

WEALDSTONE



matchday programme 2023-24 £3

SOUTHEND



Yellow/Yellow/Yellow

- G David MARTIN 25
- G Col ANDENG-NDI 30
- Gus SCOTT-MORRIS 2
- Nathan RALPH © 3
- Louis LOMAS 4
- Adam CROWTHER 5
- Ollie KENSDALE 6
- Jack BRIDGE 7
- Noor HUSIN 8
- Harry CARDWELL 9
- Danny WALDRON 10
- Callum POWELL 11
- Deon WOODMAN 12
- Jack WOOD 14
- Marcus DACKERS 15
- Harry TAYLOR 16
- Cav MILEY 17
- Wesley FONGUCK 18
- Henry SANDAT 19
- Mauro VILHETE 20
- B'lyn KABONGOLO 22
- James MORTON 23
- Jason DIMITRIOU 24
- Oliver COKER 28

WEALDSTONE



Blue/White/White

- G Dante-Astor BAPTISTE 1
- G Jacob ADAMS 13
- 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
- Kyle SMITH 18
- Dillon De SILVA 19
- Reo GRIFFITHS 20
- Kallum TRACEY CESAY 21
- Sam BOWEN 22
- Jaydn MUNDLE-SMITH 23
- Jaiden BARTOLO 25
- Aaron HENRY 26
- Sean ADARKWA 27
- Trae COOK-APPIAH 29
- Brandon MASON 32
- Joseph CULLIS 36
- Emmanuel ADEYEMO 39

DORKING W

Red/White stripes

- 1 Harrison MALE G
- 21 Slavomir HUK G
- 2 Isaac PHILPOTT
- 3 Bobby-Joe TAYLOR
- 4 Dan PYBUS
- 5 Tony CRAIG
- 6 Niall McMANUS
- 7 Jimmy MUITT
- 8 Matt BRIGGS
- 9 Jason PRIOR
- 10 Alfie RUTHERFORD
- 11 James McSHANE
- 12 Callum KENNEDY
- 16 Charlie CARTER
- 17 Josh TAYLOR
- 18 Luke MOORE
- 19 Haydn HOLLIS
- 20 Daniel GALLAGHER
- 22 Barry FULLER
- 24 Harry OTTOWAY
- 25 Aaron KUHL
- 29 Tom BLAIR
- 30 Seb BOWERMAN
- 32 Jack SAUNDERS

WEALDSTONE SOUTHEND WEALDSTONE DORKING

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**Ole, ole
ole ole,
Cesay,
Cesay!**
INSIDE: KALLUM
CESAY INTERVIEW

Wealdstone v Southend Utd

TUES APRIL 9, 2024, 7.45PM VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE

Wealdstone v Dorking Wands

THURSDAY APRIL 11, 2024, 7.45PM
VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE

**YOUR
GREAT
DOUBLE
ISSUE**



EARNING HIS SPURS: Stones' new capture from Tottenham, Kallum Cesay, gets on the ball against Boreham Wood but even his bright performance couldn't prevent a 4-0 defeat PICTURE: JON TAFFEL

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BY TIM PARKS

Written in Stone

Welcome back to the Vale for this vital start to our National League run-in of five games in just nine days. And the last few days have hardly been undramatic!

We've had this sort of congestion (and worse)

many times in the past but that was always when we were looking upwards. This time it's the spectre of relegation that haunts us and there's no way to sugar-coat the Stones' situation. That's why our 'new' managerial team of David Noble and Neil Banfield lasted just over two months before having their contracts terminated 24 hours after the 4-0 collapse at Boreham Wood on Saturday.

Coach Sam Cox has taken over (aided by senior players) and make no mistake, it will take self-belief, bravery and commitment to get the club out of the hole that we have dug for ourselves. It was a bold move by our chairman Rory Fitzgerald and one that will hopefully pay off.

One point from the last 18 was simply unacceptable.

Those with long memories will recall the home last-day defeat at the hands of fellow strugglers AP Leamington that saw the club suffer its first-ever relegation (from the Alliance Premier League) back in 1981... and, personally, that's just how it felt when Solihull Moors scored their undeserved injury-time winner here a week ago. Leamington were heading out of the league until they scored twice in the last five minutes to send us down instead.

That was truly awful... but at least this time we have games in hand to save ourselves.

● This programme is obviously a 'double-header' due to impossibly-tight deadlines (and it will be the same for the visit of Chesterfield and Eastleigh next Saturday and Tuesday) so we say 'Good Evening' and another 'Good Evening' to the players, officials and supporters of Southend United

and Dorking Wanderers who visit on Tuesday and Thursday.

The Shrimpers are camped happily in mid-table, safe from relegation and probably too far adrift of the play-offs. Being deducted 10

points didn't help their cause and we print an excellent 'Away Fans' piece by Bernie Friend later in this programme that reveals the latest on the club's ownership travails. For the first time in a long while, it's looking pretty rosy!

Dorking Wanderers, meanwhile, are three points adrift of ourselves having played two more games and simply HAVE to win at the Vale to save their skins. Their final games are against clubs who are safe from the drop and unable to squeeze into the play-offs. Let's hope they've shaken the sand out of their flip-flops.

I think everyone has a bit of a soft spot for Dorking after the public exposure for their owner/manager Marc White on the hugely entertaining "Bunch of Amateurs" series... but there can be no sentiment as defeat to the Surrey club could tip us over the edge. Let's just hope that our survival doesn't depend on the final-day-of-the-season trip to Oldham Athletic on April 20. Due to the live TNT Sports game kicking off at 12.15pm, every other game also has to start at that ungodly hour so it will be a rather early departure for the (hopefully) hundreds travelling by train or coach to cheer the side on. There are seats available on the coach (leaving Ruislip at 6.30am) but don't leave it too late!

● A big thanks as always to our

match sponsors for this pair of games: Allday & Miller estate agents for the Southend United clash and Smith & Latimer for the Dorking Wanderers match. Income from sponsorship is crucial for the club so we are hugely grateful to you guys. **UTSI!**



It's a time for strong minds and big hearts to survive this dramatic finale to the season

The games to play....

WEALDSTONE

Tue 9 Apr H v Southend United

Thu 11 Apr H v Dorking

Sat 13 Apr H v Chesterfield

Tue 16 Apr H v Eastleigh

Sat 20 Apr A v Oldham Athletic

BOREHAM WOOD

Tue 9 Apr A v Rochdale

Sat 13 Apr A v Aldershot Town

Sat 20 Apr H v Ebbsfleet United

KIDDERMINSTER

Sat 13 Apr H v Eastleigh

Sat 20 Apr A v Barnet

DORKING

Thu 11 Apr A v Wealdstone

Sat 13 Apr A v Rochdale Sat 20

Apr 20 H v Hartlepool United

FOOT OF THE TABLE

18 Ebbsfleet United	42	-10	52
19 York City	44	-15	50
20 Wealdstone	41	-14	47
21 Boreham Wood	43	-17	47
22 Kidderminster Harriers	44	-15	46
23 Dorking Wanderers	43	-28	44
R Oxford City	43	-37	32

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:
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 - 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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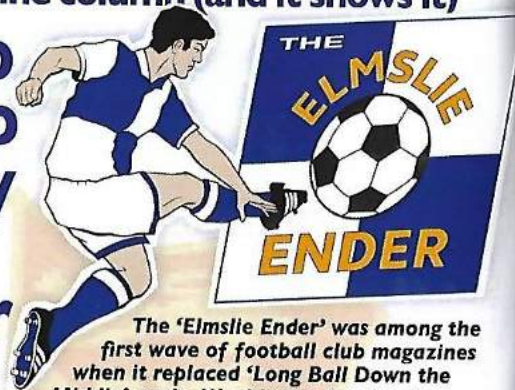


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Britain's longest-running fanzine column (and it shows it)

When it comes to footballing rags to riches, what story could possibly be more romantic or heart-warming than our own?



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 MICK FISHMAN
ON THE train to the Fylde game a few weeks ago I got into a conversation with Stones director Nick Symmons about how rapid had been the rise of AFC Fylde and, to a degree, Dorking Wanderers.

In the football world we all like a "romantic tale" - both those clubs fall into that category, and rightly so. The current pyramid is sprinkled with clubs that have risen for the first time, like Fylde, Dorking, Salford City or Fleetwood Town, or have risen again having once been big or relatively big clubs - such as AFC Wimbledon, Wrexham, Aldershot Town, York City, Halifax and Maidstone United.

All these clubs have a tale to tell, but I believe our own Wealdstone FC story is, if not unique, then quite unusual and in some ways even more romantic in football terms.

All the clubs named above have recovered or progressed almost entirely on the back of a person or people pumping in very large sums of money - and good luck to them! We have not. Think about it. 1985 was the culmination of 20 plus years of Wealdstone having operated at the highest levels of

non-league football, either as amateurs or semi-professionals; and there can be little doubt that the 1982-85 period, when we really became the best, was predicated on the extra funds put into the playing budget by David Morritt.

His withdrawal, and the botched sale of our beloved Lower Mead, resulted in a rapid decline in the club's fortunes. In 1985 we were the best non-league club in the country. Ten years later we had been homeless for four years and preparing for our first season five divisions lower in the Isis League Division 3... and squatting in our third different ground since Lower Mead.

The Gola League in 1985 contained Barnet, Gateshead, Dagenham, Barrow, Kidderminster and Altrincham, all of which have continued to compete and, in some cases, prosper in senior football.

But there was also Nuneaton Borough (recently imploded for the second time), Scarborough (bust and reformed), Enfield (no longer and now split in two), Northwich Victoria (reformed further down the pyramid) and Worcester City (currently performing well in the FA Vase), and others.

The Icis League Division 3 in 1995 constituted clubs that now by and large ply their trade in the lower reaches of the Isthmian and Southern Leagues, as well as competitions even further down

the pyramid such as The Essex Senior, Combined Counties and South Midlands Leagues. Of the rest, Aveley are in the National League South. Hornchurch, Horsham and

Wingate & Finchley currently compete in the Isthmian League Premier Division.

It is only Wealdstone who now play at the very top level of non-league football.

Those of us who have been supporting the club for these past 30 years or more would have seen us progress from playing near to the very foot of senior football to the peak of the non-league game with all the accompanying joy and misery in between. Where once we were routinely playing Tring and Flackwell Heath in league matches, we are now going toe to toe with Oldham Athletic, Southend and Chesterfield; and it has been achieved without going out of business (despite going into administration in 1993) and re-launching ourselves, or the input of vast sums of money from very wealthy individuals.

It is down to the fans dipping into their pockets and attending matches week in and week out to support the team through thick and thin. It is about the fans and their fund-raising activities ranging from questionable music extravaganzas to sponsored walks. And let us not forget that we had no home of our own for 17 seasons!

We owe it to those who have over many years given up their time to steer the club through very choppy waters - Paul Rumens, Nick Symmons, Dominic Whyley, Pete Worby, Howard Kraiss, Fingers, Roger Slater, Quentin Fox, Rory and many others.

There are also those who have stepped in, albeit briefly, with time and money such as Peter Marsden and Nick Archer whose efforts helped the club move on.

We don't have a Marc White or a Danny Hunter. We have forged a different route. It hasn't appeared to capture the imagination of the footballing public, but it should have done.

Referencing Marc White has brought something else to mind. Nick and I are now both hooked on viewing post-match interviews on

YouTube. It is always interesting to compare the reactions of the Wealdstone manager (exes Stuart and now Nobby) with that of the opposition manager. The different slants are always educational and often entertaining. More generally, Marc White is always great value. Probably liked and loathed in equal measure (I fall into the first category) he always speaks from the heart and, depending on result or performance, liberally laces his invective with effing and cheffing.

He sometimes calls out officials (don't we all), but I have yet to hear him have anything but praise for the opposition management or teams. Miles away from the anodyne rubbish routinely served up by Premier League managers and players soaked in media training, Marc tells it as he sees it. Equally verbose is Spencer Day at Farnborough, if somewhat more lucid and less "flowery" in his choice of words than the Dorking supremo.

Andy Woodman of Bromley is always good value. To me he has a rather threatening demeanour, but Fingers tells me that he is a very nice bloke and who would disagree with Fingers? I'm always intrigued by Paul Cook of Chesterfield never giving post-match interviews. His deputy, Danny Webb, fills in and does a very decent, if somewhat unexciting, job. Given that Paul Cook is such a great character his absence from interviews is odd.

But arguably the king of all post-match interviews has to be dear old Alan Dowson. I lost track of him a little once he was managing Dartford, but his time at Woking was top entertainment.

Delivering his views on a match in what seemed to be fluent Bulgarian, the challenge to discern what was being said in the broadest of Geordie accents was impossible to meet. In this age of the podcast, I would propose

having "Dowse" link up with our very own Fingers, who has been strangling the English language for decades, to front a podcast about... well, anything really. It could attain cult status :)



Above: A couple of Elmslie Ender covers illustrate the crazy days (groundsharing at Watford) and desperate days (ground-sharing at Yeading) that makes the Stones' story so compelling

Below: the iconic Elmslie Stand at the Stones' Lower Mead in Harrow. This picture is so old you can probably see Mick in there somewhere





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MAX KRETZSCHMAR

Taking it to the



Our playmaker Max Kretzschmar looks back on a desperate run of defeats....

Hello Stones' fans! What a huge week this is in our bid for survival in the National League.

Recent weeks have been very tough both for players, staff and you fans... and our display last time out against Boreham Wood was simply unacceptable. The chances we missed, the lack of energy we played with and the sloppiness in defence...it's our duty as players to always clap the away support after a game and we all listened to and felt your emotions on Saturday.

I am as angry and disappointed as you are. But we all have to stick together in these moments.

In my second year as a professional I was involved in a relegation dogfight in League 2 with Wycombe Wanderers. It was a tumultuous time at the club with the fans' ownership. Money was very tight and a lot of youth was blooded from the system to the first team.

In the penultimate game of the season, our relegation rivals Bristol Rovers beat us on our own patch which put them three points above us and plunged us into the relegation zone. I played right midfield (pictured right), riddled with fear as to not make the crucial error which could seal our fate. We all played with fear that day and it was no surprise we lost. But the following week, against an already-relegated Torquay we won 3-0 and with results going our way, we stayed up by the skin of our teeth.

Rovers, who had celebrated unceremoniously on our pitch the week before went down.



Max busts a gut to get alongside Sean Adarkwa in the opening minutes on Saturday... but the striker's shot went the wrong side of a post. Pic: Jon Taffel

'We listened to and felt the fans' emotions on Saturday... our display was unacceptable. But now we have to show confidence and no fear'

There are two things I learnt from this experience: that playing with fear is both futile and damaging. I wouldn't say we are playing with fear here at Wealdstone today but it is clear we are lacking in confidence in certain areas. And that has to change.

Confidence comes from within and it's up to the experienced players in the group to draw that out of the squad. Scoring the first goal in a game I believe would help hugely. We haven't been ruthless in front of goal lately, typified by the Boreham Wood game with several big chances falling to us in the first half which weren't taken.

This week we have four home games in a row and that could be crucial... we have to make the Vale a fortress and the fans play a huge role in that.

Conversely I understand that fans have to see passion, energy and quality on the pitch to fully get behind the team. That much is obvious. So I urge you guys to stay positive and back us.

At the end of the day, these are all just words on paper. Actions must speak louder.

UTS!!



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WFCSC Update

Nick DuGard



Welcome to Southend United and Dorking Wanderers fans in the space of three evenings (!) as I write on behalf of WFCSC for this 'double' programme in the midst of a crazy number of consecutive matches all whilst we are fighting a titanic relegation battle. I have never known such a season where it's so incredibly tight from the middle of the table downwards. No doubt it will go right to the wire but at the time of typing these notes it's anyone's guess as to what our respective positions will be come the end of this campaign.

Both of our visitors have experienced tumultuous seasons for different reasons and from contrasting histories and footballing perspectives. Whatever the future holds, as loyal fans we'll continue to passionately back our club of course and from a Stones perspective I obviously hope we can secure a points return from this ludicrously frenetic match congestion that will see us on a route out of the drop zone. Ultimately however, there is a bigger picture here and that lies off the pitch.

Onto WFCSC matters and as I wrote in our recent excellent newsletter its been very positive to have held several good meetings with directors over recent months where we have asked key questions on important wider matters currently affecting the fans and the club as a whole and, as

ever, we have offered our help and support. That is what we are here to do and with increasing understanding, mutual cooperation and support we can achieve loads as we look to future change. As you will all be aware a major step forward for us in the SC this season has been the long awaited opening of our new Megastore cabins and I hope that all fans will continue to visit us, have a chat with Adam and co and purchase items from a great range of stock tonight. On line sales and fan information is always available via our website

Innovative fundraising remains a major part of our plans and efforts and we were able to report excellent achievements at our SC AGM and we have continued to make donations to the main club including a significant £8,000 donation very recently as a contribution towards important master plan costs. There is always more to do of course and new volunteers and ideas are welcomed Why not get involved?

Finally, I have always been a great supporter of Non League Day and have been in contact with founder James Doe since its inception and it was fantastic to see so many new and England bound fans at our match a couple of weeks ago versus Kidderminster Harriers. I am sure they all enjoyed the occasion and the standard of football.

Nick



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THE STONES INTERVIEW BY TIM PARKS

ten minutes with...

KALLUM CESAY

KALLUM CESAY is just 19 but he's suffered more ups and downs than some footballers with another ten years on the clock.

From the highs of playing international football for his country, Sierra Leone - before he'd even played 90 minutes of men's football - to the lows of traipsing around 17 clubs on trial last summer... no wonder the talented teenager says that he'll never face another season so tough mentally in the whole of his career.

After an impressive 2021-2022 season in Tottenham's Premier League 2 side, Kallum was hailed as one of the brightest stars in the Young Spurs firmament. The African nation was quick to spot his eligibility.

"I literally just had an email out of the blue from the Sierra Leone Football Federation, asking me to join the squad for a series of friendly matches in Turkey!" laughed the likeable midfielder.

Not only did Kallum make his debut in such extraordinary circumstances, he also scored both goals as opponents Congo were beaten 2-1.

He also played in AFCON qualifiers that summer against Nigeria - featuring Alex Iwobi and Ademola Lookman (which they lost 2-1) and also in a 2-2 draw against Guinea-Bissau.

But it is obviously his international debut which registers as his most memorable match.

Kallum, then just 17, won a penalty with a rampaging run into the Congo penalty area, forcing a defender to handle the ball.

"I wasn't down to take pens - I think one of the wingers

should've taken it - but I grabbed the ball and the captain said: 'You take it.'"

Kallum stuck away a very tidy penalty... and then 10 minutes later a surging run from left back Alex Bangura opened up the Congo defence and the Spurs youngster arrived at just the right moment to tuck away a second goal from close range. "My other favourite football moment was playing a pre-season match against Leyton Orient

'I felt I belonged in that company when I played for Spurs... this last year has been very tough mentally for me'

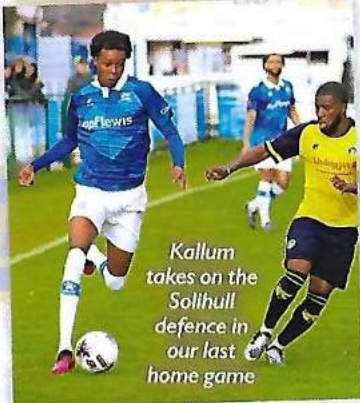
for Tottenham just before Nuno Espirito Santo was sacked. The game finished 1-1 but even playing alongside stars like Eric Dier, Dele Alli, Stephen Bergwijn, Harry Winks and Lucas Moura I felt I belonged in that company, and could play at that level. I thought to myself 'I belong here.'"

Sadly, however, last summer the youngster was made a free agent barely a year later... and then suffered the ordeal of then travelling on trial to that long list of professional clubs.

"I'm not signed to an agency, but friends and colleagues put me in touch with those clubs and it was so tough. Never-ending."

His journeys took him to Norway at FK Haugasund, to Germany and Werder Bremen, to Holland and Standard Liege, plus Sheffield United of the Premier League, QPR and Middlesbrough of the championship plus Crewe Alexandra, Lincoln City, Huddersfield, Shrewsbury - and even, whisper it quietly, to our chums along the road at Barnet!

Kallum is delighted to have landed at Wearlstone, even as he says "I have to admit that I knew nothing at all about



Kallum takes on the Solihull defence in our last home game

Spurs: Kallum Cesay could be next Oliver Skipp

Tottenham Hotspur youngster Kallum Cesay could be the next player to make the step-up from the club's academy, following in the footsteps of Oliver Skipp.

LEWIS BLAKE



Who is Spurs youngster Kallum Cesay?

Ahead of this weekend's Premier League clash with Chelsea, several U23 starlets were involved in the senior training session at Hotspur Way, one of which being versatile gem Kallum Cesay, according to football.london.

An outing against Brighton and Hove Albion's youth side earlier this month even saw Cesay provide an assist from defensive midfield, which further highlights his multi-faceted game.

Whilst Kane is the pinnacle of success for any Spurs youngster, a player like the versatile 20-year-old could well follow in the footsteps of Oliver Skipp as someone that has been in and out of the side for the last few years, even going out on loan to Norwich City in 2020/21.

The 22-year-old is a fine case of what could happen if you've got the quality and show some loyalty in the progression system around N17.

The Spurs website following the pre-season game at Leyton Orient. Here Kallum defends a freekick with Dele Alli and Harry Winks

Wearlstone Football Club! But the squad are a good bunch, very welcoming, and I've enjoyed the games so far even though we've not been winning."

Kallum describes himself as a midfielder, but reckons that clubs will get the best out of him as a full-back as not everyone can play an offensive and defensive game.

"I was disappointed not to score, or assist, in my first few games, although I hit the crossbar against Kidderminster and missed a good chance at Oxford City in the second half. The ball came to me quickly and I thought just get a good connection... next thing, the ball was sailing over the crossbar.

"My favourite goal came for the Tottenham under-18s away at Crystal Palace when I com-

bined with the right winger who cut the ball back to the edge of the box. I took a touch with my right foot and then hit the top corner with a left-footed shot".

Despite that impressive 2021-22 season Kallum only came close to a first team appearance when he was named on the bench for successive Europa conference group stage matches in Portugal, France and Holland.

Growing up in Newham, East London, Kallum went with his family and mates to watch West Ham and was taken on by the Hammers at the age of eight after impressing in Sunday youth league matches.

He has two brothers and two sisters though none of his family play the game... but it must have seemed almost like family when Kallum lined up alongside four other Cesays (or Sesays, or Seesays) in the Sierra Leone squad!

Winston Cesay, Ibrahim Sesay, Alie Cesay and also David Cesay (who spent time with the Stones of course a couple of years ago) were all capped around that time for the AFCON squad which must have made life quite confusing for the match officials!

Now he's knuckling down to life in the National League and, unsurprisingly has taken a few games to get used to it.

"When you play under-23s football, you just prepare and play the game, and then just go home afterwards - the National League is real life, it really means something and I have to get that idea in my head.

"The physicality is different to what I've experienced before, but it's really the fact there's more on the line that is the big difference".





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All you need to know about... Southend United

The opposition in focus

Organised football in the Borough of Southend-on-Sea really started taking hold in the late 1890's. Clubs such as Southend Victoria, Southend Amateurs, Southend Corinthians, Southend Ramblers and even Southend Wesleyans were on the local scene at this time.



The new Roots Hall had been built entirely by internal labour with Sid Broomfield leading a small band of men to build the stadium we know and love today. The entire cost of the stadium, save for a small grant from the Football Association, was met by the Supporters Club and their extensive fund-raising programme.

A team called Southend United were recorded as early as 1898 but it is not known where they played. One thing is for sure is that they are in no way related to our club. At the same time over at Marine Park, which incorporated a football pitch among its attractions, Southend-on-Sea Football Club were establishing a reputation as a top amateur side. The clubs' colours were white shirts and blue 'knickers'. By 1900 this side has changed its name to Southend Athletic, and although Marine Park was later to become The Kursaal, Athletics' ground was radically different to the one occupied by Southend United in their early Football League days. It consisted of a railed off pitch surrounded by a 'trotting' track and a large pavilion with absolutely no spectator accommodation. Also during 1900 a new pitch was laid out adjacent to the large property in Victoria Avenue called Roots

Hall. Ironically one of the first teams to stage games there was Southend Athletic. However the face of football in the Borough was to change forever following a meeting held in the Blue Boar Public House on May 19th 1906. It is well documented that Southend United were formed at this meeting convened by landlord Oliver Trigg and a band of fellow enthusiasts. In 1920 the Southern League clubs, including Southend United, were elected en bloc to form the new Third Division of the Football League. A year later this became the Third Division South as a northern section had also been introduced.

The 1955/56 campaign was to prove one of the most pivotal in the club's history. After 21 years at the largely unpopular Southend Stadium the Blues moved into their new home.

Southend United joined the new national Third Division in 1958, where they remained until 1966 when they suffered their first ever relegation, into the Fourth Division. The club had to wait six seasons until 1972 to experience the club's first ever promotion as runners-up behind Grimsby Town. In 1976 Southend suffered relegation again before taking another runners-up spot behind Watford in 1978. Another relegation in 1980 was directly followed by one of the most successful seasons in the club's history as they won the Fourth Division Championship in 1981, breaking a series of club records in the process. Despite success on the pitch and low admission prices, the club's gates were low and condemned as "a bad reflection on the town"]

In 1984, the club was relegated to the Fourth Division (Bobby Moore was manager), and the following season finished 20th, narrowly avoiding having to seek re-election to the Football League. However, Southend gained promotion

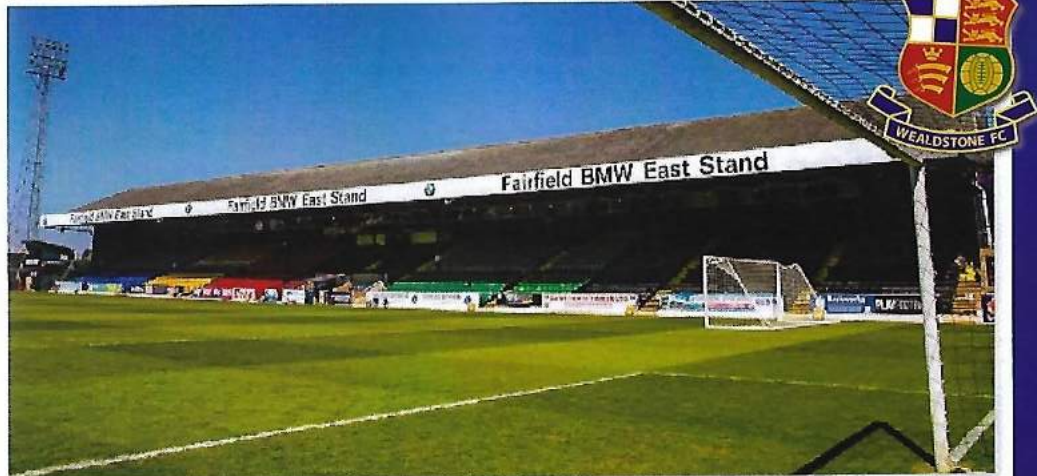
in 1987. Although relegated again in 1989, successive promotions in 1990 and 1991 saw Southend United reach the second tier of the Football League; in 1992, under manager David Webb, the club finished 12th in the old Second Division, having briefly topped the division on New Year's Day, 1992. In 1995, former Liverpool player Ronnie Whelan became player-manager & Southend finished 14th in Division One, but were relegated a year later and Whelan left the club. He was replaced by Alvin Martin but Martin was unable to avoid a second consecutive relegation. Martin left in April 1999, with Southend fifth from bottom in the Football League. Alan Little was manager for a brief spell before the club turned again to David Webb, then Rob Newman, Steve Wignall and, in late 2003, former Southend

THE SHRIMPERS

HOME GROUND ROOTS HALL
CAPACITY - 12,392 (2,878 SEATED)
MANAGER - KEVIN MAHER
2022/23 - 8TH NATIONAL LEAGUE

LAST SEASON

SAT 124TH SEP 2022 (H) L 0-1
SAT 29TH APR 2023 (A) L 1-2
ALL TIME
P 15 W 3 D 3 L 9 FI 6 A 27



United midfielder Steve Tilson.

Under Tilson, Southend reached their first national cup final, meeting Blackpool in the final of the Football League Trophy but the team did not rise to the occasion and Blackpool won 2-0. Tilson then led Southend to promotion to League 1 in 2005, while making a second successive appearance in the Football League Trophy final, which the Shrimpers lost 2-0 to Wrexham, but the third appearance at the Millennium Stadium in the League Two play-off final against Lincoln City brought success giving the club its first promotion via the play-off system and their first major silverware since 1981.

In May 2006 Southend became League One champions after beating Bristol City 1-0 at Roots Hall - the club's first title in 25 years. Tilson was named as the League Manager Association's Manager-of-the-Season for League One.

In 2006/07 the Shrimpers were relegated back to League One & the 2009-2010 season was tougher: a run of just one win in 2010 left Southend deep in trouble, and relegation to League Two was confirmed.

A transfer embargo at the start of the 2012-13 season saw the club start its campaign with a depleted squad. However, a successful loan signing - Britt Assombalonga from Watford - helped Southend to a run of 14 games unbeaten which saw them reach 4th in the table. League form dipped in early 2013. Phil Brown was brought in as manager but picked up just one win in his eight games in charge as Southend

finished the season in 11th position. In 2015 Brown led the team, via a play-off final against Wycombe Wanderers (decided 7:6 on penalties), into League One.

On 22 October 2019, Sol Campbell was appointed manager of Southend. Financial difficulties, including a winding-up petition heard on 22 January 2020, resulted in non-payment of players' and other employees' wages. The winding-up petition was dismissed after debts were cleared.

On 9 June 2020, Football League clubs in Leagues One and Two agreed to end the 2019-20 season; Southend were relegated to League Two. On 30 June 2020, manager Campbell and three assistants left the club by mutual consent.

On 13 August 2020, Southend United appointed Mark Molesley, formerly manager of Weymouth, as their new manager on a three-year contract. On 9 April 2021, Molesley was sacked by Southend United having only won 8 games out of 45. The club were 23rd, five points from safety with six games remaining. Phil Brown returned as manager but could not rescue the situation; Southend suffered a second successive relegation.

On 3 October 2023, the club confirmed that they had reached an agreement for the sale of the club to the Justin Rees consortium and After 15 months, Southend's transfer embargo was lifted on 28 December 2023

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OPPOSITION IN FOCUS

Southend United FC



2. GUS SCOTT-MORRIS - DEFENCE

Gus Scott-Morriss joined the Blues in the summer of 2022, on a two-year deal with an option in the club's favour to extend. The right back joined Hemel Hempstead Town from Royston Town in 2021 and went on to make over 40 appearances for the Tudors in 2021/22. Scott-Morriss became the fourth addition to Kevin Maher's squad in the 2022 summer transfer window after the defender agreed a two-year deal. He played 35 league games in his first season at Roots Hall and scored five goals.

3. NATHAN RALPH - DEFENCE

Arriving from Scottish side Dundee in 2019, Nathan Ralph's first season at Southend was disrupted after dislocating his shoulder in December against Burton Albion. Prior to that the left-back showed his impressive aerial ability and willingness to get forward and deliver good crosses into the box. Formerly of Peterborough, Yeovil, Newport and Woking, with loans at Kettering Town and Aldershot Town, Ralph won Dundee's Player of the Year award in 2018/19.

4. LOUIS LOMAS - DEFENCE

Louis Lomas joined the Blues in 2022 on a two-year deal with the option of another year. The centre-half was identified as a key target by head coach Kevin Maher and the rest of the recruitment department after an impressive 2021/22 season for Brackley Town.

6. OLLIE KENSDALE - DEFENCE

Ollie Kensdale joined Southend United in January 2021 for an undisclosed fee from Concord Rangers. The 21-year-old centre back became Head Coach Kevin Maher's first permanent signing, joining from the National League South side, and made 15 league appearances in his first season at Roots Hall. The defender progressed through Colchester United's youth system, making his first-team debut in November 2018. He made six appearances in total for the U's, also spending time out on loan at Maldon & Tiptree, Bath City and Braintree Town.

7. JACK BRIDGE - MIDFIELD

Jack Bridge returned to Roots Hall in the summer of 2021. He enjoyed a superb 2022/23 campaign, netting 13 goals, including braces against York City and Dagenham & Redbridge. The midfielder started his career at Blues, but after making 11 appearances in two years he departed in January 2018 to join Northampton Town. In June 2019, Bridge signed for Carlisle United and went on to make 35 appearances,

scoring three goals for the Cumbrians. The 28-year-old was on trial at Blues in 2020, but when a move didn't materialise, he signed for Concord Rangers where he caught the eye of Bromley.

8. NOOR HUSIN - MIDFIELD

Blues completed the permanent transfer of midfielder Noor Husin from Dartford for an undisclosed fee in January 2022. The former Reading, Crystal Palace, Notts County and Stevenage centre midfielder arrived at Roots Hall on a two-and-a-half-year deal after Blues agreed an undisclosed fee with the National League South club. Husin, is an Afghanistan international, appearing 14 times for his country since his debut in 2018.

9. HARRY CARDWELL - FORWARD

Harry Cardwell signed for Southend United in January 2022 for an undisclosed fee from Chorley. A former Scotland U21 international, Cardwell began his career in the youth system at his hometown club, Hull City, before joining Reading's Academy at the age of 16. In 2017, after five years with the Royals, Cardwell moved back up north to join Grimsby Town before signing for Chorley in 2020. Cardwell then spent the second half of the 2020/21 season on loan at Stockport County.

10. DANNY WALDRON - FORWARD

11. CALLUM POWELL - FORWARD

Callum Powell joined Southend United in January 2022 from Kettering Town for an undisclosed fee. The 26-year-old forward signed terms on a two-and-a-half-year deal at Roots Hall. Formerly of Northampton, Wrexham, Tamworth and Stourbridge, the forward enjoyed a very successful 2021/22 campaign for Kettering in the National League North before joining Blues.

14. JACK WOOD - MIDFIELD

Jack Wood signed for the Shrimpers from Kings Langley in January 2022. He joined the seventh-tier side in 2019 at the age of 16, and signed for Southend on a two-and-a-half-year deal. Wood spent time on loan at National League South side Tonbridge Angels in 2022/23, netting eight goals.

16. HARRY TAYLOR - DEFENCE

In 2022, Harry Taylor joined the Blues on a two-year deal with the option of another year. He signed from Barnet, where he made over 185 appearances over an eight-year span. Capable of playing in midfield or in defence, Harry began his career in Chelsea's youth team before joining Barnet's academy in 2012 along

with his younger brother Jack, now at Ipswich.

17. CAV MILEY - MIDFIELD

Cav Miley joined the club in the summer of 2022, signing from fellow Vanarama National League side Eastleigh. Miley signed for the Spitfires at the age of 22 from Jersey-based club St Pauls, going on to make 178 league appearances and scoring seven goals from the centre of midfield. Following his move to Essex, Miley immediately established himself in the Blues starting XI upon joining and was named Player of the Year after a magnificent season which saw him appear in every single National League fixture.

18. WESLEY FONGUCK - MIDFIELD

Joining the club in the summer 2022 transfer window, Wes Fonguck left Barnet after 121 league appearances over an eight-year period. He began his football journey with Crystal Palace, leaving the Selhurst Park club at the age of 16, joining Barnet in 2014. In his early years at the Bees, he went out on loan to Hendon and Hampton & Richmond Borough, before going on to score 12 goals for the club in a lengthy spell there. During his time with Barnet, Fonguck made two appearances for England C.

19. HENRY SANDAT - FORWARD

Sandat re-joined the club on a one-month loan on 23 December 2023. Having progressed right the way through the club's academy, he made a big impact for the first team in the 2022/23 season at the age of just 17. In the summer of 2023, he signed for Championship club Hull City, but returned to Roots Hall on a temporary basis six months later.

20. MAURO VILHETE - MIDFIELD

Mauro Vilhete signed for Blues on 19 September on a dual registration with Hayes & Yeading United. The 30-year-old utility player played more than 200 games for Barnet between 2009 and 2020, where he would've played with both Harry Taylor and Wes Fonguck. A big chunk of those appearances came in the EFL. He joined Dagenham & Redbridge in 2021 and played 65 National League games for them across three seasons.

22. BROOKLYN KABONGOLO - DEFENCE

Brooklyn Kabongolo signed for the club on non-contract terms at the end of September 2023. The 20-year-old joined from Billericay Town. Kabongolo was previously in Ipswich Town's academy, where he also spent time out on loan at Bury Town.

23. JAMES MORTON - MIDFIELD

Morton, who is a central midfielder, joined the Club on a two-and-a-half year deal on 29 December 2023. He had played most of his football in the Bristol area but made the move to Essex to become Kevin Maher's first signing since the lifting of the transfer embargo. He spent 10 years with Bristol City, from 2013 to 2023. Morton had three separate loan spells with Bath City in that time, playing 84 league games for the Romans. Morton has also played for three different clubs in the EFL, Forest Green Rovers, Grimsby Town and Gillingham, making 19 appearances in League Two and one in League One.

24. JASON DEMETRIOU - DEFENCE

Southend United completed the signing of Jason Demetriou in July 2016 following the end of his deal with Walsall, and he is now comfortably the club's longest-serving player.

25. DAVID MARTIN - GOALKEEPER

David Martin signed for the club on non-contract terms on 19 September 2023. The experienced goalkeeper started out at Tottenham Hotspur in his youth. He spent four years at Liverpool from 2006 to 2010 although never played in the Premier League for the Reds, spending time on loan at the likes of Accrington Stanley and Leicester City. By far the most significant spell of Martin's career came at MK Dons in the 2010s as he played 274 league games for the Buckinghamshire club, appearing in the Championship for the Buckinghamshire outfit.

28. OLIVER COKER - MIDFIELD

Oli Coker grew up watching Blues with his family, initially joining the youth team system in 2011. He made his first-team debut in October 2020, playing 38 minutes against Portsmouth in the group stage of the EFL Trophy.

30. COLLIN ANDENG-NDI - GOALKEEPER

Collin Andeng Ndi first signed professional terms with Blues in September 2021 after an initial trial period. He was spotted at South Essex College by club legend Steve Tilson, with his first day on trial at Southend coming in October 2020. The Italian-born shot-stopper's debut for the club came in the FA Trophy against Dorking Wanderers, with his first league appearance coming against Stockport County in April 2022. In 2022/23, Andeng Ndi played 23 league games and kept 13 clean sheets, which saw him win our Young Player of the Season award.

Southend United Greatest Seasons CLASSIC CAMPAIGNS

1951/52

Harry Warren guided Southend United to the FA Cup fifth round in 1951/52. Southend soared up the table with a six-match unbeaten run that included a 7-1 victory at home to Aldershot. They beat Bournemouth 6-1, Oldham Athletic 5-0, Southampton 3-0 and Bristol Rovers 2-1 to reach the FA Cup fifth round for the first time, losing 2-1 at home to Sheffield United. The Blues slammed five goals past Bristol City, Watford and Ipswich during the closing weeks of the season, with Sandy Anderson and Jimmy Lawler ever-present. Shortly afterwards, Jackie French and Les Stubbs moved to Nottingham Forest and Chelsea respectively.

1971/72

Southend United won promotion for the first time in 1971/72. Arthur Rowley signed Brian Albeson from Darlington and Ray Ternent from Burnley, with Southend emerging as early pace-setters. They defeated Aston Villa 1-0 in the FA Cup first round and maintained their promotion challenge with a thrilling 14 match unbeaten run. Promotion was assured with a 1-1 draw at rivals Scunthorpe and they finished runners-up after a 2-2 draw at home to Gillingham in their final match. Top scorer Bill Garner and Billy Best netted 44 goals, while other notable players included skipper Joe Jacques and future England winger Peter Taylor.

1977/78

Dave Smith managed Southend United to promotion in 1977/78. Alan Foggon was signed from Sunderland and made his debut as the Blues kicked off with a 1-0 victory at Reading. They raced to the top after being undefeated in their first eight games and top scorer Derrick Parker netted four goals in the 4-0 victory over Torquay. Title rivals Watford were beaten 1-0 and Southend were unlucky to lose 3-2 at Derby in the FA Cup third round. Watford

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

won the title after a 1-1 draw at home to Southend but the Blues finished runners-up with a 3-1 victory over Rochdale. Alan Moody, Colin Morris and Derrick Parker were ever-present.

1980/81

Southend United stormed to the Fourth Division title under Dave Smith in 1980/81. The Blues started with four successive wins and consolidated pole position after dropping just one point in nine matches. They won every home League game until a 0-0 draw against Northampton in January and remained unbeaten at Roots Hall all season, conceding only six goals at home. Southend were so dominant that they clinched promotion with six games remaining and secured the title with a 1-1 draw at home to Rochdale. Derek Spence was top scorer, while other stars included Mervyn Cawston, Terry Gray and Anton Otulakowski.

1986/87

Southend United regained Third Division status at the first attempt in 1986/87. New manager David Webb signed Derek Hall, Peter Johnson and Paul Roberts during the summer, then added Martin Ling from Swindon as the Blues soared into the promotion frame after five straight wins. Southend went second after a 2-1 victory at Wolves in mid-December but the club was stunned by David Webb's resignation at the start of March. Skipper Paul Clark became caretaker-boss and Southend beat rivals Wolves 1-0, then clinched fourth place with a 2-0 win at Stockport in their final match. Richard Cadette was top scorer with 24 goals.

1989/90

David Webb returned to guide Southend United back to the Third Division at the first attempt in 1989/90. The Blues raced to the top of the table after dropping just four points in their opening ten games and were unlucky not to beat Spurs in



LEAGUE ONE CHAMPIONS 2005/06

the Littlewoods Cup second round. They overcame a shock FA Cup defeat at Aylesbury to maintain their promotion challenge and top scorer David Crown grabbed a hat-trick in a 5-0 victory over Aldershot. Ian Benjamin, Andy Ansah and Dean Austin were signed just before the deadline and a Southend side containing five teenagers clinched third place with a 2-1 victory at Peterborough.

1990/91

Southend United won promotion for the second consecutive season in 1990/91. Notable summer signings included Brett Angell from Stockport and future England left-back Chris Powell from Crystal Palace. The Blues stormed to the top of the Third Division after winning all except four of their first 18 games and David Webb tightened the defence by signing Eire international Pat Scully from Arsenal. They were held to a 0-0 draw by rivals Cambridge United in front of 10,664 and clinched promotion to the Second Division for the first time with a 1-0 victory at Bury but finished runners-up after failing to win their last two games.

2004/05

Steve Tilson plotted Southend United's 2004/05 League Two play-off final triumph. Summer signings included Adam Barrett, Wayne Gray and Carl Pettefer as well as returning favourites Andy Edwards and Spencer Prior. The Blues failed to win any of their opening five games but then climbed the table with six wins in eight matches. Freddy Eastwood grabbed a hat-trick on his debut in the 4-2 victory over Swansea in October and was top

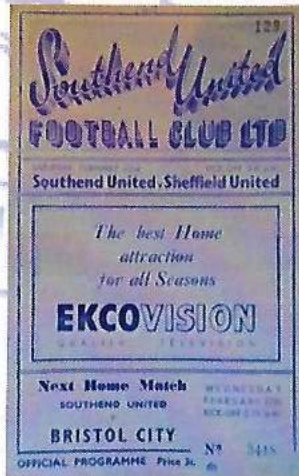
scorer with 19 goals. They lost 2-0 to Wrexham in the LDV Vans Trophy final and were pipped to automatic promotion on the last day but beat Lincoln 2-0 in the League Two play-off final.

2005/06

Freddy Eastwood scored 23 goals as Southend United won the League One title in 2005/06. Newcomers included Mitchell Cole and Shaun Goater but Southend won just one of their first five matches before eight successive victories catapulted them to the top. Steve Tilson's side overcame three defeats in a row to regain pole position with a 13-match unbeaten run. Efe Sodje and Lee Bradbury were signed during this period and made a significant contribution, with Southend securing promotion with a 2-2 draw at Swansea. The Blues clinched the title with a 1-0 win over Bristol City, finishing three points ahead of Colchester.

2014/15

Phil Brown guided Southend United to League Two play-off final success in 2014/15. The Blues won six of their opening ten matches, including a 2-0 victory at home to Portsmouth, then remained in contention with just one defeat in 16 games. Seven straight wins in April lifted Southend to third place but they missed out on automatic promotion on the final day after losing 3-1 at Morecambe and finishing fifth. Barry Corr finished leading marksman with 14 League goals. Southend beat Stevenage 4-2 on aggregate in the play-off semi-finals, then defeated Wycombe Wanderers 7-6 on penalties after a 1-1 draw in the Wembley final.



v SHEFFIELD UNITED
1951/52 FA CUP 5TH
ROUND

VIEW FROM THE AWAY END: SOUTHEND

Southend's tale of avarice & woe ... and players and fans who just wouldn't let the club die

WE'VE featured diehard Shrimpers fan **BERNIE FRIEND** in these pages before, and the former *Southend Echo* and *Daily Mirror* writer again offers an inside view on the turbulent (and inspirational) last two years at Roots Hall. Settle in for a good read as **TIM PARKS** gets some exclusive insights into all things Southend United...

So Bernie, is the long-awaited club takeover finally in place?

CONTRACTS for the sale of Southend United have been exchanged between chairman Ron Martin and a consortium led by Australian IT millionaire Justin Rees (pictured below) ... but the finalisation of the deal is still dragging on painfully.

Off-the-pitch approval regarding property transactions which will keep the club at Roots Hall need to be ironed out to get the sale officially over the line. But the consortium's involvement has already had a hugely positive impact on the Shrimpers and there has been a tidal wave of renewed optimism flowing around the club.

The prospective new owners have provided crucial life support, bankrolling the Roots Hall wage bill and getting the club's transfer embargo lifted after 15 difficult months. And our miracle-working management team of Kevin Maher, Darren Currie and Mark Bentley have been tied down to long-term contracts.

However, with the clock ticking down fast on another turbulent campaign, the feelgood factor is in danger of being washed away if the sale doesn't go through ahead of pre-season, giving Maher the chance to sign his targets early and prepare for a



Bernie (second left) models the chic checkered look together with his son Evan. More soberly dressed are his cousin Peter and nephew Sonny... and Sammy the Shrimp!

proper crack at promotion next term. Completion of the deal would seem a win-win situation for everyone involved - most importantly a club which was sitting on death row at the end of last year, and its incredible supporters whose passionate protests have given it the kiss of life.

It's also a great deal for unpopular owner Martin, who has failed to relocate the club to a new stadium at Fossetts Farm for 25 years.

A move away from Roots Hall has always been key to Martin getting Southend Council to rubber-stamp a sprawling housing development on the surrounding land. And the Shrimpers' spiritual home was also set to be sacrificed as part of Martin's masterplan... the goalposts bulldozed to make way for even more money-making flats.

But much to the relief of Blues' fans, the consortium wants to keep the club at Roots Hall with the council's blessing, and Martin required to fund a multi-million pound makeover as part of the sale, transforming our

Theatre or Rust into a Theatre of Dreams once again. And Martin might just be the biggest winner. He could realise his lucrative property dream without the burden of relocating the club to Fossetts Farm, with even more housing units filling the hole originally planned for a new stadium... now that's

called playing the long game!

Who are the new owners and do you trust them implicitly?

THE NEW owners are businessmen and supporters of the club, led by our newly appointed guardian angel Justin Rees: a Foster's-fuelled Aussie who had a football epiphany last year while walking and cycling the 500-mile Camino de Santiago pilgrimage in northern Spain.

After hearing about Southend's perilous plight on the bush telegraph, he decided to fly to the club's rescue and will certainly earn his wings if he can turn things round at Roots Hall. The consortium's main task is to plug the financial leaks on the Essex coast and help a club haemorrhaging £2.4million-a-season to break even within five years.

Southend are in desperate need of extra income outside of football to achieve this aim, and a revamped 16,000-capacity Roots Hall has been

earmarked as the way forward. The neglected 69-year-old stadium has not aged well, but is in line for a large shot of Botox to get rid of its wrinkles. And the demolition and rebuilding of a modern £15million East Stand is the planned jewel in the crown, with new bars and banqueting facilities providing additional revenue streams to boost the club's empty coffers.

Two interesting names connected to Blues' saviours are lifelong Shrimpers fan Jason Brown, who owns a hedge fund in Hong Kong, and Glasgow Rangers shareholder George Taylor, whose late father Sir Teddy was a local MP and Southend supporter. As for trust? That has to be earned... but anything has to be a major improvement on the recent past!

When did the transfer embargo end? Do you like the sound of the new signings?

THE EMBARGO was finally lifted in December after 15 long months struggling along with a threadbare squad. It was a massive boost as it's been more Sunday League than National League at times this season with Blues going into tough fixtures with just one substitute. And it has given some oppo-

nents licence to employ dark arts, putting in sly challenges and trying to wind up our players to gain a numerical advantage on the pitch... but credit to the Southend lads who have refused to bite.

This has presented huge challenges to our management team who have worked wonders to keep us ultra-competitive. But now our head of football, 'non-League Godfather' John Still can start working his magic. Still's scouting network is second to none at this level of the game, but the embargo had shut down his use of those contacts to unearth rough diamonds that Kevin Maher and Co can polish into shining gems.

Defender Adam Crowther, midfielder James Morton and striker Danny Waldron have arrived permanently from King's Lynn, Weston-super-Mare and Rushall Olympic respectively, to beef up the body count. However, we must be careful to navigate this brave new world of transfer freedom with patience and diligence, not panic and desperation... as rival clubs believing we are awash with cash following a takeover will be quick to raise the prices on their players' heads.

Could the new players disrupt the 'Shrimpers against the world' mentality that has served you so well this season?

TRENCH FATIGUE crept in over Christmas as players drained by the unforgiving National League schedule understandably looked to be running out of steam. So any new recruits are as warmly received as the cavalry riding over the hill at the last minute to reinforce a depleted army which has

been under constant enemy fire all season... from all angles.

It may be an exhausted football cliché, but Southend boss Kevin Maher truly does have blue blood pumping through his veins. He was captain of the club as a player, clocking up 450 games. And he knows what it takes to succeed at Roots Hall after winning double promotions to the Championship and having seen off Manchester United in the League Cup during a decade shovelling coal in the Shrimpers' engine room.

And he has kept that fire burning against all the odds this term. Maher has galvanised his 16-man squad with a siege mentality in a fight for survival on and off the pitch. His players have fed off the fanatical energy of their supporters' backing both home and away in large numbers... plus a plague of plastic rats and tennis balls served up for chairman Ron Martin at Roots Hall, turning pro-

Continued overpage>>>



Gus Scott-Morris has been a stand-out player for Southend

VIEW FROM THE AWAY END CONTINUED

From previous page tests into precious league points. Blues would be in the thick of the play-off fight without the 10-pt deduction imposed on the club... which is testament to the extraordinary levels of over-achievement that Maher and his coaching staff have achieved this campaign.

What have been the standout performances?

HARRY Cardwell will get the plaudits for his goalscoring exploits and the tireless Gus Scott-Morris epitomises the club's never-say-die attitude by running through brick walls for 90 minutes every match.

But everyone associated with the club deserves the ultimate praise. The management, players and club staff who have struggled along without wages at times for long periods. And the thousands of supporters who marched through the streets in protest and made chairman Ron Martin's private life uncomfortable by spending long vigils camped outside his house chanting loudly and holding up banners in an effort to relinquish his stranglehold on Southend.

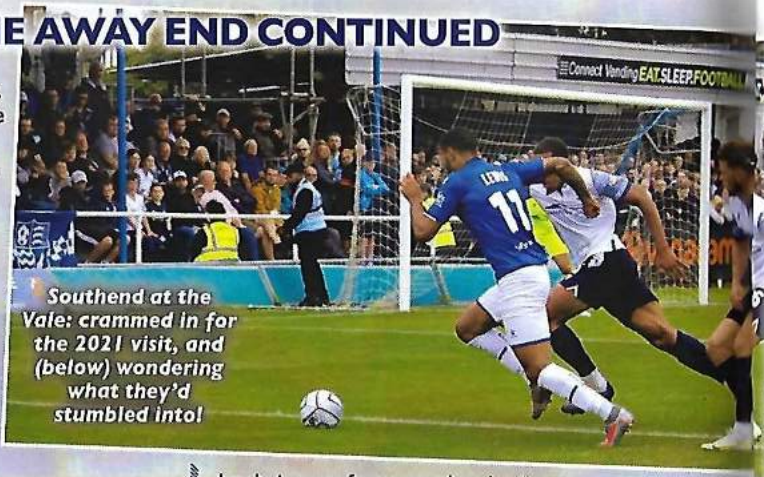
Rarely has a football team and its fans forged such a tight, emotional connection... it truly is a United club in every sense. And this group of players - and supporters - should go down as the biggest heroes in the Shrimpers' 118-year history.

Did you fear for the club's existence last summer?

A TOXIC cocktail of terrible mismanagement and winding-up orders left Southend in terminal decline and close to drawing its last breath... but I never once feared wearing a blue suit to its funeral.

The club might have been completely skint and all set to stick the last 50p in the Roots Hall floodlight meter before they were switched off for good. But one currency the Shrimpers are super-rich in is fan power... and the club's supporters would never have

Southend at the Vale: crammed in for the 2021 visit, and (below) wondering what they'd stumbled into!



let their team face eternal extinction.

Many of our followers would have swallowed administration and the embarrassment of relegation to National League South if it had forced Ron Martin through the Roots Hall exit door. And there were already murmurs of a phoenix club rising from the ashes of desolation if the unthinkable happened.

Without sounding arrogant, Southend are too big a club to disappear. We regularly attract 7-8,000 attendances at Roots Hall and sell out away ends on our travels... and with even more stayaway fans set to flood back through the turnstiles once Martin has finally severed all ties with the club.

There would have been enough people who cared around the city to start again and fight our way back... but hopefully we don't have to worry about that anymore. Fans want the consortium to be visionaries who can help Southend United finally realise its full potential.

You only have to look at the likes of similar-sized clubs such as Bournemouth, Brentford and Luton punching well above their weight in the Premier League to see what can be achieved when club owners genuinely have a love for the game. But all we want is a Football League return in the short term.

How are you expecting Southend to get on against the Stones tonight?

WE ARE a big scalp at this level and Wealdstone always have their tomahawks sharpened when we are in town. The Stones like to get in our faces and make life uncomfortable, so I'm expecting another close game. And we should fill your away end, as The Vale is only a short sail around the M25 from the Essex Riviera. We took 1,800 fans to Ebbsfleet on Good Friday, so I hope Stones supporters are warming up their vocal cords. I've only

made one previous visit to your ground, the 0-0 draw in our first National League season in August 2021... and it was a sobering affair for two contrasting reasons.

On the football front it was a massive wake-up call for 'big-time' Southend - a tight, suffocating little non-League ground with all of its charming quirks. Matchday parking on grass football pitches opposite the turnstiles, the imposing steel skeleton of a communications tower which could have teleported on to the terracing from 70s science fiction soap opera Blake's 7, and a World War II gun turret primed to repel Essex invaders.

But your modern clubhouse made a rotting Roots Hall look every inch the minnow... no warm pints of beer in sight, or the need to hire a paddle board to safely navigate the filthy waves of leaking toilets at Southend's home.

I'll be at the game tonight and understand that Wealdstone are looking to relocate. I would never want to stand in the way of progress, but will be sad to lose the character which oozes out of your current home from the football map. And as I'm sure every Southend fan will join me in saying, 'Just be careful what you wish for!'

Shrimpers boss Kevin Maher (right) greets Stones goalkeeping coach Jason Scannel when the teams met at Roots Hall early last month

When they last met...



Sean Adarkwa puts Stones 1-0 ahead at Roots Hall and celebrates (left)

Tuesday March 5, Vanarama National League: Southend 1 Wealdstone 1

By the Southend Evening Echo A LAST-GASP equaliser from substitute Henry Sandat secured Shrimpers a 1-1 draw against Wealdstone at Roots Hall.

Blues went behind early on and seemed set for a frustrating evening after failing to make the most of some excellent opportunities. But the Shrimpers continued to attack and were rewarded late on with Sandat diverting home a left wing cross from Jack Bridge as the hosts bagged their first home draw of the season.

Southend - who were missing the injured Harry Cardwell in attack - threatened in the opening exchanges but the visitors hit back and broke the deadlock in the fifth minute with Sean Adarkwa on target for the 10th time this season.

The striker was left unmarked just six yards from goal and had time and space to neatly control Max Kretzschmar's left wing cross before firing home.

The goal saw the Shrimpers fall behind for the fourth game in succession and the visitors were soon pushing for a second goal with Tarryn Allarakhia having a low cross shot saved by goalkeeper Collin Andeng Ndi at the second attempt. Blues

soon replied and came close to equalising just past the half hour mark when a fine through ball from Jason Demetriou created a good chance for Waldron.

The forward lifted the ball over the advancing Marcus Dewhurst but Stones skipper Jack Cook got back well to clear the effort away from goal.

Dewhurst then tipped over a looping volley from Noor Husin before the visitors threatened down the left hand side with Allarakhia beating two or three Blues defenders before seeing his shot blocked by Andeng Ndi at the near post. And Stones debutant Dillon De Silva also looked dangerous.

Dewhurst tipped over a looping volley from Noor Husin before the visitors threatened down the left hand side with Allarakhia beating two or three Blues defenders before seeing his shot blocked by Andeng Ndi at the near post.

And on the stroke of half-time the visitors threatened again with De Silva bursting into the box before sending a left footed shot over the crossbar.

Ves Fonguck, an unmarked Waldron, Husin and then Marcus Dackers all missed chances before ex Blues midfielder Nathan Ferguson fired over from 20 yards.

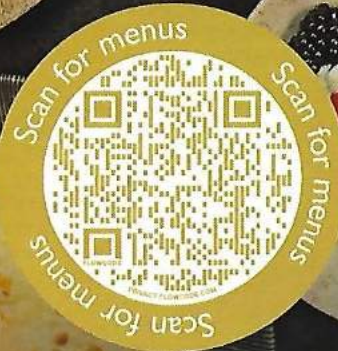
Allarakhia burst through only to shoot straight at the Southend keeper... but then came the sting in the tail as Bridge darted in from the left hand side and saw Sandat stab home his cross to make it six games unbeaten for Kevin Maher's side. Attendance: 6,399 (including 130 Wealdstone supporters)



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 AFC FYLDE Saturday 19th August Vanarama National League	Harrow Windows	
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All you need to know about.. Dorking Wanderers

Opposition in focus



Dorking's football history combines nearly 200 years of rich local heritage with a remarkable modern day community success story.

Football was first played in Dorking in the 1830s – an annual game with the East and West of the town competing against each other in the High Street. The first senior club, called Dorking FC, was started in 1880 and played at West Bank, before moving to Fairfield Drive and on to Pixham Lane in the 1920s. Football came quite literally to the town centre in 1953, when a new stadium was built in a picturesque location just behind the High Street at Meadowbank.

It became an iconic non-league stadium hosting Corinthian and Athenian League matches, along with a record-breaking crowd in 1992 as Dorking FC took on Peter Shilton's Plymouth Argyle in the FA Cup. That high point was followed by two decades of decline and a dilapidated

Meadowbank stadium, once the pride of Dorking, closed for health and safety reasons in 2013 and Dorking FC played its last game.

Meanwhile, Dorking Wanderers Football Club was established in 1999, and had steadily climbed the non-league pyramid from park football to the National League South. The founder members Marc White, Peter Buckland, Mark Lewington, Ian Davidson, Lee Spickett and Penny Gregg brought the club to life and entered the fledgling team into the Crawley & District League in 1999, with the home ground situated at Big Field Brockham, a small village on the outskirts of Dorking.

The club remained at Big Field Brockham until 2007, and after several promotions it relocated to a new Westhumble home. This was a monumental project, which saw a huge off the field effort transform the once derelict site into a senior level football ground.

Back on the field the promotions continued after the club relocated, and this continued in 2015 when the club finished runners-up in the Sussex County League, securing promotion to the Ryman Division One South (Step 4). The

2015 season also saw the club progress further than ever before in the FA Cup, where they eventually succumbed to a last minute extra time goal away to Biggleswade Town in a 2nd qualifying round replay.

The club marked their first year in the Ryman Division One South by finishing runners-up (losing out in the play-offs), however they went one better in 2016-17 when they again finished runners-up (only on goal difference having amassed 105 points) and secured promotion via the play-offs following victories over Hastings United and Corinthian Casuals.

The 2017-18 season saw Dorking Wanderers line up in the Bostik Premier League (Step 3) for the first time in their history, which coincided with the construction of the multi million pound Meadowbank Stadium development in the heart of Dorking Town Centre, soon to be the home of The Wanderers.

In 2018-19 Dorking Wanderers kicked off the new season in their brand new stadium at Meadowbank Park. Following a mixed start to the season, mainly due to several injuries to key players, Wanderers really found their form from December onwards, and subsequently only lost one league game in 2019. The team went on to win the Bostik Premier League by 22 points and promotion to the National League South (Step 2) for the first time in their history. At the same time they set a new British record of having had 11 promotions in just 19 years. This fantastic achievement was made even more special due to the fact that it coincided with the clubs 20 year anniversary.

Now firmly ensconced in their new home Marc White's team enjoyed a successful first season in the National league South finally losing out in the promotion play off semi-finals. Their first season at step 2 saw many notable performances including an excellent FA Trophy run with victories over two National League teams including a superb 4-0 away win against Stockport County.

The second season also brought much success and having started the season with an early FA Cup defeat, The Wanderers looked well

WANDERERS
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CAPACITY - 3,000
MANAGER - MARK WHITE
2022/23 - 16TH NATIONAL LEAGUE



set for promotion being 5 points clear at the top of the table with games in hand when the season was prematurely curtailed due to the Covid virus. This disappointment was put firmly behind us and everybody at the club became fully focussed on achieving promotion last season with four new highly experienced players being signed during the close season to bolster the squad.

Away from the first team, our reserves started the 2020 - 21 season well with a squad composed mainly of boys that have come up through our Under 18's and our highly successful Academy. Our ladies team had a fantastic first season gaining promotion at the first attempt and making it to the Capital Women's Intermediate Cup Final where they narrowly lost on penalties to the New London Lionesses. We continued to further develop our ground with the addition of two new stands which were completed during the 2020 - 21 season.

The 2021 - 22 season was another historic period for the club. The 1st Team finished runners-up to Maidstone United in the National League South and with two victories in the play off semi-final and the National League South Promotion Final, we were promoted to the highest tier of non-league football for the first time in our short history.

A dramatic equaliser 5 seconds from the end

of normal time was enough to take us into extra time and win 3 - 2 against Ebbsfleet United in the promotion final. 12 promotions in 21 completed seasons sees us start 2022 - 23 in the top tier of non-league football, having started at the lowest level in 1999 - 2000.

Our ladies team finished second in their league and won the Capital Women's Intermediate Cup in only their second season.

Our first season in the top tier of non-league

football, the National League, was for us a real learning experience. We took a lot from that inaugural season that saw us beat Notts County 3 - 1 at Meadowbank and also face an in-form Wrexham side at Meadowbank where the scoreline was in their favour. Travelling further

afield brought its challenges and this will inform how we prepare for the 2023 - 24 season.

Now that the 2022 - 23 campaign is over, we are looking forward to our second season in the National League. Recent developments have seen the 1st team move to training on two mornings per week instead of evenings, which will give the coaching staff more time with the players. We also have recruited a new Head Coach - Ross McNeilly arriving from The Aldershot Town FC Academy after Mark Beard was appointed as Manager of Eastbourne Borough FC.

ALL TIME

P 6 W 2 D 2 L 2 F 10 A 13
PREVIOUS RESULTS

Tue 19th Sep 2023 (A) - L 3-1

Sat 22nd Apr 2023 (H) - D 2-2

Sat 22nd Oct 2022 (A) - L 3-1

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UCFB graduate, Assistant Producer at **talkSPORT**



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OPPOSITION IN FOCUS

Dorking Wanderers



1. HARRISON MALE - GOALKEEPER

Harrison, spent over a decade rising through the youth ranks at Leeds United,.At international level, Harrison also represented England's U15 and U16 sides. Following loan spells with Tadcaster Albion and Gateshead, Harrison joined Worthing in 2021.

2. ISAAC PHILPOT - DEFENCE

Isaac grew up in Dorking and played for Dorking FC before he represented Metropolitan University in the Welsh Premier League.The Wanderers signed him in 2017.Able to play at right back or central defender, Isaac also had a spell at Sutton United.

3. BOBBY-JOE TAYLOR - DEFENCE

A real fans favourite Bobby joined us in 2021 from Ebbsfleet United, bringing a wealth of experience with him. Bobby spent his youth career at Chelsea and Gillingham before moving to Cambridge United. He has also represented England C twice and played for Maidstone United, Bromley FC and Dover Athletic.

4. DAN PYBUS - MIDFIELD

Dan who played youth football at Sunderland and Derby has previously played senior football for Bradford City, Blyth Spartans, Tønsberg in Norway, Queen of the South, Dunfermline Athletic and York City

5. TONY CRAIG - DEFENCE

Tony came through the youth ranks at Millwall and would go on to make over 300 appearances across 4 spells for the South London side. He has also played for Crystal Palace, Leyton Orient and Brentford.Tony went on to play for Bristol Rovers and Crawley Town before joining the Wanderers initially on loan in 2023. Tony played a pivotal role in our League survival and Marc moved quickly in the close season to secure his permanent signing.

6. NIALL MCMANUS - MIDFIELD

One of several ex Leatherhead players currently in our squad, Niall is in his 6th season with the club, making nearly 200 appearances since joining in the summer of 2018.A speedy and tireless centre midfielder, he was formerly at Carshalton, Millwall, Hayes & Yeading and Matlock Town.

7. JIMMY MUITT - FORWARD

Jimmy signed for us in 2019 from Bognor Regis with a reputation as a prolific goal scorer at his former clubs Brighton, Lewes and Bognor Regis.

Known for his direct play and electric pace, he is a versatile player able to play in several positions. His performances went from strength to strength as the season progressed gaining him a new contract in the close season

8. MATT BRIGGS - MIDFIELD

Now in his 9th season with us here at The Wanderers, having made his debut in 2015. Matt has now made over 200 appearances during his time with The Wanderers.

9. JASON PRIOR - FORWARD

Jason rejoined The Wanderers in 2023 having previously played an instrumental part in the club's recent history and success. Jason scored 7 important goals in the final 14 games of last season helping the club retain its National League status.

10. ALFIE RUTHERFORD FORWARD

Signed from Havant & Waterlooville. Alfie has a wealth of Step 2 experience having played in the National League with Havant and Waterlooville for two seasons. He has also played for Bognor Regis Town. He finished as winner of the National League South Golden Boot for the 2021-22.

11. JAMES MCSHANE - MIDFIELD

In his 8th season with the club he has played for several Scottish League teams (including Clyde) and more locally for Chipstead, Egham and Molesey. He has now made over 300 appearances and scored over 100 goals in the Red and White.

12. CALLUM KENNEDY - DEFENCE

An ex professional having made over 250 appearances for several league teams including Swindon, Scunthorpe, AFC Wimbledon and Orient, Callum joined us from Billericay

15. JOE COOK - DEFENCE

Joe initially joined The Wanderers on a loan last season from Chesterfield with his move being made permanent in January. He joined Chesterfield from Bognor Regis during the summer of 2022 and he adds competition at the back

16. CHARLIE CARTER - MIDFIELD

Charlie's footballing journey began at Fulham and then across the county at Woking before earning a move to Chesterfield and from there a transfer into the Football League with Stevenage. After three seasons at The Lamex Stadium, Charlie enjoyed a consistent season with Eastleigh last term

17. JOSH TAYLOR - MIDFIELD

Josh joined us from Havant & Waterlooville in May 2021. After spending 4 years in the USA on a scholarship, Josh was at Sutton United for two seasons before moving to The Hawks. He has brought another dimension to The Wanderers and is already well on his way to making 100 appearances for The Wanderers.

18. LUKE MOORE - MIDFIELD

The former AFC Wimbledon man is now in his 7th season with The Wanderers having previously played league football with 168 appearances for AFC Wimbledon as well as receiving a call up to the England C team. Early on in his career he also made 123 senior appearances for Ebbsfleet

19. HAYDN HOLLIS - DEFENCE

Haydn has played in the Football League with Notts County and Forest Green Rovers, and has also played on loan in the Conference for Barrow, Hinckley United, Darlington and Chesterfield, before signing for Ebbsfleet United in the summer of 2022. He made the move to Dorking Wanderers in November 2023.

20. DAN GALLAGHER - MIDFIELD

Joined us from Leatherhead in 2019 having been at AFC Wimbledon since he was 10 years old Dan represented the first team there during the 2014-15 season before moving to Kingstonian and Leatherhead.

21. SLAVOMIR HUK - GOALKEEPER

Slovakian keeper in his 9th season with The Wanderers having joined in July 2015 from VSS Kosice. Slav is a real fans favourite and was our player of the year in 2017 and 2018. A fantastic shot stopper and penalty saving expert he will always be a club legend thanks to his Isthmian League Division 1 play-offs heroics.

22. BARRY FULLER - DEFENCE (C)

Club Captain Barry signed in August 2020 from Gillingham following his second spell at the League 1 club where he made a total of 195 appearances either side of playing 205 games for AFC Wimbledon. He was the Dons Player's Player of the Season twice in 2013-14 and 2015-16. 'Baz' is nearing 100 appearances for The Wanderers also contributing 10 goals. Injury kept his appearances down to just 26 last season

23. JACK JEBB - MIDFIELD

Jebb joined us from Dartford FC in June 2022.A

product of the Arsenal youth academy, Jack has represented England at U15 and U16 level. Signing a professional deal with Arsenal in 2012, he regularly played for their U18 side, before playing for Stevenage and Newport County in the football league. Jack made 22 appearances at the start of last season and then went out on loan to Havant & Waterlooville in the National League South.

24. HARRY OTTAWAY - FORWARD

joined us in January 2022 from Carshalton FC making his debut on 29 January 2022. Harry has scored 11 times in 40 appearances - his impact in matches has been crucial to the continued success of The Wanderers. His previous clubs have included Sutton United and Dover Athletic. An all round striker, Harry very quickly settled into The Wanderers style of play and has gelled well playing alongside either Jason or Ryan.

30. SEB BOWERMAN - MIDFIELD

Seb came to us with a great pedigree - named player of the Year in the Berkshire Football Awards during the 2021-22 season. He also scored 29 goals for Bracknell that season and provides guile and pace on either wing. Seb started his career at Binfield FC, making his way through the youth ranks breaking into the first team at age 16.

37. GEORGE FRANCOMB MIDFIELD

George began his career in the Tottenham Hotspur youth ranks before moving on to the Norwich City academy at the age of 16. Whilst at the East Anglia club George would experience loan spells with Barnet and then Hibernian, his time with the Edinburgh side including a substitute appearance in the 2012 Scottish Cup Final against city rivals Hearts. A final loan stint from Norwich out to AFC Wimbledon concluded with George making a permanent switch to the South London club in 2013. Going on to make nearly 200 appearances for 'The Dons', Signing for Crawley Town in 2018.

MANAGER MARK WHITE

White founded Dorking Wanderers with friends in 1999 as an amateur park divisional team and initially played for the team, as well as running the club he went on to become first team manager. White has overseen 12 promotions in 23 years and has seen the club move from the seventeenth-tier of English football to the National league

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To purchase your season ticket go to <https://wealdstonefc.ticketsco/events/uk/en>

	2024-25 Season Tickets		Season Ticket cost per game		Individual match tickets	
	Early Bird	Standard	Early Bird	Standard	Online	Pay on the Gate
Adult £	275	325	11.96	14.13	18	20
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Next Gen £	100	150	4.35	6.52	11	13
16-18 £	50	80	2.17	3.48	7	8
Under 16* £	10	10	0.43	0.43	7	8

* £10 season ticket will be donated to the Wealdstone FC Charitable Foundation



A day of disaster as shot-shy Stones are crushed 4-0 by relegation rivals

BOREHAM WOOD 4
Tshimanga 9, Sass-Davies 60, Robinson 70, Ndlovu 74

WEALDSTONE 0

MATCH STATS

BOREHAM W V WEALDSTONE

8 SHOTS ON TARGET 4
2 SHOTS OFF TARGET 4
9 CORNERS 1
1 OFFSIDE 0
8 FOULS CONCEDED 2
1 YELLOW CARDS 1
0 RED CARDS 0

WOOD STEP UP FOR BOSS LUKE

By Brett Lewis

BOREHAM Wood turned on the style for outgoing boss Luke Garrard with a thumping victory over fellow strugglers Wealdstone to end their six-game losing streak.

Garrard announced he was to step down after nine years in charge of Wood at the end of the season with last year's play-off semi-finalists deep in relegation trouble.

But his troops responded with aplomb as goals from Kabongo Tshimanga, Billy Sass-Davies, Matt Robinson and Lee Ndlovu sent their level on points with their visitors with three matches to play.

"The announcement this week has been a weight lifted from my shoulders," Garrard admitted.

"It's last chance saloon, there are no more rehearsals. We needed the win today - we had to deal with the pressure and believe in ourselves.

"We were clinical in front of goal which was good. We have three games left and ideally want to win, win and win, to keep us up. It's backs to the wall, we've got to come out fighting."

It could have been so different, however, had the Stones taken some of their chances in the first half. Sean Adarkwa was one-on-one with Wood keeper Nathan Ashmore on two minutes but screwed his shot wide.

And they were made to pay eight minutes later when Wood took the lead - Angelo Baintan's cross turned in by Kabongo Tshimanga.

The visitors responded well with Nathan Ferguson denied by Ashmore when he raced clear of the Wood defence.

And Adarkwa found himself heading down on



BILLY THE MID: Boreham Wood's Billy Sass-Davies celebrates his goal.

Wood almost punished him again on 42 minutes but Jack Payne's shot was blocked on the line before the ball ricocheted back to him and he fired over.

Wealdstone came out for the second half showing plenty of attacking intent. Two minutes into the restart, Ashmore produced an incredible save to deny Adarkwa for a time.

Wood, however, issued a warning when Matt Robinson forced a fine save from Stones keeper Marcus Dewhurst.

And on the hour, Wood doubted their lead when Peter Sousa's freekick

was headed home by Billy Sass-Davies.

Wood dominated from there on and Robinson added a third on 70 minutes with a crisp volley that gave Dewhurst no chance.

And four minutes later, they wrapped it up with a fourth with Lee Ndlovu squeezing the ball in at Dewhurst's near post.

It's just one point from a possible 18 now for David Noble's Wealdstone, who sit on the cusp of the relegation zone on the same points as Wood, albeit with two games in hand.

STAR MAN: Matt Robinson (Boreham 70:00)
ATE: 1 2pt
ENTERTAINMENT: ****
REFEREE: Paul Wilson

LINE-UPS

Ashmore 6

Sousa 8, Baintan 6, Bush 8, Adarkwa 7

Sass-Davies 6, Payne 6, Robinson 9

Isarian 7, Ndlovu 7, Tshimanga 7

Adkins 6, Ferguson 6, Awaraka 7

Nerry 6, Kristiansen 6, Dye 6

Barnet 7, Barker 6, Mulla 6, Tsoy 7

BOREHAM WOOD: Dwyer 7 (for Barina 60), Marsh 7 (for Tshimanga 7), Flynn 6 (for Payne 85), Sains 6 (for Lewis 60), Clayton WEALDSTONE: Agony 6 (for Adarkwa 6), Cook 6 (for Ashmore 6), Sains 6 (for Noble 60)

Boreham Wood v Stones report (above) courtesy of the Non-League paper

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REWIND SPECIAL >>>> by tim parks

It happened 50 years ago

Part 21: The final straight as the amazing Stones win five games in just 11 days...

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.

- Tuesday April 2, 1974, Southern League Division One South: Wealdstone 3 Canterbury City 1
- Saturday April 6, 1974, Southern League Division One South: Andover 0 Wealdstone 3
- Tuesday April 9, 1974, Southern League Division One South: Bognor Regis Town 1 Wealdstone 2
- Friday April 12, 1974, Southern League Division One South: Ashford Town 0 Wealdstone 1
- Saturday April 13, Southern League Division One South: Wealdstone 2 Dorchester Town 0

Okay, the standard of the Southern League Division One was nowhere close to the levels that Wealdstone players perform to today.

And there's no doubt that every National League player today is an athlete, whereas non-League football half a century ago had its fair share of 'journeyman' players who would get nowhere near Level Five in the mid-2020s. But revelling in the misfortunes of some of the teams who came up against the Wealdstone Class of '74 was all part of the fun.

This team had players who'd played at much higher levels very recently: skipper John McCormick, ex-Crystal Palace; Eric Burgess, ex Colchester; Terry Dyson, ex-Spurs double winner; George Duck, ex-Southend and Spurs; Ray Fulton and Willie Watson, both ex West Ham and even player-manager Eddie Presland had turned out in Division One for the Hammers and Palace.

Yet it still took deep reserves of grit and determination to come through the five games (and five



George Duck leaps to bravely head the Stones opening goal in the 3-1 defeat of Canterbury. Johnny Henderson lurks to the left!

wins) in 11 days that pretty much wrapped up the title for the Stones. Similar to this season's schedule, in fact!

And this was with a squad of just 13 players, who kicked off the spectacular winning run just three days after the rude awakening of a 2-0 defeat at Bath City (chronicled in last week's programme). The Somerset side were now managed by Bert Head, the former Crystal Palace boss and were formidable opposition - eventually finishing as runners-up to the Mighty Stones. **Canterbury** were a little less formidable.

This was the first floodlit game to be played at Lower Mead for FIVE whole months - after the miners' strike had paralysed the country over Christmas and New Year - since the Southern League Cup 3-3 draw with Wimbledon in November. And how happy must the Wealdstone treasurer have been to see 1,212 fans flood through the turnstiles. They had their money's worth as Stones pulverised the Kent side's defence (see report, right) and two goals from Georgie Duck took him up to the 52 mark for the season.

Next up was **Andover** and I was one of the 250-odd fans to travel down to Hampshire, the Supporters Club running three coaches... much to the astonishment of the home club's officials as we pulled into the car park in that sleepy Hampshire town.

"Thizzle be our biggest gate of the season!" said one as we made our way into the quaint ground. "We had that Baaath City here a few weeks ago and Wealdstun have brought three times as many. I'd better open the tea hut!"

Colin Pope's match report claimed it was Andover's biggest-ever crowd (some 700) and that the 'Super Stones' completely controlled the match. I remember a one-sided second half, with us 3-0 ahead, and thoughts turning to getting home in time to watch the *Eurovision Song Contest* that evening (which was quite memorable, with Abba's *Waterloo* the winning song).

The trip down to **Bognor** three days later was not for me. According to my 1974 diary I was following my 'other' team QPR as they beat

Manchester City 3-0 at Loftus Road.. but there was still a breathless mention of the Stones' 2-1 win thanks to the Harrow Observer three days later. Did we really have to wait three days to know if our team had won a crucial promotion clash?

Well, yes we did actually. I gobbled up the match report with the Stones' Press Officer Colin Pope relating the news that we'd scored twice in the last 14 minutes to deservedly win the game after Bognor had gone ahead. He wrote of his pride at the side's indomitable spirit as their magnificent, flowing football finally paid off... leading to a pitch invasion as George Duck calmly scored the winning goal in the dying moments. Jim Godfrey had blasted in the equaliser.

Stones now faced games in successive days: a trip to face **Ashford Town** in Kent on Good Friday and then back to Lower Mead 24 hours later to face **Dorchester Town**. Was I

at both? Er, no... shamefacedly I have to admit that the lure of QPR v Division One title-chasing Ipswich won the day over a trip to Kent. Rangers lost 1-0, I'm sad to say but the Stones WON 1-0 in another epic display of balls and bravado! The hero this time was our under-rated goalkeeper Roy Mackenzie, who "catapulted across his line" to save a last-minute penalty as Stones protected their 1-0 lead, provided also via a spot kick from (who else?) George Duck.

Dorchester should have been one game too many. My diary mentions a good win but a "rather

Superb 'Stones forge ahead after frights

By Phil Sugden

Wealdstone 3, Canterbury City 1.

WEALDSTONE went three points clear at the top of the Southern League Division One (South) after a most entertaining game which kept 1,212 spectators on their toes from first to last whistle at Lower Mead on Tuesday evening.

Although Canterbury are third from the foot of the division, they proved anything but easy meat for the potential champions. The Kent club, strangely, have one of the best defensive records in the league and goalkeeper Gerry Armstrong, centre-back Bob Harrop and full-back Ron Bayliss showed why.

Time and again they saved seemingly certain goals, particularly in the first half hour when 'Stones were in such rampant mood that a hatful of goals seemed likely.

Thereafter the home side was less dominant for a time, not because of failures by any individual player, but purely and obviously because they were

Big George is 52 not out

George Duck's second goal in the game against Canterbury on Tuesday evening was his 52nd in all matches this season. Controversy has surrounded

clearance, on the stroke of half-time. Byrne again bemused the defence before pounding a low shot inches wide.

The Canterbury goal had some amazing escapes straight after the interval. First Housden headed off the line from Duck and then George headed Fairclough's cross onto the under side of the bar which resulted

'Stones turn on style and power as they race on to the title

By Phil Sugden

Wealdstone 2, Dorchester Town 0

DORCHESTER captain Roy Gater, until recently a Bournemouth player, summed it all up after the game. "What a great side," he said of Wealdstone. "They'll more than hold their own in the Premier Division. They could have had six against us this afternoon."

Well, there's many a slip twixt cup and lip, as my dear old Cornish Grandmother used to say, but if 'Stones slip now your reporter will be the most surprised football writer in Britain.

Forget the scoreline, for as Gater said, it could have been six, and would have been but for a deal of bad luck for the home men. This was scintillating stuff and the first half pure exhibition football to delight a crowd of approximately 2,000.

If behind the goal supporters were a little premature with their con-

midway into the second half when Dorchester got a little more into the game. Behind

McCormick head barely inches over the angle. Eight Wealdstone corners

under-powered performance". *Under-powered?* I'm not surprised it was bloody *under-powered*.. they'd just played FIVE GAMES in 11 DAYS with a 13-MAN squad for goodness sake!

Johnny Henderson and Ray Fulton scored the first half goals at the Elmslie End, which was just beginning to get its act together as a brilliant backdrop to the championship celebrations. Hundreds of teenage fans, festooned with flags and scarves, were making the EE their own and the sound and enthusiasm levels were cranking up with every successive home game. And it was only going to get better...



Duck is denied in the win over Dorchester

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2023/2024

CORRECT AS AT 1ST APRIL 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	16	12	10					2							16	14	10	16	14	10	
Adeyemo, Tobi		2													2			2			
Allarakhia, Tarryn	25	7	5	1			2	2						28	7	7	80	13	16		
Andrews, Corie	6	14	1				1	1						7	15	1	20	19	4		
Barker, Charlie	38		2	1			3							42		2	74	2	2		
Barrett, Mason	10	9		1			3							14	9		33	16			
Bowen, Sam	31	5	5	1			3	1	1					35	6	6	35	6	6		
Campbell, Tahvon *	16	3	6	1			2	2						19	3	8	19	3	8		
Cesay, Kallum	3	1												3	1		3	1			
Charles, Ashley *	19	1		1			1	1						21	2		119	23	2		
Clayden, Charles *	13	2												13	2		36	5	4		
Cook, Jack	36	1	5				3	1						39	2	5	125	4	13		
Cook-Appiah, Trae		1												1			1				
De Silva, Dillon	3		1											3		1	3		1		
Dewhurst, Marcus	21						4							25			25				
Duku, Manny	4	2	1				1							5	2	1	5	2	1		
Dyer, Alex	15	7					2	1						17	7	1	213	44	35		
Ferguson, Nathan	20	9	3		1	1	4	1						24	10	5	74	19	12		
Griffiths, Reo								1						1			1				
Henry, Aaron	10	3	1				2	1	1					12	4	2	32	4	4		
Hutchinson, Dominic																	20	8	1		
Ilunga, Brooklyn *	3	2					2							5	2		17	4			
Kretzschmar, Max	21	9	6	1		1	1	2	1					23	11	8	48	17	14		
Mason, Brandon	14	5			1		3							17	6		17	6			
Mundle-Smith, Jaydn	39		2	1			4							44		2	81	14	5		
Obiero, Micah	26	6	1	1			2	1						29	6	2	57	12	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 *	12	1	2	1										13	1	2	13	1	2		
Ward, Jed *	19			1										20			20				
Woodman, Deon *		2												2			2				
Young, Jack	5	1												5	1		5	1			

* = no longer with the club



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 OLDHAM ATHLETIC Saturday 30th September Vanarama National League	Tony Pauley
 BOREHAM WOOD Saturday 21st October Vanarama National League	Stuart Kane
 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 8th 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
 BROMLEY Tuesday 12th March Vanarama National League	Wealdstone FC Supporters Club	
 KIDDERMINSTER HARR. Saturday 23rd March Vanarama National League	in Memory of Rowland Edwards	
 SOLIHULL MOORS Monday 1st April Vanarama National League	Terry Hissey	
 SOUTHEND UNITED Tuesday 9th April Vanarama National League		
 DORKING WANDERERS Thursday 11th April Vanarama National League		
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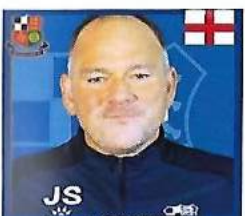
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Jaiden BARTOLO
2 5 10.02.06 | 1.84m | CF
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2 8
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1 0 20.09.97 | CF
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7 17.10.97 | 1.75m | RM
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2 3 17.12.99 | 1.83m | LB
GARY SMITH



Dom HUTCHINSON
1 7 17.11.01 | LW
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Micah OBIERO
1 4 22.2.01 | 1.77m | CF
MIKE & VAL WESTON



Dante-Astor BAPTISTE
1 2 7.02.02 | GK
WEALDSTONE ACADEMY



Marcus DEWHURST
3 1 20.03.21 | 1.9m | GK
JAMES KLARFELD




Luke DREHER
1 7 27.11.98 | 1.84m | CM
NICK & JACKY DUGARD



Aaron HENRY
2 6 31.08.23 | DM
WEALDSTONE ACADEMY



Sam BOWEN
2 2 14.01.01 | 1.8m | CM
WEALDSTONE WELSH



Sean ADARKWA
2 7 11.10.00 | 1.8m | CF
NICK SYMONS & STEVE PAULL



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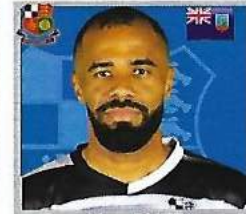
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WEALDSTONE ACADEMY



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VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE TABLE AS AT TUESDAY 7/4/2024

	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)	(A)
1 Chesterfield	43	30	5	8	102 60	22	18	3	1	62 27	21	12	2	7	40 33	42	95	3-2	1-1
2 Barnet	43	24	7	12	84 58	21	15	3	3	45 21	22	9	4	9	39 37	26	79	0-0	0-0
3 Bromley	42	20	14	8	65 45	22	12	6	4	42 26	20	8	8	4	23 19	20	74	2-1	1-1
4 Altrincham	44	20	11	13	81 59	22	13	4	5	53 26	22	7	7	8	28 33	22	71	0-0	0-0
5 Solihull Moors	43	19	13	11	67 59	21	8	6	7	30 24	22	11	7	4	37 35	8	70	0-1	0-1
6 Gateshead	41	20	9	12	83 57	20	10	5	5	43 25	21	10	4	7	40 32	26	69	2-4	1-2
7 Halifax Town	42	18	12	12	53 46	20	8	8	4	28 23	22	10	4	8	25 23	7	66	2-0	0-1
8 Aldershot Town	43	19	8	16	70 77	22	12	7	3	43 30	21	7	1	13	27 47	-7	65	3-3	1-3
9 Oldham Athletic	43	15	16	12	59 55	22	6	9	7	31 27	21	9	7	5	28 28	4	61	1-1	1-1
10 Southend United	43	19	12	12	65 42	22	13	3	6	43 19	21	6	9	6	22 23	23	59	1-1	1-1
11 Rochdale	43	15	12	16	66 62	21	9	6	6	36 25	22	6	6	10	30 37	4	57	3-2	0-3
12 Hartlepool United	43	16	8	19	64 75	22	11	2	9	33 32	21	5	6	10	31 43	-11	56	4-4	1-2
13 Dagenham & Redbridge	44	14	12	18	65 59	22	8	2	12	34 31	22	6	10	6	31 28	+6	54	0-2	2-0
14 Eastleigh	43	14	11	18	71 84	22	8	6	8	40 42	21	6	5	10	31 42	-13	53	0-0	0-0
15 Fylde	43	14	10	19	72 77	21	7	7	7	36 36	22	7	3	12	36 41	-5	52	3-2	2-1
16 Woking	44	14	10	20	46 53	22	7	5	10	26 29	22	7	5	10	20 24	-7	52	1-0	1-1
17 Maidenhead United	43	13	13	17	53 62	21	7	8	6	26 23	22	6	5	11	27 39	-9	52	0-1	2-0
18 Ebbsfleet United	42	14	10	18	59 69	22	10	4	8	32 24	20	4	6	10	27 45	-10	52	2-1	0-2
19 York City	44	11	17	16	53 68	22	5	9	8	30 33	22	6	8	8	23 35	-15	50	2-1	3-2
20 Wealdstone	41	12	11	18	51 65	19	8	6	5	31 28	22	4	5	13	20 37	-14	47	--	--
21 Boreham Wood	43	11	14	18	56 73	22	7	8	7	31 28	21	4	6	11	25 45	-17	47	1-1	0-4
22 Kidderminster Harriers	44	11	13	20	39 54	22	4	8	10	19 27	22	7	5	10	20 27	-15	46	1-1	0-1
23 Dorking Wanderers	43	12	8	23	48 76	22	6	4	12	25 36	21	6	4	11	23 40	-28	44	1-3	1-3
24 Oxford City	43	8	8	27	53 90	21	6	3	12	28 36	22	2	5	15	25 54	-37	32	3-1	0-1

Follow Stones on the road:



Oldham Athletic
National League
Saturday
20th April
12:15pm



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