

Monarchs win in Wembley debut

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SPORT

Borough are handed a lifeline

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Cordice fluke is a winner

Rushden 0 Wealdstone 1
STONES completed a league double over Rushden on Monday in a poor apology for a match which was totally ruined by the combination of a strong swirling wind and a hard and bumpy pitch, writes John Comfort.

The only goal was in keeping with the rest of the match. It came in the 64th minute when Neil Cordice hooked in a speculative shot from the edge of the area which flew up off the hard ground, glanced off defender Timlin's head and deflected past keeper Hoppo into the net.

Against the wind in the first half Wealdstone were forced to defend for long spells but did so effectively and the closest the home side came to scoring was when Kirkup's close range effort from an Ashby cross was blocked by Hudson.

After the break Stones came more into it but before they netted their winner they had several scares with Jim Watson having to whip the ball off Keams' toes as he shaped to shoot with only Hudson to beat, and then Forbes fired over from close in after a frantic goalmouth scramble.

Wealdstone: Hudson, Bartlett, Goyette, Watson, Harrison, Donnellan (Goodison), Hopson (J. Ferguson), Tapley, Kelly, Blackman, Cordice.

Town tumble to ten men

Kingsbury Town 0 Collier Row 1
KINGSBURY suffered an unhappy defeat on Tuesday when they lost to a Collier Row men when they had Ian Sutton sent off in the 25th minute for a kick at Pedro Petrou.

A minute after the dismissal the visitors took the lead when Marsh intercepted Peter Stapleton's poor back pass to round Mick Coffey and score.

And although Kingsbury pressed for the rest of the game with Williams, Dale and O'Rourke all going close, Collier Row defended stoutly to hold onto the points.

Kingsbury: Coffey, Keane, Simpson, Stapleton, Barr, K. Williams, O'Rourke, Dale, P. Williams, Suthers, Petrou, Subs: Mulhern, Cook.

Trendsetting ground share move secures Wealdstone's future

£2.5m deal sees Stones move in with Watford



BY JOHN COMFORT

WEALDSTONE FC's future has been secured in a sensational and unique £2.5 million deal which will see them share Watford FC's Vicarage Road ground from the start of next season.

With a significant part of the £6 million they received from the sale of their Lower Mead ground to the Tesco supermarket chain, Wealdstone have purchased a 50 per cent stake in Vicarage Road which will now be their home for the duration of the 127 years lease.

Coincidentally, former Wealdstone chairman David Morrill tried to buy out ex-Watford chairman Elton John in a much publicised move three years ago.

Although several non league clubs currently share with Football League sides, this deal breaks new ground by being the first to be agreed on a permanent basis.

The new deal was initiated by Watford director Charles Lissack who handled negotiations on behalf of the Football League club, while David Pollock of estate agents Greene and Co instigated proceedings on behalf of Wealdstone. It followed abortive attempts by Stones to link up with neighbours Wembley and Harrow Borough and after an ill fated bid to take over Willesden Stadium.

Under the agreement the stadium will be run by an umbrella committee on which representatives of both Watford and Wealdstone will sit. All administration expenses, except match day expenses will be shared.

The clubs will play their matches on alternate weeks and in the event of cup games clashing, one tie will be played on a Saturday, the other on a Sunday.

But although the clubs will share the ground, they will remain autonomous off it. Plans are being submitted by Wealdstone for a two storey building to be erected behind the main east stand at Vicarage Road which will house their own dressing rooms, offices and a club shop.

There will however be no separate social facilities. Wealdstone will share those already in existence at the ground.

At a press conference on Thursday called to announce the deal, Watford chairman Jack Petchey said: "The Taylor report recommends ground sharing and we are pleased to be the first to do it on a long term basis. "This is a wonderful agreement for both clubs. From Watford's point of view it has been concluded on three fundamental issues. We need to improve the strength and capability of the team, we want to develop the stadium and we must ensure the finan-



● Ground sharing partners at Vicarage Road, Wealdstone chairman Alan Clifton (left) and Watford chairman Jack Petchey (right) with their respective team managers Brian Hall (centre left) and Steve Perryman.

cial stability of the club. "While endeavouring to make the club financially sound we also want to bring success back to Vicarage Road. Our manager Steve Perryman may require further funds which will be made available and he is already in the process of developing his squad."

Wealdstone chairman Alan Clifton said: "Both Jack Petchey and myself have similar views and feel that in the light of the Taylor report it makes sound common sense for local clubs to share and administer one stadium. We are both of the same mind that our two clubs will be the forerunners of more partnerships in the future of our national game."

"Wealdstone's future since 1985 has unfortunately taken a turn for the worse. We are an ambitious club and are determined to get back to win-

ning ways and ultimately promotion to the Football League. I see this arrangement with Watford as the first rung on the ladder of our renaissance."

Mr Clifton does not think that Wealdstone's gates will significantly suffer as a result of the move to Watford - almost six miles from Lower Mead. "We will probably take a hard core of 200-250 supporters there. We will pick up some support from those who don't travel when Watford are away and if we get our act together then hopefully we can retain them."

The sale of Lower Mead is due for completion on June 30 after which Wealdstone will have to pay Watford and then settle their outstanding debts, which are estimated at over £1 million. Liabilities for Capital Gains Tax relating to the sale will also have to be met.

The residue of the proceeds will then be put into an invest-

ment account with the interest from it being used for the day to day running of the club.

Wealdstone's members and shareholders were officially informed of the Watford deal at a hastily arranged emergency general meeting on Sunday at which the move received general approval from the 50 or so present.

Another egm has been called for April 10 at which members will be enlightened on the full monetary details involved. Approval for amendments to the club's articles of association will also be sought.

One casualty of Wealdstone's move to Watford is the club's reserve team which was only re-established this season and is currently leading the Suburban League. Their re-signation has already been tendered to the League. The club will however continue to run a team in the Capital League.

Lions fall back in the mire

Wembley 0 Hitchin 2
WEMBLEY slipped back into the relegation zone after a poor performance on Tuesday, writes John Comfort.

The depleted Lions rarely threatened, and their only real chance came in the 31st minute when Tim Ventour's headed a Charlie Flaherty free kick goalward but defender Covington got back to hook the ball off the line.

Hitchin had taken the lead just four minutes earlier in somewhat fortunate circumstances. In a goalmouth scramble from a McGuire corner Flaherty cleared the ball off the line but it struck teammate Lance Cadogan and rebounded into the corner of the net.

Wembley made a bright start to the second half with Cadogan narrowly off target after Mark Bryan had robbed Hann, but the home side's efforts soon faded and Hitchin sealed victory in the 86th minute when Lindsay scored with a low angled drive.

Wembley: Fanner, Larkin, Simpson, John (Bennett), Shields, Ventour, White (Foley), Flaherty, M. Bryan, B. Hutchinson, Cadogan.

League tables

BEAZER HOMES LEAGUE
Premier Division

Team	P	D	A	Pts
Farnborough	34	20	5	67
Chesham	34	17	5	67
Chesham	34	17	5	67
Dover	32	19	6	47
Cambridge	33	17	11	46
Bromley	33	17	11	46
Worcester	35	15	10	47
Barnet	34	13	9	53
Widley	32	10	8	41
Halesowen	35	15	5	58
Dorchester	36	13	10	41
Widley	32	10	8	41
Dartford	37	13	8	55
Bashley	33	11	11	47
Maidenhead	36	11	15	52
Widley	33	17	8	66
Atherstone	33	11	9	41
Chesham	33	9	12	44
Widley	32	10	8	41
Pool	34	9	16	44
Crawley	32	7	11	36
Grays	37	7	21	37
Weymouth	34	2	20	37

VAUXHALL LEAGUE
Premier Division

Team	P	D	A	Pts
Redbridge	33	23	5	58
Aylesbury	35	20	9	67
King's Lynn	33	17	4	62
Woking	31	19	6	68
Marlow	36	16	11	64
Widley	37	9	11	58
Widley	34	15	9	60
Chesham	33	9	12	66
Grays	33	10	8	41
Hayes	34	14	6	43
Widley	32	12	8	39
Bishops Cleeve	34	11	10	47
Hendon	34	9	14	41
Dagenham	35	11	8	53
Bognor	33	11	5	37
St Albans	37	9	18	51
Staines	36	9	18	36
Basingstoke	36	10	5	21
Harrow	36	7	6	23
Leyton-Wing	35	5	6	24

Division One

Team	P	D	A	Pts
Chesham	35	21	6	73
Bromley	34	19	10	52
Tring	37	18	9	65
Widley	34	16	5	66
Hazlet	36	18	8	69
Yeading	34	18	6	60
Widley	34	18	11	55
Dorking	33	18	3	66
Molesey	33	17	4	50
Chalfont St P.	36	17	4	50
Aveley	34	19	6	56
Dulwich	34	13	7	45
Harrow	33	13	6	41
Widley	32	10	2	38
Uxbridge	36	13	3	20
Boreham W.	31	12	5	39
Croydon	32	10	2	38
Hayes	36	10	8	35
Widley	34	9	10	48
Lewes	36	8	19	45
Meads	5	23	4	66
Woking	32	2	28	21

Division Two North

Team	P	D	A	Pts
Staines	35	29	4	96
Vauxhall	35	19	7	68
Billerica	35	19	7	68
Ware	34	19	6	64
Collier Row	34	14	6	49
Berkhamstead	35	19	11	47
Purfleet	35	14	10	55
Widley	35	16	4	61
Kingbury	35	13	7	58
Salfron W.	34	13	11	59
Ranham	36	14	7	46
Collier Row	35	10	12	51
Widley	32	13	8	47
Hertford	36	12	9	55
Tisbury	35	13	4	63
Barnet	34	10	12	46
Hemel H.	34	10	12	46
Basildon	35	10	17	54
Collier Row	35	10	12	51
Chesham	36	9	10	50
Finchley	33	6	22	39
Tring	35	0	27	22

'Exciting prospect' say Supporters Club

The Watford move has been received favourably by the Wealdstone FC Supporters Club who view it as "an exciting prospect."

In a statement from the club's committee released this week, they said: "The news of the ground sharing agreement with Watford Football Club came as a genuine shock to everyone at the club and it has therefore taken some time for an opinion on the move to settle.

"Most supporters agree that there are many positive aspects to relocation at Vicarage Road, not least a direct route to Conference and Football League status due to the obvious quality of the facilities.

"Geographically it is well placed in relation to Harrow and supporters should not find travelling a problem. Viewed against many of the alternatives, it is potentially a very exciting prospect.

"The Supporters Club committee, having sought its members views, shall be looking to obtain much more information on the aspects of the move at the next e.g.m. and beyond.

"The overriding task for all of us will be to ensure that the identity of Wealdstone Football Club is solidly maintained at the new ground and that the supporters play a full part in ensuring a successful transition."

Injuries hit Edgware's cup hopes

EDGWARE'S bid for a place in the final of the Middlesex Charity Cup at Ruislip Manor tonight (Thursday) has been hit by injury problems.

Brian Rider's squad, already decimated by long term injuries, suffered a further blow when Mark White sustained a hip injury against Hertford.

Rider had also hoped to bring Jason Zazzera in for the Manor game, but he dislocated an elbow playing for the reserves and is ruled out. Manager Peter Lawrence has plunged into the transfer market as Harrow Borough look to maintain their late bid to steer clear of relegation.

Former Fulham, Enfield and Eire under-21 international full back Brian Cottington has been signed from Kingstonian along with midfielder Bob Armit and Lawrence has also snapped up defender Steve Small from Hendon and ex-Finchley striker Steve Sapsford.

All will be in consideration for Saturday's match at Grays although the Borough boss is likely to keep faith with the side which performed so well in the win over Marlow.

Wembley go into a critical week in their quest to avoid the drop with successive games against fellow strugglers Lewes, Worthing and Uxbridge.

They have injury problems with Harry Hutchinson, Steve Graham and Ronnie John while Jeff Banner might miss Tuesday's game against bottom of the table Worthing through work commitments. Paul Rogers stands by.

Kingsbury's strike force has been hit by the loss of top scorer Troy Birch who has joined Hendon. This Saturday Kingsbury are at home to Royston.

Rayners Lane meet time contenders Banbury on Saturday and Hounslow on Wednesday. Roland Matthews (achilles), Chris Cockram (back) and Gary Woolsey (knee ligaments) are all injury doubts while Paul Coffey is away on holiday.

Without a league game on Saturday, Wealdstone will play a Jersey FA XI in a friendly at Lower Mead, Leo Donnellan and Steve Smart are both doubtful with injuries. On Tuesday Stones will be bidding for a 'double' at home to League leaders Farnborough Town.

Soccer fixtures

Thursday April 4
Middx Charity Cup semi-final:
Ruislip Manor v Edgware Town.

Saturday April 6
Vauxhall League Premier Division:
Grays v Harrow Borough.
Vauxhall League Division One:
Lewes v Wembley.
Vauxhall League Division Two:
North: Farnborough v Purfleet (White Lion ground, 3pm); Kingsbury Town v Epsom (Silver Jubilee Park, 3pm).
Hellenic League: Banbury Town v Rayners Lane.
Friendly: Wealdstone v Jersey FA (Lower Mead, 3pm).
Tuesday April 9
Beazer Homes League Premier Division: Wealdstone v Farnborough (Town, Lower Mead, 7.30pm).
Wednesday April 10
Capital League: Wokingham v Wealdstone.
Hellenic League: Hounslow v Rayners Lane.

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