

# SPORT

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

## NATIONAL LEAGUE



Wealdstone boss Sam Cox remains positive. Image: Jon Taffel

# 'Lot of positives' for Wealdstone in draw

SAM Cox says his side can 'take an awful lot of positives' from the 0-0 draw with Eastleigh despite Wealdstone's winless run stretching to five National League matches.

In a cagey affair, the Stones were able to dominate possession in the first half but failed to convert that territory to goals.

A second-half sending-off for Eastleigh's Aaron Pierre tipped the balance of the match in favour of the hosts, but a valiant defensive display from the visitors denied Cox's side the chance to re-discover their winning formula.

"We are disappointed, but we have to take an awful lot of positives. We're still a work in progress, but the fact that we've come away with a clean sheet and only conceded one in two from two re-

By Tom Norton

ally tough games is credit to the boys.

"I think the first 45 minutes were very promising. I thought we dominated the ball and created a lot of opportunities. I think we worked a lot on the attacking patterns that we did a bit yesterday," Cox told the club website post-match.

"Before the game, we asked them to really play in our identity. I think a common theme of what we've spoken about over recent weeks is not conceding those naive goals, which we were doing. So, we have to take a lot of positives from the game.

Pierre was given his marching orders just six minutes into the second half,

leaving Eastleigh with no option but to pivot to their defensive game plan.

"When they went down to ten men and they became that deep block, it was hard to break down, and we lacked a little bit of spark in the final third. In the end, the game fizzled out, although we had a great opportunity in the dying seconds," said Cox.

"There's an awful lot of positives to take, and we can't feel frustrated for not coming away with three points."

Despite dominating large periods of the game, the Stones struggled to create any clear-cut chances due to the fearlessness of the Eastleigh back line, and Cox gave his assessment of why he thought the visitors were able to stifle his side.

The Wealdstone boss explained: "They've got experienced players, and

they went to that deep 4-4-1 when they went down to ten men. I thought before we had the plus one, we were moving the ball really well.

"Even when they went down to ten men, we were trying to encourage (the players) to keep shifting them from side to side and wait for the moments to attack the half space and get crosses into the box from the outside.

"Unfortunately, it never happened. It never quite clicked in the final third. (Micah) Obiero, I thought, all game ran his socks off, and he has done for the last two. It was great to have Fela (Olomola) back in the side and (Nathan) Tshikuna, who's been ever-present over the last couple of games.

"They've all run their socks off, and unfortunately it didn't quite click."

## Middlesex end season with a win

CRICKET



Toby Roland-Jones took 4-57

TOBY Roland-Jones claimed four wickets to round off Middlesex's Rothesay County Championship campaign in winning fashion as they ground down Gloucestershire on the final day at Lord's.

The 37-year-old seamer finished with four for 57, ending the campaign as Division Two's second highest wicket-taker behind Derbyshire's Luis Reece to dismiss the visitors for 281 in their second innings, despite Ollie Price's knock of 61.

Former Gloucestershire duo Zafar Gohar and Ryan Higgins backed up Roland-Jones with three and two wickets apiece as the Seaxes sealed an innings victory with 22 overs unused. The result meant Middlesex finished fourth in the final table, 11 points short of the promotion places, with Gloucestershire in sixth.

Captain Leus du Plooy said: "They pushed us right to the end there. Four-day wins never come easy and I thought the boys put up a great fight, especially after losing a lot of time yesterday - it's just great to finally get over the line.

"It was a nice challenge for us in terms of how we want to play our cricket next year, we tried never to see it as just the last game of the season because it could easily have petered out and been a dull draw.

"I'm really proud of how they bowled as a unit, the way the guys went about their cricket, the way they fought on the field. Ro-Jo (Toby Roland-Jones) kept on wanting the ball, it was tough to say 'listen mate, you've got to chill out here and change it up'.

"The fact we could end this season with a win is spectacular, the whole vibe in the changing room is awesome and I'm sure we'll reap the rewards next season."