

SPORT

Diadora bound!

Wealdstone members vote in favour of switching leagues

WEALDSTONE are on course to move from the Beazer Homes League to the Diadora League next season after the proposal was given the thumbs up by members at the club's annual general meeting.

Even though it is likely that, if the move is approved, they will have to start in Diadora Division Three, members voted 49 in favour with 10 against. There were 6 abstentions. "It wasn't a close run thing at all, it was more unanimous than I had anticipated," said delighted Wealdstone chairman, Paul Rumens.

Earlier in the day Mr Rumens had attended a meeting of the Beazer Homes League management committee to inform them of the club's intention to resign at the end of this season, subject to the approval of the agm.

He said: "The move to the Diadora League will be far from straightforward. The Beazer Homes League is not keen to lose us. Even though we are not the force we once were, to lose a club of our stature and with our history is not good news for them."

"But two years ago they lost Andover and Dunstable and

By John Comfort

Canterbury have gone this season. It speaks volumes for the high costs of playing Beazer Homes League football."

He added: "We have to face up to facts. It's all about money and we're losing too much by not having our own facilities. I expect that we will save a reasonable sum of money by being in the Diadora League - probably about £30,000 a year."

Wealdstone now have to play a waiting game, hoping that the Beazer Homes League will back their efforts to move across the pyramid.

"They will be discussing it with member clubs but it is not a foregone conclusion that we are coming out," said Mr Rumens. "I've got to be above board and diplomatic and project our case correctly, but I expect that the Beazer Homes League will not want to stand in the way of the club's viability. I expect their blessing very soon to our resignation."

"On our behalf they will then put our case forward for a move to the Diadora. We can-

not approach the Diadora League ourselves. It has to be done by the Beazer Homes League. Now it is just a waiting game."

Stones are turned down by the Diadora, their resignation to the Beazer Homes League will be automatically withdrawn. "Wealdstone will

club short and Malden Vale, who are in Division Two, have indicated that they will be quitting at the end of this season. "There will be two places available and I'm confident that Wealdstone will take up one of those places," said Mr Rumens.

If accepted by the Diadora,

THE power of the London Towers forward line edged out the shooting prowess of the Leicester City Riders guards on Saturday as Kevin Cadle's team chalked up a 102-89 win in the Budweiser League.

Towers had a comfortable 56-44 advantage at half time which was cut to seven points at 77-64 at the end of the third quarter, and with Leicester's Gene Waldron scoring seven consecutive points in the final period, the home side were still in with a chance at 85-78.

But this triggered an 11-0 run by the Towers which ultimately put the game

out of the home side's reach. Tony Windless top scored for the Towers with 23 points, followed closely by Martin Henlan with 22 and Kenny Scott with 21.

This Saturday Towers visit Worthing Bears in the League, tip off 8pm.

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Last four cup berth beckons Wasps

WASPS will be confident of booking a semi-final berth after Monday's Pilkington Cup quarter final draw at Twickenham gave them an away tie at Exeter, writes Alan Bodenham.

Having demonstrated the considerable gap in class between First and Second Division rugby with two 50 point hauls against Waterloo and Newcastle in the previous rounds, Wasps task against the Devonians, at present struggling to avoid relegation to the Fourth Division, looks to be an easy one.

There will be no complacency at Repton Avenue, however, and Wasps preparations will be thorough.

Exeter have some useful players. Their scrum half and skipper, Andy Maunder, was once coveted by Bath. He scored 10 tries in the League last season. Fly half Andy Green is a prolific goal kicker who amassed 265 points in League rugby last year.

For the Sudbury faithful it is a question of support Wasps and see the World - well England anyway!

The cup run so far has taken them to the north east and the north west and it is now the south west.

It means another big job for supporters travel organiser Don Fowler.

Wasps have no match this week following the cancellation of their scheduled fixture against Racing Club de France.

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Stones look to move from... to...




Mr Rumens will not be entirely unhappy if they are placed in Division Three.

"If it's Division Three, then so be it," he said. "Other clubs, notably Aldershot, started there. Although they get big gates, they've done things sensibly. They've maintained

not be going into total oblivion on this one," said Mr Rumens.

However, Mr Rumens is confident that Stones will be accepted by the Diadora League. "It is going to happen," he said.

The Diadora is already one

a low budget squad and it is our intention to do the same. We're not going to make drastic cuts to the wage bill, we're going to temper it to a good budget for the level that we will be going to play in."

"I'm not unhappy about the possibility of being in Division Three where we would have a reasonable chance of success playing more localised football. Nothing of course is guaranteed, but the side is more than capable of getting promotion and we expect to strengthen it. I'll then look forward to the day Wealdstone are playing in a new stadium and playing derby matches against the likes of Harrow Borough, Hayes and Enfield."

That scenario contrasts markedly with their current prospects in the Beazer Homes League. "We are not far away from having a decent side in the Beazer Homes League, but if next season we won promotion, we would be in the Premier Division where the travelling is even worse and the wage bill will be worse. We would not survive, we wouldn't," said Mr Rumens.

Amongst those against a Diadora move was club

trustee Les Hobbs. "To do into the Third Division of the Diadora is a retrograde step and it is the beginning of the end for Wealdstone Football Club," he said. Mr Hobbs also claimed that the voting was "flawed" as shareholders were allowed to vote.

A low point of Diadora Division Three membership for Stones, once proud winners of the FA Trophy, would be that they will not be competing in that competition, but in the FA Vase.

But Mr Rumens urges them to accept this drop in status.

"Wealdstone must live in the real world and at the moment if we are only good enough for Division Three and playing in the FA Vase, then that is our status."

"As the board promised, we will do our level best to get promotion quickly. It is not our intention to rot in the Diadora League."

The other big topic discussed at Wealdstone's agm was their move to ground share with Edgware Town next season at Town's White Lion ground.

That Stones are finally on their way back to Harrow after four years in the wilderness was unanimously welcomed.

Said Wealdstone Supporters Club chairman, Howard Kraiss: "We are delighted that the club is finally moving back into the Borough of Harrow after four years away."

"Hopefully this stay will only be temporary before we will be able to move into a new stadium of our own but it does give us a great opportunity to begin to welcome back many of our former supporters."

Cantona incident has a precedent - ask Stones

OBSERVATIONS that nothing like it has ever happened before in soccer which followed the remarkable Eric Cantona incident at Selhurst Park last week were greeted at Wealdstone FC with the response 'oh yes, there has.'

True, there was no kung fu kick as was executed by the Manchester United player on a Crystal Palace supporter, but when Stones played at Fisher last season in a Beazer Homes League match, one of the home team's players raced some 50 yards across the pitch at the final whistle, leapt over the barrier,

and punched Wealdstone Supporters Club chairman, Howard Kraiss.

The incident was reported to the Football Association and, following a disciplinary committee hearing, the full weight of the FA's powers for such an outrageous attack were brought crashing down on the assailant. They gave him a pitiful two weeks ban.

At the time both Mr Kraiss and Wealdstone were agast at the leniency of the punishment. Not surprisingly, their anger has considerably increased

following Manchester United's decision to suspend Cantona for the rest of the season, a ban which is likely to be confirmed by the FA when they consider the case.

Said Mr Kraiss: "It is a clear example of how they show disparity between top footballers and those at our level. There was a precedent for the Cantona incident, it has happened before, and how it has been dealt with only increases our outrage at the leniency of the sentence handed out to the Fisher player."

"I half expected at the time that the FA didn't deal correctly with what was a very serious matter. It was more premeditated than the Cantona incident. He wasn't being goaded or walking off through an avenue of hatred after being sent off. But all he got for it was a rap over the knuckles."

Wealdstone will be waiting with interest for the FA's decision on Cantona and then Lancaster Gate can expect a letter from the club asking for an explanation to their complete lack of consistency.

New Charity Cup date

WEALDSTONE'S Middlesex Charity Cup match against **Bushy Manor**, called off on Monday night, has been rescheduled for Monday February 13 at Manor's Grosvenor Vale ground.

Edgware's match with Viking and Wembley's game at Harfield on Tuesday, both in the same competition, were also postponed. Edgware will try again this Tuesday. Wembley have yet to reschedule their game.

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Metcalfe and Davies return to boost Borough

CHRIS Metcalfe and Kevin Davis return after suspension to strengthen Harrow Borough's line-up for Saturday's clash with second in the table Bromley at Earlsmead.

Borough have no injury problems, but will be without both Andy Fruton and Dave Bensted, who are still serving bans.

Mark McGinly has a groin injury and is doubtful for Wembley's visit to runaway league leaders Boreham Wood.

Giuliano Grazioli's knee injury is more serious than first thought, and his absence is extended, while Charlie Flaherty will also be missing through suspension.

Wealdstone have signed striker Marvin Hall from Vik-

ing Sports and he is in contention for a place in the side to visit Batsley on Saturday.

Steve Browne, who made several appearances for the club before Christmas before joining Yeading, could be on his way back to Stones.

Edgware Town's promotion chances face another critical test at home to Saffron Walden.

Dave Sue and Steve Sailsman are over injuries and in

contention for places, but other injured players, Paul Ferry, Andy Murray and John Coleman are still a couple of weeks away from full fitness.

Kingsbury Town are without a game on Saturday as scheduled opponents Canvey Island are involved in the FA Vase.

Town have lost defender Dave Wallace, who has joined Premier Division neighbours Hendon. But manager Peter

Blain has signed Don Allday from Southall.

Fourth in the table Rayners Lane look to further their hopes of finishing in one of the two Hellenic League promotion spots - even if their lack of lights will prevent them going up - when they vi-

sit Wallingford on Saturday.

Steve Cott has recovered from a long term injury and begins lights training this week but will not figure in team selection.

Otherwise, manager Don Durkin has a full squad to choose from.

The latest league tables

DIADORA LEAGUE		Hellenic League	
Premier Division		Wallingford Town v Rayners Lane (3pm)	
Hayes	24 15 7 24 10 52	Tuesday February 7	
Bromley	24 12 6 54 30 42	Mills Charity Cup: Edgware Town v Viking Sports (White Lion ground, 7.30pm)	
Slough	24 12 6 54 30 42	Diadora Division Three: Kingsbury Town v East Thurrock (Silver Jubilee Park, 7.30pm)	
Enfield	23 11 8 48 28 41	Football Conservation: OFR v Swindon Town (Earlsmead, 7pm)	
Canterbury	22 8 9 38 32 32	Diadora Division Two	
Harrow Borough	22 8 9 38 32 32	Malden Vale	
Arlesey United	22 8 9 38 32 32	Leyton	
St Albans City	22 8 9 38 32 32	Kidlington	
Dulwich Hamlet	22 8 9 38 32 32	Haverhill	
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