topmost non-league league. Given that huge gap from 1988 until 2020, I guess it probably doesn't feel like it. (Tech note: I'm counting the Southern League Premier Division between 74/75 to 78/79 as Tier One.)

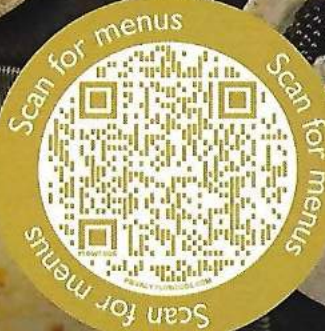
Anyway, all of which goes to show just what a prize National League status would be to both clubs today. Good luck after today Kidderminster, let's hope we're both in There One to tell the tale in 2024/2025.



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The screenshot shows the National League TV website and mobile app interface. The website features a navigation menu with 'HOME', 'MATCHES', 'MATCHES', 'TV', 'MEMBERSHIP', and 'LINKS'. The main content area displays 'The E12tree & Boreham' logo, 'vanarama NATIONAL LEAGUE' logo, and 'NATIONAL LEAGUE TV NOW LIVE' with a play button icon. Below this, there are sections for 'BOREHAM WOOD SOUTHEND UNITED', 'LATEST CONTENT' with video thumbnails, and 'YOUR TEAM' with logos for various clubs. The mobile app interface shows a 'BT SPORT REVIEW SHOW' and a 'HIGHLIGHTS SHOW'.

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 ALTRINCHAM Saturday 16th September Vanarama National League	Ruislip Windows & Doors	
 WOKING Tuesday 26th September Vanarama National League	Rolfe East	
 OLDHAM ATHLETIC Saturday 30th September Vanarama National League	OSMO UK	
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 MAIDENHEAD UNITED Tuesday 6th February Vanarama National League	Written in Stone	
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APPEARANCES

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CORRECT AS AT 9TH MARCH 2024	VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE			FA CUP			FA TROPHY			MIDDLESEX SENIOR CUP			MIDDLESEX CHARITY CUP			TOTALS			STONES CAREER		
	A	S	G	A	S	G	A	S	G	A	S	G	A	S	G	A	S	G	A	S	G
Abdulmalik, Abdul *	6	3		1		1										7	4		7	4	
Adarkwa, Sean	15	10	10					2								15	12	10	15	12	10
Allarakhia, Tarryn	22	7	5	1			2	2							25	7	7	77	13	16	
Andrews, Corie	6	14	1				1	1							7	15	1	20	19	4	
Barker, Charlie	32		1	1			3								36		1	68	2	1	
Barrett, Mason	6	8		1			3								10	8		29	15		
Bowen, Sam	27	3	5	1			3	1	1						31	4	6	31	4	6	
Campbell, Tahvon *	16	3	6	1			2	2							19	3	8	19	3	8	
Charles, Ashley *	19	1		1			1	1							21	2		119	23	2	
Clayden, Charles *	13	2													13	2		36	5	4	
Cook, Jack	32		5				3	1							35	1	5	121	3	13	
Cook-Appiah, Trae		1													1					1	
De Silva, Dillon	1														1			1			
Dewhurst, Marcus	15						4								19			19			
Duku, Manny							1								1			1			
Dyer, Alex	12	7					2	1							14	7	1	210	44	35	
Ferguson, Nathan	19	9	3	1	1	4	1								23	10	5	73	19	12	
Griffiths, Reo								1							1				1		
Henry, Aaron	7	2	1				2	1	1						9	3	2	29	3	4	
Hutchinson, Dominic																		20	8	1	
Ilunga, Brooklyn *	3	2					2								5	2		17	4		
Kretzschmar, Max	16	8	5	1		1	1	2	1						18	10	7	43	16	13	
Mason, Brandon	11	2			1		3								14	3		14	3		
Mundle-Smith, Jaydn	33	2	1				4								38	2		75	14	5	
Obiero, Micah	23	5	1	1			2	1							26	5	2	54	11	10	
Olomola, Olufela *	4	4													4	4		36	14	10	
Phillips, Declan								1							1			1	1		
Seaman, Charlie	5	2													5	2		5	2		
Smith, Kyle *	10	1	2	1											11	1	2	11	1	2	
Ward, Jed *	19			1											20			20			
Woodman, Deon *		2													2			2		2	
Young, Jack	2	1													2	1		2	1		



Kidderminster, we've played you before Won none of the last seven, and not beaten Kiddy for almost 40 years.. time for a change, Stones!

BY TIM PARKS

Cordice double sinks Harriers

1983:
The first
meeting
(W2-0)

THERE are some clubs that seem to be beaten even before they face Wealdstone, and there are others that seem to hold a jinx over us. Kidderminster Harriers certainly fall into the second category.

When the two sides faced off for the first time in 35 years - due to the Worcestershire club's climb out of the National League into the EFL while we were freefalling in the other direction - at Aggborough last October, Harriers were rock bottom of the table. They had won promotion via the National League North play-offs last season and were struggling... but still, it was hardly a surprise when a last-minute goal saw them win 1-0.

For that was the 'hex' sinking in. Although I've decorated this spread with reports from our golden early spell back in the Conference, we haven't beaten

Kiddy since the year we won the non-League double back in 1985! Since those glory Gola League days we've met the Harriers seven times (in the days that they were high-fliers and we were facing relegation with an ageing squad) and not won one.

THOSE GLORY YEARS...

No doubt many of our older fans will look back and smile at the early and mid-80s clashes with the men from Aggborough. Above left is the report of our first-ever clash in 1983, and although we lost the return game at the Harriers the sepia-tinted glasses are firmly in place as we look back at the sensational 1984-85 campaign. The double we inflicted on Kidderminster went a long, long way to securing that first unprecedented non-League 'double'. After racking up a 5-2 win (see report above right) on August 24, our

Graves hat-trick as Stones hit five

WEALDSTONE struck gold as they hit five goals past Kidderminster Harriers at Lower Mead on Saturday.

The goal spree will earn them a share of the first monthly jackpot of £2,500 - a cash bonus on offer from League sponsors Gola for teams scoring four goals at home or three away, writes Paul Jacques.

But Stones manager Brian Hall refused to get carried away by the 5-2 scoreline, which included a second half hat-trick for Mark Graves.

It was a far from perfect Wealdstone performance, and he knew it.

Hall had no doubts about Kidderminster's footballing ability.

And he had this warning for his players before the kick-off: "If you allow them room to play, they will punish you."

His fears were nearly confirmed in the opening minutes as Micky Tuohy grazed the crossbar and Etwyn Roberts made a hash of a chance from six yards.

Wealdstone, driven on by the non stop effort of Roy Davies, took the necessary action to block the flight path of Harriers and indulged in their own sorties at the other end.

Steve McCargo twice went close with long range shots before Wealdstone took a 35th minute lead.

A corner from the highly competitive Gary Donnellan was



1984:
The 3rd
meeting
(W5-2)

GOAL - Mark Graves dives in to head home the first of his hat-trick against Kidderminster on Saturday. PICTURE: DOUG AVENT.

cleared only as far as Robin Wainwright who hit a first time shot past keeper Tim Garner.

Brian Greenaway limped off two minutes from half-time to be replaced by Kevin Wedderburn, and then followed Wealdstone's most inventive period of the half.

Wainwright nearly added a second with a shot from the edge of the box that was tipped away for a corner, and Graves hit a shot that was scooped off the line after the keeper had only half parried it.

Two goals inside a minute put Stones well in command.

In the 61st minute a throw from

Davies was hooked across by Graves for Lee Holmes to steer the ball home.

A minute later, a cross from McCargo was flicked on by Alan Cordice for Graves to dive in and head home the first of his hat-trick.

John Barton curled a shot wide and Paul Davies somehow shot onto the bar from six yards with only keeper Bob Iles to beat.

Davies made amends in the 73rd minute when he sent a diving header past Iles.

Within three minutes Wealdstone were 4-1 up when a cross from Cordice was headed in

at the far post by Graves, who had started the move himself.

Six minutes from time Harriers pulled back a second goal when John Powell was allowed too much room inside the box.

It seemed Graves would be denied his hat-trick after he broke through and met a high bouncing ball with a header over the keeper which went agonisingly wide of the post.

But with virtually the last move of the match, Cordice broke clear down the left, cut inside the box and unselfishly squared the ball for Graves to slam home his third.

Wealdstone: Iles, Davies, McCargo, Byatt, Bowgett, Wainwright, Greenaway (Wedderburn 43), Holmes, A. Cordice, Graves, Donnellan.

Wealdstone 2, Kidderminster Harriers 0

Band, warmly received home supporters.

Iles though, did well to tip over Brennan's angled drive, before making a marvellous double save after 40 minutes, first from Mullen and then on the rebound from Bowater.

The deadlock was broken on the hours, somewhat out of the blue, when, after being released down the right, Gary Donnellan crossed superbly for the unmarked Cordice to head home gleefully from 10 yards. Cordice went close with another powerful header soon afterwards, before settling the issue after 71 minutes with a clinical finish from 12 yards, following Mark Graves' unselfish approach work.

Byatt, Graves and Waites all went close towards the end, before Iles made sure of his second successive clean sheet, blocking excellently from the unmarked Jones.

Wealdstone: Iles, Waddock, Richardson, Byatt, Bowgett, Barwick, Donnellan, Johnson (McCargo 88), Pearce (Waites 75), Cordice A. Graves.

AFTER an opening full of promise and enterprise, Wealdstone struggled to overcome a determined Kidderminster side last Saturday,

before two well-taken Alan Cordice goals ended the Midlanders' stout resistance and assured the 'Stones of two valuable home points.

The match got off to a cracking start, in keeping with the blazing Bank Holiday weather, with Nigel Johnson being denied twice in the opening ten minutes by the agility of Dullerstone, and the elusive Graham Jones having his well-directed header palmed on to the post by Bob Iles.

Sadly though, the game lost direction and pattern in the next half-hour, with both sides' distribution from the back leaving much to be desired. Indeed, the most lively performance came after the half-time whistle, courtesy of the visiting Middlesex Yeomanry Military



Alan Cordice - two goals

Ah, the iconic Stones programme covers of the 1980s!

Above: The unstoppable Alan Cordice takes the plaudits as we met, and beat, Kidderminster that first time early in the 83-84 season. Below, the covers from the clashes at Lower Mead in 1984 and 1987... when the Harriers were becoming all-powerful



Casey feast

1986:
The 7th
meeting
(L2-5)

WEALDSTONE'S fight back at Kidderminster on Saturday was halted by prolific scorer Kim Casey, who blasted a second half hat-trick as Stones crashed 5-2.

The opening 20 minutes had seen Wealdstone dominate and look the more dangerous. Their efforts were rewarded when Paul Miller scored from an acute angle, with a slightly mis-hit shot, after a fine run from the half-way line.

But Stones were then floored by two goals in five minutes from Paul Davies, who twice took advantage of a hesitant Stones defence.

His first was a well-executed lob over Bob Iles, while for the second he nipped in between Dennis Byatt and Iles to finish clinically.

Within minutes of the second half getting underway Casey stretched Kidderminster's lead, outstripping Paul Bowgett on a run from half-way before superbly beating Iles.

Kidderminster continued to dominate and Stones' frustration boiled over, with Bowgett being sent off for swinging his arm in the direction of a Kidderminster player.

But the ten men of Wealdstone rose to the occasion and had a terrific 15 minute spell, during which Mark Graves pulled the score back to 3-2, capitalising on a schoolboy error.

Graves and Derek Doyle both then had chances to level the scores, before Stones were killed off by Casey in the final 15 minutes.

He struck twice to complete yet another hat-trick, with Davies squandering two great chances to notch his hat-trick.

season went from imperious to stuttering as the fixture backlog (following a month of snow) caught up with us. With five games to play in the final nine days of the season, we were just one of four clubs nursing hopes of the Gola League title - with Kidderminster on the fringes. We had games in hand but realised, as everyone else was beating each other, that another half dozen points might be enough to seal the deal.

First up, on Saturday April 27 was lowly Dagenham at home (D0-0). The trip to Kidderminster the following Monday night was arguably the toughest of the run-in yet we smashed it out of sight!

Andy Graham had come into the side for a fabulous trophy-laden cameo and he put us ahead following a sweeping move the whole length of the pitch. Hard-as-nails midfielder

Continued over page >>

By March 1986 the shift in power had begun and from winning 3-0 and 5-2 we were losing by the same scorelines! Kim Casey (below) was the Kiddy star of that era



Kidderminster, we've played you before, continued

from previous page

ond and an own goal sealed one of the Stones' best displays of the season. Two days later, Wednesday night against the Yorkshiremen of Frickley could have clinched the title in front of a 1,104 crowd but we could only draw 1-1

with another crucial Holmes goal... yet three days later the crown was ours when the magnificent Graham volleyed the only goal at Kettering.

Yes there was still Barnet to face at Underhill on the May Bank Holiday but happily it didn't matter!

Then came the long, slow decline as our National League life ebbed away...

THE Mighty Stones of 1985 couldn't go on forever. In public, at least, there were grand plans to spend thousands on new players and relocate the club as the dream of automatic promotion to the Football League was tempered by the reality that Lower Mead wasn't up to scratch.

There was frustrating under-investment in the squad, and three years after being the best team in non-League we were relegated back to the Southern League.

Kidderminster's fortunes were diametrically opposite - and it showed as they cemented their place in the Conference (as it was then called) over the next 15 years and even spent five years in the EFL after promotion in 2000.

Back in the mid-80s they

had the celebrated Kim Casey and Paul Davies banging in the goals and (unbelievably) Casey scored 73 goals in the 85-86 season and 47 the next while Davies was a handy contributor with 307 Kiddy goals in his 13 years up front!

I remember travelling down to Southampton's Dell to watch their FA Trophy semi-final second leg with little Fareham in 1987, on a Sunday afternoon. They beat the Hampshire side 2-0 and then Burton Albion in a Final replay, 2-1 after a 0-0 draw with both goals coming from Davies.

For once Casey drew a blank!

'Stones under fire

Hall's fury as slump continues

Wealdstone 0, Kidderminster 3
WEALDSTONE'S players were locked in their dressing room for over an hour and a half by disappointed manager Brian Hall following Saturday's pathetic display against Kidderminster.

Hall's double stars failed to compete as Kidderminster rattled in three goals to leave them without a win in their last six outings, writes William Bull.

"I have never held them back after a game before," said Hall. "I usually leave things until training on Tuesday but I could not hide my feelings of disappointment on Saturday.

"We were beaten by a better side. But we let them beat us and what really hurt me was that we were not upset at being beaten."

Hall is still thinking about rebuilding his side, particularly with a view to automatic promotion and relegation between the Gola and Football League due to be introduced next season.

The long-term future of the club is due to be discussed at a board meeting tonight (Wednesday).

"It is always time to re-

build," he said. "But the transfer deadline is close and that does not give us much of a chance.

"We will have to see what might be available between now and the end of the season and also see what we might dispense with.

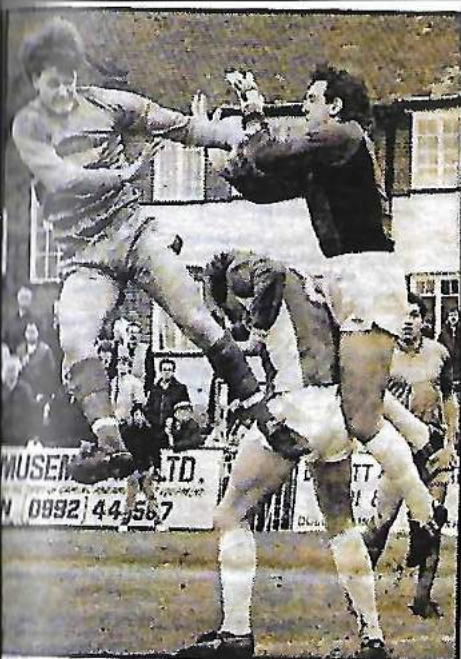
"But I will not let players go just to punish them. We have to keep the club going forward. The next few years in the Gola League are going to be exciting and we will have to be ready to meet that challenge."

He added: "I knew last year was going to be hard to follow and I thought that perhaps we could not win anything this year.

"I can tolerate going out of the Trophy because that is on a one-off basis but we have given the league away a little bit too easily and that is disappointing."

On Saturday, Wealdstone were going through the motions against a Kidderminster side that took control from the start.

The visitors went ahead in the 23rd minute when Wealdstone failed to clear a corner. The ball pinged around the area before falling



OFF: Kidderminster keeper Campbell gathers safely under pressure from Mark Graves. Mark Buckland plays the support role.

the unmarked Kim Casey on, although Bob Iles nicked his original effort, the other scored at the second attempt.

Kidderminster stretched their lead three minutes before half time when Iles fumbled a free shot, with Adrian Dowd forcing the loose ball away from close range.

And the Harriers completed Stones misery with a third in the 68th minute. An attacking back pass by Paul Swiggett was intercepted by

Mick Tuohy, he held the ball up before firing across the face of the goal, Casey dummed and Graham MacKenzie drove home from the edge of the area.

"We have got a few things to sort out now," said Hall.

"There is still a possibility that we can finish in the top six. That is not too bad but it is not really satisfactory. The important thing is that we rediscover our pride."

Wealdstone: Iles, Tapley, McCargo, Jones, Bowgett, Wainwright, Greenaway, Cordice, A. Cordice, Graves, Donnellan.

..and up to date

KIDDERMINSTER 1
Morgan-Smith 90+3
WEALDSTONE 0

IT'S A HOME COMFORT AT LAST FOR BOSS RUSS

By Adam Matthews

AMARI MORGAN-SMITH struck three minutes into time added on to finally give Kidderminster Harriers a first home win since returning to Non-League's top-flight, while leaving Wealdstone still searching for an elusive away victory.

The Kiddy forward pounced from close range in the dying seconds of a scrappy affair after Sammy Robinson's free-kick had failed to be cleared by the Stones defence.

"Amari deserved the winner for what he puts in for this club," said relieved

minutes after the restart had it not been for the heroics of Dibble.

He initially made fine saves from Tarryn Allarakhia and former Harriers loanee Tahvon Campbell's follow-up, after a clever move to unlock the home defence. He then had to be at his best to deny Jady Mundle-Smith at the near post as the visitors forced four corners within a frantic two-minute spell.

Harriers remained in the hunt for a first home victory and substitute Ashley Hemmings drew Ward into a save with an angled drive.

Motherwell loanee Barry Maguire had a golden chance to break the deadlock with six minutes left but he steered Hemmings' corner wide from inside the six-yard box.

But Morgan-Smith sent the home support into raptures with only seconds left to seal a third win of the season.

"We've been sucker-punched at the end," Wealdstone boss Stuart Maynard said. "We have come up short on quality overall and we have not taken our chances, which means you have got to defend your box properly, and we haven't."

"First half was the worst we've been in possession. We tweaked things at half-time and had the best chance of the game, but then we've not defended the set-piece well enough at the end and it's a frustrating day for all of us."

MATCH STATS
KIDDERMINSTER V WEALDSTONE

3 SHOTS ON TARGET	3
6 SHOTS OFF TARGET	3
5 CORNERS	8
3 OFFSIDE	2
6 FOULS CONCEDED	7
2 YELLOW CARDS	2
0 RED CARDS	0

KIDDERMINSTER: (4-2-3-1): Dibble 8, Robinson 6, Pearce 7, Penny 7, Richards 6, Oxlip 6, Chamberlain 6, Maguire 7, Looney 6, Hemmings 3, F. Gibson 7, McCargo 6, Brown 6, G. Morgan-Smith 7. Subs not used: Phillips, Liddmore, Hall.

WEALDSTONE: (4-2-3-1): Ward 7, Satter 6, Mundle-Smith 6, Bowen 7, Ferguson 6, Adarkwa 6, Clayton 6, E. Oxlip 6, Oye 6, E. Allarakhia 7, (Kidd) 6, Campbell 6. Subs not used: Barrett, Abusunnak.

1986: The 6th meeting (L0-3)

1986: The 5th meeting (L1-3)

Suffering Stones

Quick goal starts the afternoon of torment

Kidderminster 3, Wealdstone 1
WHEN KIDDERMINSTER scored their first goal on Saturday after only 30 seconds, you could perhaps sense that this was not going to be Wealdstone's afternoon, writes Dave Free.

A slick move down the right eventually saw the ball squared to a totally unmarked Paul Davies, who slotted home from about 15 yds.

Kidderminster are a Gola League side renowned for scoring goals and their strikeforce of Davies, Kim Casey and Mick Tuohy has scored over 60 goals this season between them.

Wealdstone's goal was under a barrage in the opening minutes and shots were flying in from all angles.

Only a last ditch clearance from Derek Doyle prevented O'Dowd increasing the scoreline but from the resultant corner a melee ensued and

Steve Tapley's clearance fell sweetly for the home side's giant defender Jones to curl a superb shot into the top corner from all of 30 yards and Wealdstone were two down after only six minutes.

The game then settled into a more even pattern and Wealdstone began to put their act together.

Cordice and Graves combined to set up Doyle but his shot was comfortably saved by 'keeper Garner.

Tuohy was then guilty of a glaring miss when he scooped his shot over the bar from only three yards,

although he was clearly offside.

Tuohy was again at fault after intercepting McCargo's back pass.

Graves had a great chance to reduce the deficit but, after turning brilliantly, placed his shot just wide.

With the wind behind them in the second half, Wealdstone were certainly more determined and appeared to be getting back in to the game.

But a controversial decision in the 58th minute effectively killed off the 'Stones challenge.

A clearance by a Kidderminster defender went out of play for a

throw, which the linesman correctly awarded to Wealdstone.

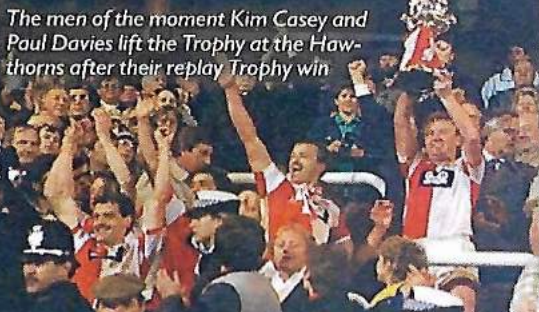
McCargo took the throw but the referee whistled — apparently indicating that McCargo had stolen yardage and, while the Wealdstone side stood watching, a Kidderminster player took a throw, Casey crossed and O'Dowd struck the ball into the roof of the net.

To the amazement of everyone in the ground the referee awarded the goal.

Bob Iles' protest earned him a booking.

From then on Wealdstone's task was always going to be too much, and although Greenaway hit the crossbar with a dipping shot, their only reply was a goal in the 80th minute scored by Graves.

Wealdstone: Iles, Tapley, McCargo, Jones, Bowgett, Wainwright, Greenaway, Doyle, Cordice N, Graves, Donnellan.



The men of the moment Kim Casey and Paul Davies lift the Trophy at the Hawthorns after their replay Trophy win



2023: the last meeting (L0-1)

Left: the Non League paper's report of the most recent clash between the two sides, in October last year. It was a poor display by the Stones against a side rooted at the foot of the table and the late winner seemed inevitable as Harriers threw men forward in the dying minutes. Morgan-Smith was the home hero with a scrambled winner to the delight of the 2,500 home fans. Harriers have recovered to mid table but they are not out of danger yet...

STAR MAN: Gavriel Dzebe (Kidderminster) ATT: 2,546 ENTERTAINMENT: ***** REFEREE: Wayne Connell

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REWIND SPECIAL >>>> by tim parks

It happened 50 years ago

Part 19: It's a turning point in the league title quest as the Stones finally start scoring...

This season we are reliving the extraordinary campaign of fifty years ago... which ended with the Stones' very first promotion in the club's long history and our first league title in 22 years.

Saturday March 9, 1974, Southern League Division One South: Wealdstone 3 Bideford 1

Sunday March 17, 1974, Southern League Division One South: Poole Town 2 Wealdstone 3

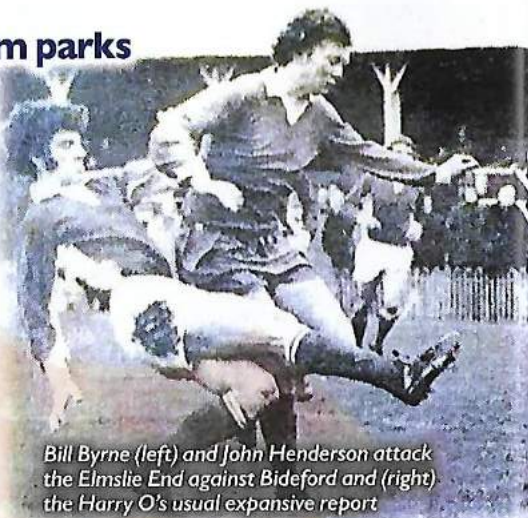
Tuesday March 19, 1974, Southern League Division One South: Crawley Town 0 Wealdstone 3

It seems that every successful Wealdstone season can be traced back to one defining moment when, arguably, the fates are tipped in our direction.

Twenty years ago the Stones were going nowhere, mid-table in the Ryman Div One North when Richard Jolly's wind-assisted strike saw us win 1-0 at Heybridge Swifts and then - nine wins out of 11 games later - end up in the play-offs and eventual promotion.

Ten years ago we were chasing promotion from the Ryman Prem but successive defeats against Hampton & Richmond, and Canvey Island, saw us slip to third in the table as two games were rained off. We faced a tricky match at the Vale against Bury Town but after Scott McGleish gave us the lead in monsoon conditions the referee took the teams off and considered abandoning the match - happily he didn't; we quieted the nerves with a 3-0 win and a subsequent 11 wins and four draws in the next 15 games catapulted us to the title.

Four years ago was a bit different when we won the National League South title - it ended up a non-celebration when the Champions were decided on points-per-game due to the Covid interruption. If there was



Bill Byrne (left) and John Henderson attack the Elmslie End against Bideford and (right) the Harry O's usual expansive report



a turning point it probably came at Havant & Waterlooville on January 18 when we convincingly beat our nearest challengers 4-2... and then a week later dismantled second-placed Bath City 7-0 here at the Vale.

And what of 1974 and Bideford, I hear you ask? Hadn't we crushed all-comers that year, eventually winning the title by 11 points?

Well yes we did. But on March 9th it was in the balance - we hadn't scored a league goal all year, apart from the 4-1 win over Ashford on New Year's Day.

Our much-vaunted Byrne-Duck-Henderson strike force had fired blanks in four successive league games when we settled for goalless draws against Hastings, Bognor and Waterlooville and a 1-0 reverse to Ramsgate.

And the previous two weeks had seen us desperately crash out of the FA Trophy in the last 16, held at home by Northern Leaguers South Shields and then losing the replay on Tyneside 2-1 after extra time.

I remember the Bideford game very clearly - especially as we'd visited North Devon on a family holiday only the previous year and I'd been intrigued that any team would travel that far to compete in Southern

League football... the town is practically in Cornwall and the journey in those pre-M4 and M5 days took about six hours in our old Austin Wolsey.

I was also apprehensive about our chances of winning the league, having slipped below Poole Town and Waterlooville in the table, but reckoned the De-

vonians would be out on their feet after that journey. And I was feeling smug when we took the lead after just two minutes through Bill Byrne. But Bideford quickly levelled, and even after a George Duck penalty had put us ahead again at the Elmslie End going into the last 15 minutes my teenage nerves were jangling as our normally-safe keeper Roy Mackenzie seemed about as confident as me, flapping at crosses and spilling the ball as the visitors looked for another equaliser.

Luckily, Bideford keeper David Lee was worse. Anything in the air was causing him palpitations and I was standing right behind the goal, jammed in against the railings as he waved a fist hopefully towards Paul Fairclough's left-wing corner. The ball wafted across from in front of the Supporters Club shop, under the shadow of the Elmslie Stand and then, wonderfully, arced over the flailing keeper and into the net at the far post. 3-1!

Was this a turning point?

The Stones now had to back up that win with successive away games in strange circumstances. First up was Poole Town, memorable as it was the first ever competitive away game to be played on a Sunday. The country was gripped by the oil crisis, factories and

Continued over page >>

'Stones close the gap, but are made to fight

By Phil Sugden

Wealdstone 3, Bideford 1

ON PAPER this was a very good result for Wealdstone. Bideford could be among the challengers for promotion with seven games in hand over the current leaders, Poole Town. And as Poole were beaten, Waterlooville could only draw and third placed Minehead also went down, the Lower Mead club is in a very strong position.

Those are the statistics, but the facts are that Wealdstone struggled hard for much of this game, were far below what we know to be their best and again showed shocking form in the middle of the park.

And if the midfield men have gone off the boil, then it would be fair to say the front runners are little better. George Duck is but a shadow of his old self, Bill Byrne worked hard but lacked support and John Henderson is suffering from over-tight marking by every defence he runs up against.

All this might sort itself out if the midfield men were doing their jobs as efficiently as earlier in the season. Unhappily, they are not. Fairclough showed occasional flashes, but was never consistent.

Fulton appears to have lost his confidence and Godfrey, who was said to have performed brilliantly in his comeback game at South Shields, played ed brilliantly in his comeback game at South Shields, played in this one like a man out of touch until the latter stages.

Thanks be to the back four, generally, had another excellent game. Prestland was outstanding with firm tackling, cool clearances and occasionally superb distribution. Burgess swept up with almost nonchalant ease and used the ball well and McCormick, apart from a couple of lapses, was strong in the air and on the ground.

Add to that "Mac" made three of the best scoring attempts provided by the home side, and he can be reckoned to have had a good game.

Kinnear, switched into the back-line to replace the injured Watson, and what can best be described as a sketchy game. He did much that was good and several things which were appalling, and in goal MacKenzie failed to inspire the confidence of recent weeks.

One or two misjudgements brought hearts into the mouths of the 780 or so spectators who braved a bitterly cold afternoon to watch the proceedings.

It may sound churlish to criticise a team which wins 3-1 against a hard tackling, but good footballing side, but anyone who is honest will admit that 'Stones were too often second best.

A LOT TO DO
One can only feel that with 16 hard games to come the Lower Mead club, despite a massive six games in hand on the leaders, has a great deal to do.

We may learn much from next Sunday's fixture against Poole, the leaders, down in Dorset. If Wealdstone can find their form there and win just one point, we may all take a different view.

Wealdstone could hardly have had a better start. They had won two corners in the first minute before they went a goal ahead after only 120 seconds.

Kinnear started the assault on an unsettled Devon defence. Duck flicked on and Byrne positioned himself well to shoot. Duck flicked on and Byrne positioned himself well to shoot past goalkeeper Lee.

Bideford needed just a minute to get on terms and home goalkeeper MacKenzie must take the blame for the score. 'Stones were caught by a quick one-two passing movement but MacKenzie appeared to be in position to stop Gauntlett's shot which went through his hands after a bewildering comedy of errors in the six yard box.

At this stage Wealdstone were still making the running, with Byrne leading Snell a merry dance, mainly by virtue of taking him to the line, beating

him and then getting thumped in the back to earn a free kick.

Snell, indeed, gave away frees with all the energy of a youngster eating sweets, but none of these awards proved fruitful.

Bideford, with Derek May and John Gauntlett dominating began to put their football together and several times exposed Wealdstone's midfield weaknesses, before Henderson relieved an anxious period by racing on to a Fulton cross to head inches wide.

At this stage one thing must have puzzled every Wealdstone follower. Bideford goalkeeper David Lee always looked in trouble with the high crosses to either post. He dropped several and fumbled a few, but was never put under real pressure at a time when a goal might easily have resulted.

BAD MOMENT

MacKenzie had a bad moment when Moch broke through a square defence and hammered a low drive which the 'keeper saved at the second attempt, but the best shot of the game came a few minutes from the break.

Duck, who had been strangely quiet, picked up a short pass on the edge of the box, ran a few yards and unleashed a tremendous drive which hit Lee's body and was frantically tremendous drive which hit Lee's body and was frantically grabbed at the second attempt. Had the shot been a foot either side of the Bideford 'keeper he would not have seen it.

Wealdstone re-opened quite brightly with Henderson providing two dazzling runs and Byrne twice earning free-kicks out on the left.

Bideford, however, were still having the better of the midfield and so it continued until the 52nd minute. Then Byrne broke on the left, from what looked to be a suspiciously off-side position. As he turned into the box he was tripped by Hillson and good referee G. M. Campbell, right on the spot, awarded a penalty.

George Duck stepped up to send the ball hard and low past Lee for his 47th goal of the season.

McCormick joined the attacking spree only to see his header cleared from the line and then in the 70th minute 'Stones clinched the game. Fairclough took one of a series of corners from the left, the suspect Lee failed to reach the ball with his attempted punch and saw Fairclough's effort swing into the net.

Minutes later Lee partially atoned with a splendid save from Fulton and Wealdstone had a lot off in the dying minutes when MacKenzie made an error of judgement but the sound President was on hand to kick off his goal line.

Two points, but 100 many anxious moments.
Wealdstone: MacKenzie; Prestland, Kinnear, Burgess, McCormick; Fulton, Fairclough, Godfrey; Byrne, Duck, Henderson. Sub: Bristowe.



REWIND SPECIAL contd >>>>

from previous page

businesses were working a four-day week to conserve electricity and floodlight football was banned. This meant all games kicking off at 2pm or 3pm, even on midweek afternoons which was an interesting conundrum for those who had to sneak out of work or play truant from school to attend games.

We always ran two coachloads of supporters to away games in those days and although I couldn't make the trip to Poole, Jon Taffel recalls that that game was his first-ever away trip on the coach... and with the lighter-than-usual Sunday traffic the party arrived at the South Coast around 11am.

Travel supremo Barbara Robson, the Dave Reader of her day, sanctioned a couple of hours in Bournemouth so that sleepy town was treated to the sight of a hundred or so overexcited

Stones fans trying to find something to do (apart from going to Church).

When they finally arrived in Poole, the game was a cliffhanger with the home side - still up at the top of the table while the Stones were third with games in hand - trading blows with the free-flowing blues.

George Duck and John Henderson twice put us ahead but their veteran striker Ivan Hollett levelled the scores at 2-2, before our full-back Eddie Presland popped up with a deserved winner. According to Roger Slater's book "it was Poole's first home defeat for four months and the standard of Wealdstone's play was such that at times



Poole Stadium, 70s vintage with its distinctive speedway track. Very tight for corner-taking!

the majority of the 1,100 crowd applauded their possession of the ball."

Veteran fan Mick Fishman also recalls the unexpected lunch stop in Bournemouth, and said that some of the older fans were perturbed - remembering that the coaches en route to an FA Amateur Cup game at Eastwood in the late 1960s had an unscheduled stop in Nottingham, following which the driver got completely lost and the fans ended up missing the first 15 minutes of the game. No such problems in Poole, however.

Back to 1974. Having missed the unmissable Poole trip I was determined to make the game at Crawley just two days later. But it was going to be a surreal schoolday afternoon as the match kicked off at 5.30pm!

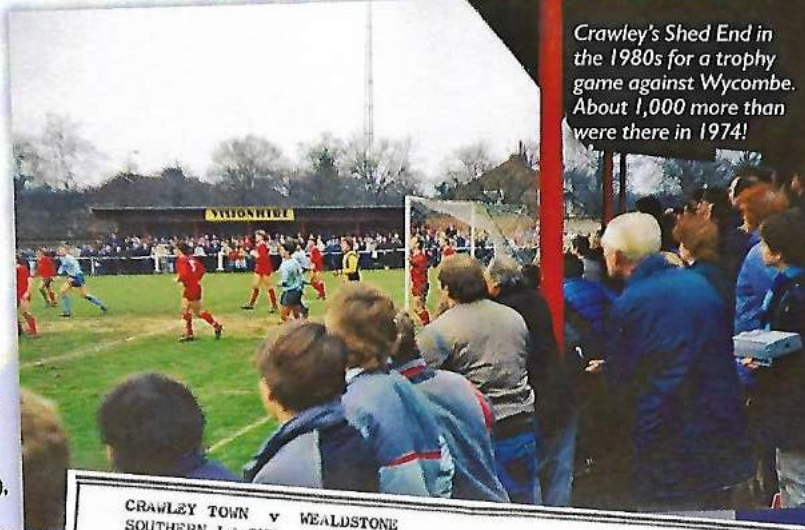
I actually discovered an old diary from that period just recently, and was amused to see that a week be-

fore this game I had been feverishly working out a route from my school in Northwood to Crawley's Town Mead ground in Sussex. The Green Line via Rickmansworth seemed the best bet until I found out that it was 65p each way. Extortionate!

There was nothing for it: a quick phone call to Ms Robson and I was on the supporters coach (one of two) to Crawley for just 55p return. I bunked out of school (a hockey match which led to me being dropped for the next game), got Mum's taxi to Lower Mead for the 3.30 departure ("lovely comfy coach" according to my diary) and it was a great debut trip among the friendly away fans.

My diary's match report described Town Mead as "a rather poor ground with a team to match". Ramshackle is probably the best word but I'm a sucker for stands tight behind the goals, and this was my view as George Duck stuck away his goals number 44 and 45 for the season as Crawley offered token resistance.

Bill Byrne headed the opener after 10 minutes and the rest of the afternoon passed by in a blur of contentment as we passed the ball around on Crawley's appalling playing surface. There is a webpage from which I plucked the accompanying pictures and it candidly describes the pitch as "clay, with tons of sand dumped on it each season. Many attempts were made to solve the drainage problems but none succeeded". Crawley moved to their new stadium at the end of the 1990s and have done rather well since.



Crawley's Shed End in the 1980s for a trophy game against Wycombe. About 1,000 more than were there in 1974!

CRAWLEY TOWN v WEALDSTONE
SOUTHERN LEAGUE FIRST DIVISION (SOUTH)
Tuesday 19th March 1974 5.30pm

CRAWLEY TOWN (RED & BLACK) WEALDSTONE

1	R Collier	0-3	1	P McKenzie
2	D Haining		2	E Presland
3	I McGonagle		3	J-Watson KINNEAR
4	P Frost		4	B Burgess
5	I Hamilton		5	J McCormick
6	V Bragg		6	C-Kinear FULTON
7	M Betchley		7	P-Fulton FAIRCLOUGH
8	A Goodgame		8	J Godfrey
9	D Moore		9	W Byrne 17 MINS 1-0
10	B Morgan		10	G Duck 20 MINS 2-0, 80 MINS 3-0
11	N Brister		11	J-Richardson HENDERSON
12	J Broomfield		12	R-Fairelough

Referee R F East Orpington
Linesmen G R Rigby Sutton (Orange Flag)
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Programmes in the 1970s had rather less content than these days. Crawley's offering 50 years ago (for just 3p, admittedly) was just a folded sheet with a very exciting cover (left) and a team list (above) and, er, that was about it.

Though there was much schoolboy hilarity as John Henderson was shown as 'J Richardson' in the line-up page. "Come on Richardson, you're not yourself today" was about the extent of the humour. Who needs Michael Macintyre?

Crawley's 'popular' side of their Town Mead ground in the 1970s. Though it clearly wasn't THAT popular



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 OXFORD CITY Tuesday 24th October Vanarama National League	Vinusan Padmarasa
 ROCHDALE Saturday 11th November Vanarama National League	Jim Kane

 BARNET Saturday 25th November Vanarama National League	Adam Rossington	
 HARTLEPOOL UNITED Saturday 23rd December Vanarama National League	In memory of Roy & Alan Couch	
 FC HALIFAX TOWN Saturday 27th January Vanarama National League	Toby Jackson (Lapels Badges)	
 ALDERSHOT TOWN Tuesday 30th January Vanarama National League	Wealdstone FC Supporters Club	
 MAIDENHEAD UNITED Tuesday 6th February Vanarama National League	Steve, Megan & Rebecca Wood	
 HENDON Saturday 10th February FA Trophy 5th Round	In memory of Brian 'Kat' Kelly and Les 'Ranter' Brookes	Alan Rickman
 SOLIHULL MOORS Saturday 9th March FA Trophy Quarter Final	In memory of Tony Drew	Steve Tuckwell MP & Councillor Richard Mills
 KIDDERMINSTER HARR. Saturday 23rd March Vanarama National League	in Memory of Rowland Edwards	
 SOLIHULL MOORS Monday 1st April Vanarama National League	Terry Hissey	Sponsor 2 Available
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 DORKING WANDERERS Thursday 11th April Vanarama National League	Sponsor 1 Available	
 CHESTERFIELD Saturday 13th April Vanarama National League	Peter & Steve Drew, Ron Moore & David Edwards - in memory of fans no longer with us	
 EASTLEIGH Tuesday 16th April Vanarama National League	Sponsor 1 Available	Sponsor 2 Available
 BROMLEY Tuesday 12th March Vanarama National League	Wealdstone FC Supporters Club	



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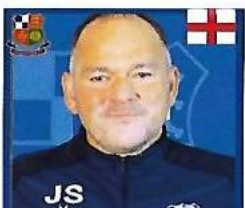
Jaydn MUNDLE-SMITH
23 17.12.99 | 1.83m LB
GARY SMITH



Dom HUTCHINSON
17 17.11.01 | LW
@STONESCAST85



Micah OBIERO
14 22.2.01 | 1.77m CF
MIKE & VAL WESTON



JS
Jason SCANNELL
CS CS
TOM MARSHALL



Sam COX
CS CS
ADAM ROWLAND



RH
Rachel HILL
CS CS
JON TAFFEL




Charlie BARKER
3 12.2.03 | CB
SUDHIR, AKHIL, NIKHIL, SARIN AND KAMRAN RAWAL




Dante-Astor BAPTISTE
12 7.02.02 | GK
WEALDSTONE ACADEMY



Marcus DEWHURST
31 20.03.21 | 1.9m GK
JAMES KLARFELD




Luke DREHER
17 27.11.98 | 1.84m CM
NICK & JACKY DUGARD



Aaron HENRY
26 31.08.23 | DM
WEALDSTONE ACADEMY



Jack COOK
2 16.9.99 | 1.85m CB
IN LOVING MEMORY OF JOHN & CHRIS JEFFRESON



Alex DYER
5 11.6.90 | 1.80m DM
IC PROPERTY




Jaiden BARTOLO
25 10.02.06 | 1.84m CF
ROGER SLATER



Declan PHILLIPS
28
JIM SORRELL



Sam BOWEN
22 14.01.01 | 1.8m CM
WEALDSTONE WELSH



Sean ADARKWA
27 11.10.00 | 1.8m CF
NICK SYMONS & STEVE PAULL



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GARY SMITH



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CARRYING YOUR TEAM TO SUCCESS



Find The Best Van Leasing Deals At

vanarama.com

Next up at The Vale:



Solihull Moors

National League
Easter Monday
1st April
3:00pm



Southend United

National League
Tuesday
9th April
7:45pm



Dorking Wanderers

National League
Thursday
11th April
7:45pm

For all Vanarama National League fixtures:

£15 admission for EFL or Premier League season ticket holders and members of the armed forces

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE TABLE AS AT TUESDAY 19/3/2024

	ALL						HOME					AWAY					RESULTS				
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS	(H)
1 Chesterfield	39	29	5	5	95	51	20	17	3	0	58	24	19	12	2	5	37	27	44	92	2-3
2 Barnet	39	22	5	12	71	53	19	13	3	3	36	20	20	9	2	9	35	33	18	71	3-2 1-1
3 Bromley	38	18	13	7	61	42	20	12	5	3	41	23	18	6	8	4	20	19	19	67	0-1 1-1
4 Solihull Moors	39	18	11	10	63	53	19	8	5	6	28	19	20	10	6	4	35	34	10	65	0-1
5 Aldershot Town	39	19	6	14	68	69	20	12	5	3	41	28	19	7	1	11	27	41	-1	63	3-3 1-3
6 Altrincham	39	17	10	12	71	54	19	11	4	4	46	22	20	6	6	8	25	32	17	61	0-0
7 Gateshead	38	17	9	12	72	54	18	8	5	5	35	24	20	9	4	7	37	30	18	60	2-4 1-2
8 Oldham Athletic	39	15	14	10	57	50	20	6	8	6	29	23	19	9	6	4	28	27	7	59	1-1
9 Halifax Town	38	16	11	11	46	42	18	7	7	4	23	20	20	9	4	7	23	22	4	59	2-0 0-1
10 Rochdale	39	14	10	15	63	59	19	8	5	6	34	24	20	6	5	9	29	35	4	52	3-2 0-3
11 Southend United	39	17	10	12	57	39	20	12	2	6	39	17	19	5	8	6	18	22	18	51	1-1
12 Dagenham & Redbridge	40	13	10	17	58	54	20	8	0	12	33	30	20	5	10	5	25	24	4	49	0-2 2-0
13 Hartlepool United	38	14	6	18	58	66	20	9	2	9	30	32	18	5	4	9	28	34	-8	48	4-4 1-3
14 Woking	40	13	8	19	42	49	20	6	5	9	23	26	20	7	3	10	19	23	-7	47	1-0 1-1
15 Ebbsfleet United	39	13	8	18	55	66	20	9	3	8	29	22	19	4	5	10	26	44	-11	47	2-1 0-2
16 Wealdstone	35	12	10	13	49	53	16	8	5	3	30	25	19	4	5	10	19	28	-4	46	
17 Fylde	40	12	10	18	66	73	20	6	7	7	34	35	20	6	3	11	32	38	-7	46	3-2 2-1
18 Eastleigh	39	12	10	17	66	80	20	8	5	7	37	38	19	4	5	10	29	42	-14	46	0-0
19 Maidenhead United	39	11	12	16	44	57	19	6	7	6	20	21	20	5	5	10	24	36	-13	45	0-1 2-0
20 Boreham Wood	39	10	14	15	49	62	20	6	8	6	26	24	19	4	6	9	23	38	-13	44	1-1
21 York City	40	9	16	15	48	65	20	4	9	7	28	31	20	5	7	8	20	34	-17	43	2-1 3-2
22 Kidderminster Harriers	40	10	12	18	34	47	20	4	8	8	18	22	20	6	4	10	16	25	-13	42	0-1
23 Dorking Wanderers	39	12	6	21	47	67	20	6	3	11	25	34	19	6	3	10	22	33	-20	42	1-3
24 Oxford City	40	7	8	25	50	85	20	5	3	12	27	36	20	2	5	13	23	49	-35	2	3-1

Follow Stones on the road:



Altrincham

National League
Tuesday
26th March
7:45pm



Oxford City

National League
Good Friday
29th March
3:00pm



Boreham Wood

National League
Saturday
6th April
3:00pm



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.



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