SPORT

Giffin takes Britannic award

KENTON Cricket Club's Mark Giffin has won the Observer's Britannic Assurance Player of the Month award for August.

Two excellent unbeaten centuries, 106 against NPL and 104 against North Middlesex, highlighted a fine month for the Kenton opening batsman. He also played fine knocks against Ashford (80) and Botany Bay (62).

Mark's award consists of a trophy, tickets to a Britannic Assurance Championship match of his choice, plus Britannic Assurance sponsorship items, including a track suit.

Britannic Assurance Player of the Month

Expanise tactics will continue says Wasps coach

WASPS coach Rob Smith has been delighted with his side's pre-season preparations, with wins over Instonians and a 90 point thrashing of Richmond on Tuesday night bearing witness to the well being of his squad, writes **Alan Bodenham.**

Everyone at Sudbury is well aware though that the real proof of the pudding will come this Saturday when the blood and thunder of Courage League Division One begins at home to Gloucester, kick off 3pm.

Last season Wasps campaign got off to a stuttering start with a dull 9-9 draw at Kingsholm. As the season progressed and their challenge faded, Smith's side experimented with an expansive game of rugby that was very entertaining to watch but did not always bring about the right result.

"The expanise tactics will continue," said Smith "but this time with more control."

The side for the League opener has yet to be finalised but one definite starter will be Rob Andrew. The England fly half's season will not finish until the World Cup Finals next June, consequently appearances for his club are bound to be somewhat restricted this season.

In Guy Gregory and Chris Braithwaite, however, he has some very high class understudies.

Referring to this, Smith was at pains to point out that whoever steps into the pivotal fly half position will be well grooved into the pattern and style of Wasps play.

Dean Ryan will lead Saturday's side. The skipper missed the Instonians game but had a run out against Richmond on Tuesday. He will be joined in the back row by fellow England tourist to South Africa this summer, Lawrence Dallaglio.

Ladbrokes quote Wasps as third favourites for this season's Courage League title at 7/1. Bath are favourites at 8/15 and Leicester follow at 11/4.

Phil Hopley scored four tries in Wasps 90-9 victory over Richmond and Guy Gregory scored 30 points, kicking 10 conversions and landing two tries.

Controversy as Gower send off sinks Edgware

Edgware Town 3 Enfield 4

EDGWARE were left fuming at Northolt referee Mike Dearing on Tuesday night over the official's ludicrous penalty decision and sending off of goalkeeper Mark Gower which effectively condemned the home side to defeat in this Diadora League Cup tie, writes **John Comfort.**

An appeal against the dismissal is pending and sympathetic Enfield officials have offered Edgware a match video, filmed by their supporters club, to help with their case.

The incident occured just before the break when Edgware were deservedly leading by a 36th minute goal, scored by Steve Newing with a delicate lob, and seemingly set to repeat last season's shock win over their Middlesex rivals.

A dangerous low cross from Engwell saw Gower dive bravely out to push the ball away from the onrushing Cherry, but when the Enfield striker fell over the keeper's prone body, Mr Dearing, to everyone's total amazement, awarded a spot kick and then compounded his complete error of judgement by showing Gower the red card.

Edgware immediately brought on substitute keeper Keith Harvey for striker Ted John and his first task was to pick the ball out of the net after Hobson blasted in the penalty for a controversial equaliser.

Edgware had enjoyed most of the play up to that point and justice appeared to be righting itself when John Coleman, who had a magnificent game, lashed a great 25 yarder into the corner of the net to restore the lead two minutes into the second half.

However, poor defending allowed St Hilaire to quickly level and Enfield went in front when Hobson's kick in was pushed back into his own net by Harvey.

Dirubbo stretched the Enfield lead and although Eugene Flynn gave Edgware hope when he headed home from a Newing cross to set up a grandstand finish, the home side were unable to repair the damage done by Mr Dearing.

Edgware: Gower, O'Leary (Thompson), White, Sue, Ferry, Sellman, Coleman, Flynn, John (Harvey), Newing, Instone. Other sub: Sheridan.

Borough are odds on for big cup tie

But Stones will be looking to upset the form book

By John Comfort

WEALDSTONE'S resurgence of form this season has cut no ice with bookmakers William Hill in the build up to Saturday's big FA Cup first qualifying round clash with bitter local rivals Harrow Borough at the Warren.

Latest odds available for the game are 6/5 Borough, 7/4 Wealdstone and 15/8 the draw, but for a place in the next round, taking into account any possible replays, Borough are firm 13 to 8 on favourites to go through while Stones are quoted at 6/5.

The odds are a reflection of recent meetings between the two sides in which results have been heavily stacked in Borough's favour.

They beat Stones 3-0 at the same stage of this competition last season and then made it a double demise for their neighbours by also ejecting them from the FA Trophy, although they required a replay on that occasion.

With Stones suffering a Middlesex Senior Cup defeat at the hands of Borough during their time at Watford in the season before last, it can be safely said that they are long overdue the sweet taste of success over the Earlsmead outfit - a point echoed by their long suffering supporters.

Wealdstone hope to have Steve Mattis and John Shanahan fit after injury, but both Roddy Brathwaite and Mark Hill are extremely doubtful. Recent signing Gerry Solomon, a former Borough player, is eligible to play.

Although Darren Seabrook and John Hurlock suffered injuries in Borough's defeat at St Albans, both are expected to be fit for Saturday.

Graham Pearce, Paul Ripley and Kevin Davies were all playing in a friendly at Hillingdon Borough last night (Wednesday) in a bid to impress manager Harry Manoe and possibly win places for the big game.

If a replay is required, it will take place at Earlmead on Wednesday night.

Saturday September 10

FA Cup first qualifying round: Aveley v Edgware Town; Wealdstone v Harrow Borough (The Warren, 3pm); Wembley v Tunbridge Wells (Vale Farm, 3pm).

Hellenic League Div One: Rayners Lane v Kidlington (Lucas Ave, 3pm).

Tuesday September 13

Diadora League Div One: Wembley v Basingstoke Town (Vale Farm, 7.30pm).

Southern Junior Floodlight Cup: QPR v Northampton Town (Earlsmead, 7pm).

Smith returns for the Lions

ANDY Smith should be available for **Wembley's** FA Cup tie at home to Kent League Tunbridge Wells on Saturday after a two week holiday.

A hamstring twinge kept Andy O'Brien out of Tuesday's game at Egham but he is expected to be fit. However, Rod Shearer damaged a heel and is doubtful.

Fit again Bobby Hutchinson scored four goals for the reserves in midweek and is added to the squad.

Seamus Finnerty returns to the **Edgware Town** side for their Cup clash at Aveley but Paul McIntosh still has an ankle ligament injury which will keep him on the sidelines. If a replay is required it will take place at the White Lion ground on Tuesday.

Kingsbury Town have a rearranged league game at home to Tring on Saturday for which they will be depleted by suspensions.

Keeper Darren Bonfield has a one match ban and will be replaced by James Faldo. Richard Louch has a three match suspension and Graham Ash is also expecting to be serve a ban.

Rayners Lane will be without the injured Tony Scally for the visit of Kidlington Town on Saturday. Preliminary x-rays show he has a fracture of the knee and possibly cartilage and ligament damage. An exploratory operation is being carried out today (Thursday) and if necessary he will be operated on tomorrow.

Fergus Meaney, Cieran Creegan, Ian Woodward and Tony Verni will all hopefully be available for selection.

Borough fail to make most of keeper injury

St Albans City 2 Harrow Borough 1

HARROW will be disappointed, not only that they fell at the first hurdle in the Diadora League Cup on Tuesday night, but also that they tested a substitute goalkeeper only once - and scored, **writes Tony Booth.**

St Albans keeper Watkiss was injured in a collision with one of his defenders a minute before the break and carried off. Full back Edwards took his place, but Borough failed to take advantage of the situation.

The first half was evenly contested. The host's best chance saw Driscoll's shot well held by Hook, while for Borough Neil Fraser had a shot deflected just wide and also headed just past the far post.

After the interval Fraser hooked a shot just over, but it was the home side who eventually opened the scoring in the 57th minute when Brett's pass saw former international Brian Stein spin on the ball and fire past the diving Hook.

Stein forced Hook into two good saves before St Albans doubled their lead in the 76th minute when Duffield squared the ball for Clark to net from close range.

St Albans defended their stand-in keeper well, but he was beaten in the 83rd minute when Fraser collected Endersby's through ball and rounded a defender before shooting just inside the near post. However, it was not enough to prevent Borough exiting from the competition.

Harrow Borough: Hook, Knight, Lawford, Seabrook (Smith), Benstead, Hurlock, Prutton, Metcalfe, Weekley (Endersby), Fraser, McKay.

Wealdstone leave it late

Bury Town 2
Wealdstone 3

TWO late goals within the space of a minute saw Stones snatch a superb victory at Bury on Tuesday night, **writes Graham Smith.**

Wealdstone found themselves a goal down after only three minutes when a Vines corner slipped through Barry Gartell's hands and allowed Bishop to score easily.

However, three minutes later the visitors were level when a long ball from Tommy Mason found Paul Goodison who picked his spot and fired under Wade's body into the net.

Ockhore should have regained the lead for Bury but shot wide in front of an open goal but at the other end Goodison was unlucky with a header that hit the crossbar.

Early in the second half Stones went close when Billy Hudson, who had a fine game, found Steve Griffiths with a corner, but his header was cleared off the line by Guy.

Bury went ahead again in the 74th minute when Gill's cross was headed home by Warburton, but Stones were not finished.

With nine minutes remaining a good run by Goodison ended with a pass to Griffiths whose cross was mispunched by keeper Wade and Tyrone Kent followed in to score the equaliser.

In the very next attack Stones scored the winner. Mason's free kick was headed on by Griffiths for Rod Findley to volley past Wade.

In the dying minutes Gartell made amends for his earlier blunder with a fine blank save to deny Warburton and Terry Birch cleared the loose ball to ensure three valuable points for Stones.

Wealdstone: Gartell, Anglin, Birch, McGrath, Findley, Mason, Elward, Kent, Griffiths, Goodison (Wilson), Hudson. Subs: Meakin, D. Hill.

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Wembley scrape through

Egham Town 1 Wembley 2

WEMBLEY scraped through to the second round of the Diadora League Cup with a narrow win over second division Egham on Tuesday night, **writes Richard Markiewicz.**

With defender Steve Daly enjoying a new midfield role, the Lions dominated the early proceedings. Steve Lawrence went closest to scoring, seizing onto Daly's through ball but having his well struck shot blocked by the legs of the advancing keeper.

But against the run of play in the 24th minute Egham took the lead with a highly debatable goal when Earl Whiskey, looking suspiciously offside, appeared to wrestle the ball out of Jeff Fanner's grasp before forcing it over the line.

Wembley retaliated almost immediately and Gavin Hughes headed home a Charlie Flaherty kick-in to level the scores a minute later.

Three minutes after the break another accurate Flaherty dead ball kick, a corner this time, was thumped in at the far post by Guiliano Grazioli to put the Lions firmly in the driving seat.

Lawrence should have made it 3-1, but fired wide after racing onto Youssef Sakhraoui's astute first time through ball.

Unable to make the tie safe with a third goal, Wembley had to endure a late rally by the home side. Fanner had to fling himself across goal to superbly push clear Chris Tomlinson's viciously struck free kick, but the Egham riposte was blunted when Tomlinson was sent off for committing a second bookable offence five minutes from time and the Lions held on without further worries.

Wembley: Fanner, Flaherty, Clark, Doyle, Shields, Daly, Shearer (Willock), Lawrence, Hughes (Page), Grazioli, Sakhraoui.

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