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## LACKLUSTRE: Stones manage to salvage a point



Omar Mussa equalises for Wealdstone in the 1-1 draw at Solihull Moors. Image: Jon Taffel

# Wealdstone boss Cox: Solihull draw was fair

WEALDSTONE manager Sam Cox says the 1-1 draw with Solihull Moors was “a fair result” after the Stones’ lacklustre away performance salvaged a point on Saturday.

The hosts took the lead after 33 minutes thanks to Emmanuel Sodupe’s good finish, but the Cox’s side quickly responded just 6 minutes later through an outstanding strike from Omar Mussa. The visitors struggled to gain a foothold throughout the 90 minutes, but man-of-the-moment Dante Baptiste pulled off a pair of outstanding late saves to secure a valuable point on the road for Cox’s side.

Speaking to the club website post-match, the Stones boss said: “I think for 70 minutes, we’ve dominated the game. I think we probably should have

Tom Norton

been ahead at half-time. Going into the second half, I think they [Solihull] did really well in feeding off of their longer passes and runs in behind.

“I thought they were a threat, especially in the first half from those longer passes and those first-man runs. I’m led to believe that it [Sodupe’s goal] was offside and a foul on Cook.

“I think on the balance of play, probably across the majority of the game, we’ve implemented our style, we’ve tried to play into the final third and get outcomes. There’s a few boys in there that are disappointed and frustrated, but on the balance, I think com-

ing to places like Solihull and where we find ourselves [in the league] is a testament to where this group are. I think we have to be realistic and say a 1-1 draw is probably fair in the end.”

Mussa’s goal came at an important time for the Stones to re-establish themselves as a competitive force in the game, and Cox heaped praise on the Wealdstone forward.

“It was a fantastic strike. We speak about our set pieces and causing chaos in the 18-yard box and not necessarily getting the first contact on that, but the percentage of actually scoring goals off the second phase is much higher than the first,” said Cox.

“We speak about that constantly in training on a Thursday night. Omar with a fantastic strike on the edge

of the box, and that goal got us back in the game. It’s disappointing to go down, to be honest, because we had the majority of the ball.

“It just didn’t quite click for us in the final third, but we felt comfortable. It [Solihull’s goal] was against the run of play, but Omar did fantastic to get us back in the game.

“We assess it, we go again. We’ve got a massive week ahead, and we take a point here. I think that’s now one loss in eleven games and another point away from home. So, there are plenty of positives.”

The Stones travel north to face Grimsby Town this weekend in the FA Cup [Saturday 3pm] before returning to Grosvenor Vale to host Cheshunt in the FA Trophy seven days later.

## Venues as UK bids to host Cup

WOMEN’S WORLD CUP



Fans outside Wembley Stadium. Image: PA

FIVE London grounds are among 22 venues set to host matches at the 2035 Women’s World Cup in the United Kingdom.

The four UK associations officially submitted their bid to stage the 48-team finals to FIFA on Friday, with no other bidders in the running for the tournament. In all, 22 stadiums in 16 cities across the four nations have been included in the submission.

Wembley Stadium, along with Arsenal’s Emirates Stadium, the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, Crystal Palace’s Selhurst Park and a proposed new Chelsea stadium are all on the list released on Friday.

Chelsea’s current Stamford Bridge ground would not meet FIFA’s technical requirements but depending on the outcome of the club’s consultation process regarding a new or redeveloped ground, they could be a host venue. The 2035 bid team said the finals would represent the biggest single-sport event staged in the country and would be the first World Cup played on British soil since the men’s finals of 1966, which were solely hosted by England.

Four and a half million tickets are set to be made available for the tournament, which will follow on from the successful hosting by England of the Women’s Euro in 2022. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer said: “Our bid to host the 2035 FIFA Women’s World Cup shows the UK’s passion for football.

“The Lionesses’ success has inspired girls across our country, and we’ll build on that momentum by welcoming millions of football fans from around the world to a tournament that will benefit communities and businesses in host cities up and down the UK.

“With significant investment in school sport and grassroots facilities through our Plan for Change, we’re creating opportunities for girls to play for their national team.”