

SPORT

Towers aim to 'clean up'

LONDON Towers remain firmly on course for a unique clean sweep of all domestic basketball honours.

On Thursday they completed a 2-0 qualifying round victory over Thames Valley Tigers with a 94-81 win that confirmed their place in the Budweiser Championships finals at Wembley Arena where in the semi-finals on Saturday May 4 they will, somewhat ironically, face the Manchester Giants - the team that knocked them out of the competition at the same stage last year.

The winners will go on to meet either Birmingham Bullets or Sheffield Sharks in the Championship final on Sunday May 5.

With the Towers already having the 7 UP Trophy, the National Cup and the Budweiser League crown safely in the trophy cabinet, the Championships give them the opportunity to become only the second team ever to win all four trophies in one season. It would be a marvellous achievement, for Wembley based Towers have not previously picked up any silverware in six years in the top flight.

Any thoughts of complacency or lack of motivation for the final prize are ruled out by Towers guard, Steve Bucknall, a leading candidate for player of the season. "This is very important to us as it is our chance to make history," he said. "Personally I've never won the Championships so you can be sure the desire is there."

Towers captain Roger Duhaney agrees. "We regard it as one more to go. The fourth is a must."

Coach Kevin Cadle, in the Guinness Book of Records as the only coach to have completed the clean sweep, with Kingston four years ago, is relaxed about the situation. "It's a little bit easier as I've been there before but also because the team has guys who want to achieve."

Although the Towers were tipped at the start of the season for honours, Cadle has been delighted with their phenomenal progress. "There are few times in your career when you have the opportunity to reach your full potential. This squad has done an excellent job and now has the chance to realise that potential."

Team owner Barrie Marshall is already looking forward to Towers competing against the best in Europe next season. "We'll serve our apprenticeship in Europe but we mean business and mean to put English basketball on the map."

Win VIP weekend to see Towers in Budweiser Championships See page 126

England stars pull in fans



ENGLAND sports stars drew hundreds of fans to Mancini Sports in Harrow on Tuesday.

England rugby captain Will Carling was there, along with Wasps skipper Lawrence Dallaglio, the man hotly tipped to take over from him next season, as well as Arsenal and England soccer stars, Ian Wright and Lee Dixon.

The quartet signed autographs and chatted with fans but they eventually had to cut short their visit after the shop was overwhelmed by the large number of people trying to get in.

Worseley to get league chance

WASPS add England youth international Joe Worseley to their squad for their last match of the season at West Hartlepool on Saturday, writes Alan Bodenham.

The young back row man, a strapping individual, is as highly rated as Lawrence Dallaglio was when a youth player, and many believe he will eventually follow the Wasps skipper into the full England set up.

The 19 year old came on as a replacement against Harlequins in March and coach Rob Smith could well use this opportunity to give him another taste of First Division action.

Meanwhile moves are being made to strengthen the squad for what will be a demanding first professional season.

Two Welsh imports lock Glyn Lewellyn, who has nine international caps, and A international Matthew Lewis, have already signed. Canadian International, Gareth Rees, is also strongly rumoured to be returning, having played for the Sudbury outfit while a schoolboy at Harrow.

Team manager Malcolm Sinclair would not be drawn into naming names, but is confident that several other quality players would be tempted over the summer. Qualification for Europe has obviously been the catalyst for new recruits.

Borough 'Rob-bed'

First minute own goal has Manoe's men reeling

Hayes 2 Harrow Borough 1

BOROUGH defender Rob Marshall perhaps took neighbourly spirit just a little too far on Tuesday night when he crashed a glorious 15 yard shot past keeper Tom Evans into his own net with only 40 seconds of this derby game gone, writes John Comfort.

That superb strike, as Marshall ran back towards his goal with impeccable timing to meet a cross from Hayes striker Martin Randall, not surprisingly knocked the early stuffing out of the visitors.

And although they picked themselves up and had plenty of the ball, they never posed any serious threat to their championship chasing hosts before the break.

When a good run by Neal Stevens ended with him setting Randall free on the right to deliver the cross from which the unmarked Gary Williams headed Hayes into a two goal lead 18

minutes into the second half, the game seemed over as a contest.

Only a brave save by Evans at the feet of Jon Brady denied Hayes a third goal but to their credit Borough kept plugging away and with six minutes remaining they pulled one back.

Keeper Russell O'Meara appeared to be fouled as he claimed a high ball on the edge of his area, forcing him to drop it, but there was no whistle and the lurking Dave Bensted slotted into the open goal with virtually his first touch of the match after coming on as a substitute.

That left Hayes having to survive an anxious last few minutes before they claimed the three points which took them back to the top of the Premier Division table.

Harrow Borough: Evans, Clarke, James, Court (Fraser), Dowe, Marshall (Bensted), Ellis (Jones), Metcalfe, Hurlock, Xavier, Enderby

There's only three games left for Lions to get it right

Wembley 0 Leyton Pennant 1

RELEGATION threatened Wembley's wireless end of season slump was extended to six matches following this defeat by Leyton Pennant on Tuesday night, writes Richard Markiewicz.

This leaves the Lions with just seven days' notice, incorporating three final fixtures, in which to renew their First Division tenancy.

Divided by the visitors' only goal of the game, Wembley's performance was largely a 'before' and 'after' affair.

Wembley dominated the early stages and, producing some splendid stuff, penned Leyton in their own half for a lengthy period.

But unfortunately Wembley were unable to translate their superiority into that vital commodity called goals.

Bryan Hammett hit the side netting after latching onto Sofiane Sardi's superb through ball, an awkward cross-shot from Hurracia Wembley was tipped over by the agile Craig Knox, and later the keeper scrambled clear a Tony Ponnou effort in a one-sided first half.

But with the interval looming, disaster struck in the 44th minute. Poor defending allowed Ben Barnett to nod a free kick into the goalmouth and the unmarked Billy Reid drilled the loose ball home to give the visitors a 1-0 lead.

The concession of this goal totally deflated the Lions and they were not the same side in the second half.

Their fluent football suddenly disappeared, indiscipline began to creep into their game and Leyton took over control of matters.

Two fine saves from Kevin Beckles prevented them extending their lead as Wembley struggled, never looking like retrieving the situation.

Their only real chance of the half came five minutes from time when Knox tipped over at full stretch Glen Metterell's superbly struck 25 yarder. It was not enough to end Wembley's woe.

Wembley: Beckles, Wilcock (Metherell), Sardi, Walters, Shields, Cumberland (Walsh), Ponnou, I. Bates, Smith, Hammett, Fleming. Other subs: Child.

More injury blows for struggling Wembley

FAST running out of games in which to save their First Division status, Wembley will do well to get anything from their visit to promotion seeking Staines on Saturday.

They are likely to go there with a depleted side, for Ashley Cumberbatch (dead leg) and Shaun Fleming (ankle) have joined Robert Hollingdale, Steve Lawrence and Yousef Sakhraoui on

the injury list, while Jon-Barrie Bates will be missing through suspension.

Harrow Borough also have selection problems for their visit to Bishops Cleeve on Saturday.

Lee Enderby misses the rest of the season through suspension while Nko Ekoku is serving a one match ban on the injury front. Jason Court is out for the rest of the season after suffering

torn ligaments against Hayes, Frank Appleby sustained a broken arm against Hendon, while Paul Fishenden still has a back injury. Paul Robinson has been advised not to play again this season following his recent head injury.

On the plus side, manager Harry Manoe will be able to call on midfielder Carlton Thomas, who recently rejoined the club.

Wealdstone will be without both Lee Walker and Fergus Moore at Hornchurch, because of suspensions, but they will welcome back striker Steve Fraser from holiday.

A waterlogged Banstead pitch caused the cancellation of Kingsbury's league game with Epsom on Tuesday night and it has been rearranged to take place tonight (Thursday).

Wembley go for hat-trick

WEMBLEY Ladies look to win the Middlesex Cup for the third year running when they meet Chelsea of the Greater London League in the final at Earlsmead tonight (Thursday), kick off 7.30pm.

Final date for Russell

ASTROLOGER and Middlesex campaigner Russell Grant will be at Edgware Town's White Lion ground on Wednesday to present the trophy when Osterley play Spelthorne Sports in the final of the Middlesex County League's Russell Grant Middlesex Cup. Kick off is at 7.30pm.

Cup triumph

HARROW players Zoya Fairbairn, Leanne Small, George Adams, Kate Sears and Lucy Clarke were all members of the Watford Girls team which won the Middlesex under-14s Cup at Hanwell Town on Sunday, beating Wembley 1-0 in the final.

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Thursday April 25

ICIS League Div Three: Epsom v Kingsbury Town

Middx Ladies Cup Final: Chelsea v Wembley Ladies (Earlsmead)

Saturday April 27

ICIS League Premier Div: Bishops Cleeve v Harrow Borough

ICIS League Div One: Staines Town v Wembley

ICIS League Div Three: Hornchurch v Wealdstone Kingsbury Town v Flackwell Heath (Silver Jubilee Park, 3pm)

Middx League President's Cup Final: Broadfields Utd v Neasden (Earlsmead, 8.30pm)

Tuesday April 30

ICIS League Div One: Wembley v Whyteleafe

ICIS League Div Three: Epsom v Wealdstone (Earlsmead)

East Thurrock v Kingsbury Town (7.30pm)

Wednesday May 1

ICIS League Premier Div: Harrow Borough v Hayes (Earlsmead, 7.30pm)

Middx League Russell Grant Cup Final: Osterley v Spelthorne (White Lion ground, 7.30pm)

The latest League tables

ICIS LEAGUE Premier Division		Tooting & Mitch		Division Two			
P	W	D	L	P	W	D	L
Hayes	59	23	4	71	30	81	1
Enfield	35	24	7	8	108	79	2
Yeovil Tn	39	22	10	7	80	25	7
Dulwich Hamlet	39	22	10	7	80	25	7
Boreham Wood	38	21	11	6	80	25	7
St Albans City	41	19	12	9	43	69	6
Kingsdown	40	19	11	9	59	36	6
St Albans	41	18	12	9	43	69	6
Harrow Borough	38	18	9	12	64	51	6
Sutton Utd	40	16	13	11	67	53	6
Aldershot Utd	38	15	12	13	63	51	6
Bishops Cleeve	40	15	9	16	55	54	6
Yeading	40	11	13	18	44	54	6
Chertsey Tn	40	11	8	21	45	64	6
Chertsey Ath	39	11	13	18	44	54	6
Purfleet	40	12	7	21	47	66	4
Hendon	40	11	9	20	59	43	9
Hitchin	40	10	10	20	41	69	4
Bromley	41	9	8	25	51	66	6
Molesey	40	8	9	23	44	60	33
Watson & Hersh	40	6	7	25	42	75	37
Worthing	39	4	7	28	40	96	19

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