

SPORT

Charles quits shock

Wembley boss calls it a day

POPULAR Wembley FC boss, Glen Charles, has decided to resign.

His shock decision to step down has ironically been made in the wake of the club's promotion back to the ICIS League Division One and will come as a great surprise to all at Vale Farm. "I'm sad to be stepping down," said Charles "but I've gone so far and I think it's time for a change. We need a fresh start and I think this is the way forward."

Charles said when he took the job on that he would expect to go if the club was not in the Premier Division in four years and that is precisely what he has done. "I'm as good as my word," he said. "But I don't regard this as a failure. We had a big rebuilding job to do and think the side is better now than when I took it on and there's a good base to build on."

Assistant John Walsh and coach Paul Shields are to take charge but Charles will have his last game at the helm when Wembley meet Edgware in the Middlesex Charity Cup Final on May 16.



Stepping down - Glen Charles.

Champion Stones



We are the Champions! The champagne flows as Wealdstone celebrate their title win.

12 LONG years of trophy famine was finally ended for Wealdstone FC on Saturday when their 3-1 victory in their last game of the season at neighbours Northwood clinched the ICIS League Division Three Championship.

Stones supporters have had little cause for celebration since the glory days of 1985, and the club's famous non-league double.

But their massed ranks among the 700 crowd soon made up for lost time at the final whistle as they spilled onto the pitch and joined the

players in wild celebratory scenes that continued long after ICIS chairman Alan Turvey had presented the League Trophy to skipper Fergus Moore.

Ecstatic manager, Gordon Bartlett, said afterwards: "Well, we did it, but we did it the hard way didn't we?" He wasn't wrong either, for Wealdstone were fully 13 points clear at the top of the table at one stage in the season but a series of indifferent results in the run in took the title race right down to the wire.

Only a win at Northwood would guarantee the crown

and after a goalless first period, coupled with the news that rivals Baintree were 2-0 up in their final game, the second half proved a tense affair.

Bryan Hammat lifted Wealdstone spirits with an early strike only for Northwood to quickly cancel it out, but with time fast running out, goals from Roy Marshall and Bryan Hammat in the last nine minutes settled the issue. The supporters cries of "Champions" echoed round the ground and the champagne celebrations began.

Gordon Bartlett was full of praise for the efforts of his

team and in particular to the team spirit generated by the inspirational Fergus Moore and the ebullient Lee Walker.

There was special mention too for the superb efforts of his assistant Leo Morris and coach Frank O'Brien "much of our success has been down to them." And the supporters weren't missed out. "They are different class" he said.

An "absolutely delighted" Wealdstone chairman, Paul Rumens, paid his own tribute to the team. "Thank you for a wonderful season, thank you for putting the smile back on our faces," he said. "It is some years since we felt so proud of a Wealdstone team."

Sadly for Stones there was to be no league and cup double, for on Tuesday night they lost 1-0 to Leighton in the final of the Associate Members Cup, the deciding goal coming agonisingly in injury time.

"This competition was always secondary to the title and would have been the icing on the cake, but unfortunately it didn't happen," said Gordon Bartlett.

"Saturday was brilliant, but this was very disappointing and something of an anti-climax."

Double dream is dashed by last gasp goal

Leighton Town 1 Wealdstone 0
WEALDSTONE'S hopes of completing a league and cup double were cruelly dashed by an injury time goal in the final of the Associate Members Trophy at Hitchin on Tuesday night, writes John Comfort.

After the euphoria of Saturday's Championship decider, this was a very low key affair, although Stones could, and should have won it.

But missed chances proved their undoing against mediocre opposition.

The first half was virtually all Wealdstone but their finishing failed to match their good approach work. Their best chance of the half came five minutes before half time

when Simon Garner cleverly flicked the ball through for Bryan Hammat to go clear.

But with only James Heeps to beat, the striker lobbed over the keeper and wide.

After the break Wealdstone's free flowing football suddenly went missing but although Leighton enjoyed the bulk of possession, they did little with it and never really threatened Darren Bonfield's goal.

By contrast, Stones still cre-

ated several good chances, the best of which again fell to Hammat.

A brave double save at his feet by Heeps denied him after he had latched onto a cross from the impressive John Massey but he really should have won the game with five minutes left when Garner's pass again left him with only Heeps to beat. Sadly the finish was a repetition of his first half effort.

With extra time looming

Stones paid a high price for that miss.

A rare Leighton goal attempt, a snap 20 yard effort from Paul Firth through a crowded goalmouth, narrowly crossed the line despite the valiant efforts of Fergus Moore to keep it out and the double slipped from Stones' grasp.

Wealdstone: Bonfield, Massey, Sterling (Walker), Moore, Waugh, Marshall (Smith), Walton, Hibbert, McKay, Garner, Hammat. Other: sub: Yaku.

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Danny keeps cool to snatch glory for Towers

LONDON Towers have become the 1997 Budweiser Champions after a dramatic 89-88 win over bitter London rivals Leopards in the Championship Final on Sunday.

Guard Danny Lewis was the hero for Kevin Cadle's team as he coolly landed two free throws with just three seconds left on the clock to provide a happy ending for Towers.

Lewis had rehearsed his match winning effort with four visits to the free throw line that enabled Towers to tie the game at 87-87 with 2.21 left.

Leopards then had contrasting fortunes in the closing minutes.

Tim Davis missed twice from the line and Eric Burks could only sink one from two which edged

Leopards into an 88-87 lead.

Despite the crescendo of noise in the Wembley Arena, Lewis then kept his nerve and made them pay to give Towers a last-gasp victory.

Coach Kevin Cadle said of Lewis afterwards: "He's the best guy for us when it comes to pressure. He's the guy I want to have the ball.

"It was a great game. Leopards

started well and jumped on us and kept it going. We struggled in the 3rd period but finally came out and hit some baskets in the 4th which got some momentum going. The last minute and a half was about whoever was going to make the first mistake. Burks missed a free throw, Lewis made his. That's the difference in the game."



Champions, London Towers, after their Budweiser triumph.

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