

SPORT

Towers cut Giants down to size

LONDON Towers scored their eighth successive victory on Thursday when they comfortably defeated the Manchester Giants by 110-94 at Wembley Court in the Budweiser League.

Towers have won every game since signing American Tony Windless and it was the powerful forward who led the scoring against the Giants, with a 29 point haul.

Kenny Scott was close behind with 28 points and Danny Lewis was again among the scoring action, landing 20. The Towers have no games this week. Their next game is on Thursday January 5 when they take on near rivals Leopards in the League at Wembley.

Wembley hit struggling Manor for six

Ruislip Manor 2 Wembley 6
WEMBLEY showed no mercy in this period of goodwill when they trounced struggling Ruislip Manor at Grosvenor Vale on Boxing Day, writes Richard Markiewicz.

Manor had taken a 7th minute lead when Ben Marskell was allowed to escape on the right and his cross was flicked on for Richard McDonagh to slot home at the far post.

Wembley took a long time to get their act together, but they eventually levelled the scores in the 19th minute. The squealing Tony Headlam netting a

rare goal after Manor keeper Damian O'Callaghan could only half clear a Matthew Catlin centre, following a quickly taken Charlie Flaherty kick-in.

Three minutes later the Lions went ahead with the best goal of the afternoon from Manor old-boy Marcos Veiga who ran at least 10 yards before launching himself at another Catlin cross to send the ball flying into the net with a brilliant header.

But in the 26th minute it was Jeff Fanner's turn to err. He fumbled a cross and McDonagh poked the loose ball over the line to make it 2-2.

However, two goals in as many minutes put Wembley firmly in the driving seat. Guiliano Grazioli nipped in unnoticed on the blindside to fire home another telling Catlin free kick in the 28th minute. And a couple of minutes later Andy Smith nodded a Flaherty corner past the frail O'Callaghan to score Wembley's fourth after his initial header had struck the crossbar.

Manor's hopes of a revival were dashed 12 minutes into the second half when their skipper Chris Balls was sent off for a 'professional' foul on Grazioli. Kenny Page rubbed further

salt into Manor's wounds with two more goals. In the 73rd minute he finished a four-man defence splitting move involving Fanner, Lawrence, Veiga and Sakhraoui with a close range strike. And his header from a Flaherty corner, six minutes from time, completed the rout.

Manor's misery was further compounded by the dismissal of ex-Lion Paul Fitzgerald for committing a second bookable offence at the close.

Wembley: Fanner, Flaherty, Catlin, Veiga, Shields, Daly (Walters), Headlam, Lawrence, Smith, Page, Grazioli (Sakhraoui).

John is star as Edgware get five place lift

Edgware Town 3 Hemel Hempstead 1
EDGWARE leapt five places up the Diadora League table with this win over lowly Hemel on a Christmas pudding of a pitch on Boxing Day, writes Tom Hooks.

Edgware showed good overall commitment and Ted John, Steve Newing and Michael Roche all went close before their efforts got a deserved reward on the stroke of half time. A fine cross by Andy Dale was met at the far post by debutante Peter Petrou who seized the chance to send his team in at half time with a 1-0 lead.

Edgware kept up the pressure in the second half. Steve Sailsman bore down on the Hemel defence on 52 minutes and rounded off his enterprising run with a great shot which was spectacularly tipped over the bar by Scarborough.

Edgware wasted a golden opportunity three minutes later when Mark White and John Mangan got in a mix up at a corner, and Mangan missing from virtually on the line.

Totally against the run of play on 70 minutes Kevin Beckles made a rare mistake, calling for the ball from a cross and then obligingly dropping it at the feet of Moran Dodds who had the easy task of hitting the equaliser.

Beckles made amends with a fine save from Chris Hewitt but at the opposite end it was the busy John who looked most likely to influence the result - and so it proved. He fought and hustled for the ball on 75 minutes in the Hemel area and when he was brought down from behind, Steve Newing made no mistake from the spot kick.

It was inevitable that Edgware would extend their lead and fitting that the scoring should be rounded off by man of the match Ted John on 85 minutes. He was put through by Coleman and held off a desperate defender's challenge before placing the ball past the advancing Scarborough.

Edgware: Beckles, A. Dale, Roche, White, Mangan, Sailsman, Coleman, P. Ferry, John, Newing, Petrou. Subs: Murray, D. Ferry, Harvey.

Nick's bad break is problem for Harry

Disputed penalty robs Borough

Harrow Borough 1 Yeading 1
SOME you win, some you know you should have won, and this was a case of the latter on Monday for Borough created sufficient chances to have clinched victory but allowed the visitors to grab a point they scarcely deserved, writes Tony Booth.

Without the injured Pearce and Seabrook and with Prutton suspended, Borough gave a debut to recent signing from Hayes, Frank Appiah. He worked hard in midfield and helped Borough to first half supremacy in this area.

Appiah had an early heading opportunity which he put straight to McKenzie who also did well to thwart Fraser's 18th minute shot, following an astute Appiah cross.

Borough only had one scare, when Graham's header was cleared off the line, via a post, by Tony Knight, but it was virtually all one-way traffic as the home side held sway.

Davies went close with a volley and a diving header before the hosts took a 32nd minute lead. O'Connor's pass sent Neil Fraser clear of the defence and he calmly rolled a 20 yard shot past the advancing McKenzie and inside the far post.

McGrath went close for the visitors with a long range effort, but Yeading

looked unlikely to break their duck at Earlsmead, where they had lost on all their previous visits.

Fraser was set up again by another O'Connor pass early in the second half, however this time McKenzie did well to push the ball clear.

But then Borough were punished for their wasted openings.

McKinnon's free kick was deflected by the defensive wall, forcing Hook to dive and push the ball away and from the resultant corner McGrath headed just over.

But the respite was brief. In the 57th minute Appiah was ruled to have pushed Cordery as they challenged for an aerial pass and referee Smith awarded a penalty which McKinnon firmly despatched.

Chances were to be evenly shared in the final quarter. Appiah shot just wide, then Enderby and Davies should have done better with a free kick and a free header respectively.

At the other end, Bowler, Cordery and Godrey were just off the mark, a fate that looks likely to face both of these mid-table teams as the season progresses.

Harrow Borough: Hook, Knight, O'Connor, Hurlock, Bensted, McKay, Appiah (Benning), Metcalfe, Davies, Fraser, Enderby. Other subs: Smith, Lawford.

Boss searching for a keeper after broken ankle tragedy

THE broken ankle suffered by Harrow Borough's second string goalkeeper, Nick Bettaccini while on loan to rivals Wealdstone, has left Borough boss Harry Manoe in a quandary this week.

With first choice keeper David Hook due to start a three match suspension following his sending off at Bishop's Cleeve, Bettaccini was a ready made stand-in.

However, his tragic injury, sustained while played for Stones against Ashford, meant that Borough had to name midfielder John Lawford as their substitute goalkeeper for the Boxing Day game with Yeading, and left Manoe busy trying to find a replacement in time for Saturday's visit to Marlow.

He has been offered a keeper by Brentford and he was also in contact with former Wembley boss, Alan Dafforn, with a view to loaning a keeper from his present club, Peterborough.

If all else fails, Manoe does at

least have the option of calling on striker Neil Fraser to step between the posts. He took over in goal last season when Hook was sent off against Worcester - and did a fine job.

As well as Hook, Borough will also be missing Andy Prutton at Marlow. He is suspended for three games. Darren Seabrook is sidelined with a back injury.

Wealdstone players, supporters and club officials had a collection for Nick Bettaccini on Monday and will be handing over £170 to the injured keeper.

Stones have a tough task away to Beazer Homes League leaders Waterloo on Saturday. They will be without striker Roddy Brathwaite who is due to go into hospital for an operation on his achilles tendon injury.

Wealdstone have re-signed former midfielder Steve Browne who left the club three years ago to join ex-Stones boss Alan Gane at Sutton. He joined Kingstonian at the

Wealdstone let strugglers escape with a point

Wealdstone 1 Burnham 1
STONES could only manage a disappointing draw against lowly Burnham on Boxing Day, writes Graham Smith.

They opened the scoring after 19 minutes. The busy Mark Biggins found Tommy Mason whose header hit the bar, but Quail latched onto the rebound and beat Dyson from close range.

However, instead of attempting to build on their slender lead, Stones seemed content to sit on it, and the closest they came to another goal before the break was when Mason's free kick was headed just over by Darrell Page.

They had a good chance early in the second half when Mason put Biggins clear and his cross found Roddy Brathwaite but he failed with an attempted lob over Dyson.

Quail was later denied by a goalline clearance from Traynor but with 79 minutes gone Burnham shocked Stones with an equaliser.

Page conceded a free kick just outside the area and from Powell's kick, Tomlinson headed past Danny Hill.

Wealdstone: D. Hill, M. Brown, Solomon (Shanahan), M. Hill, Page, Mason, S. Browne, Biggins, Buzaglo (Brathwaite), Quail, Eward. Other sub: Birch.

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Soccer fixtures

Saturday December 31
Diadora League Premier Div: Marlow v Harrow Borough.
Diadora League Div One: Wembley v Wivenhoe (Vale Farm, 3pm).
Diadora League Div Two: Leathhead v Edgware Town.
Beazer Homes League Southern Div: Waterloo v Wealdstone.

Sunday January 2
Diadora League Premier Div: Hendon v Harrow Borough (3pm).
Diadora League Div One: Wembley v Berkhamsted (Vale Farm, 3pm).
Diadora League Div Two: Hungerford v Edgware Town (3pm).
Diadora League Div Three: Kingsbury Town v Fackwell Heath (Silver Jubilee Park, 3pm).

Wednesday January 4
Football Combination: QPR v Norwich City (Earlsmead, 7pm).

Stones miss out in a nine goal bonanza

Wealdstone 4 Ashford 5
IT was 'goals galore' at the Warren last Wednesday when Stones lost by the odd goal against Ashford after being two up at one stage, writes Graham Smith.

An eventful game was marred in the closing minutes when tragedy struck keeper Nick Bettaccini, on loan to Stones from neighbours Harrow Borough.

He was injured in a collision with Ashford striker Ross and sustained a broken ankle which will keep him in plaster for six weeks.

In an amazing first 30 minutes, seven goals were scored. Stones got the first after 13 minutes when Simon Quail's cross was slotted home by Darrell Page.

Then a minute later a superb move involving Gerry Eward, Mark Biggins and Roddy Brathwaite ended with Brathwaite shooting past Munden to make it 2-0.

With 39 minutes gone Stanton took advantage of a poor clearance to reduce the arrears and a minute later Ashford levelled when Arter hit a post and then headed in the rebound.

The lead was regained after 34 minutes when ex-Stones favourite, Steve Browne, who has now returned to the club, headed home a Quail cross but within a minute Ashford levelled when Arter was put clear to beat Bettaccini.

Right on the break Stones went back in front when a Biggins cross was missed by Pearson allowing Quail to shoot past Munden.

However, 15 minutes into the second half Ashford again levelled through Ager and four minutes later the visitors scored what proved to be their winner when a mix-up in the home defence allowed Stanton to score.

Wealdstone: Bettaccini (D. Hill), M. Brown, Solomon, Birch, Page, Mason, S. Browne, Biggins, Brathwaite (Findeley), Quail, Eward (Kent).

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