

SPORT

New manager signs three for the Lions

NEW Wembley boss, Michael Charlton, has made his first signings for the club. They are Glenn Robson, formerly with Barkingside,

and two ex-Dagenham and Redbridge players, Mikael Larsen and Darren Morley. The latter needs an operation to repair a severely bro-

ken checkbone and he misses Wembley's game with Leyton Pennant on Monday. Other injury problems are Danny Norris (knee), Dave

Vincent (ankle) and Steve White (hamstring). Definitely out are Ian Bates and Wayne Walters, both serving one match bans.

Stars are back to face Gloucester

INTERNATIONALS Lawrence Dallaglio, Kenny Logan and Trevor Leota are all set to return for Wasps when they taken on Gloucester in a crucial Allied Dunbar Premiership clash at Loftus Road on Sunday, kick off 3pm, writes Alan Bodenham. All were rested for the game against Cardiff.

Rob Henderson should also return after a slight thigh strain which ruled him out of the Cardiff game at the weekend.

Competition is now so intense in the Premiership that every win is vital. Only six points separate the top nine teams. Wasps in fourth have 16, two behind Saracens, and four behind leaders Leicester and Northampton. Immediately behind are four teams on 14 points.

At the beginning of October Wasps came away from Kingsholm after a monumental struggle. Will Green scoring a try in injury time to snatch victory, much to the disgust of the Gloucester faithful. The west country side will come to London hell bent on revenge for that defeat so it should be quite an afternoon.

Supremo Nigel Melville is not calling in his players for training on Christmas Day but they will be in for a session tomorrow (Thursday).

"I don't think we achieve much by dragging the boys away from their families on Christmas Day," he said. "They will be far happier and all of them know not to overdo things. In any case we like to maintain the Wasps tradition of being a family club and that is all part of it."

Wealdstone get a replay

A second chance for Bartlett's men after FA reject Grays appeal

By John Comfort

THE appeal by Grays Athletic against the Ryman League's decision to order them to replay their Division One match with Wealdstone because one of the goalposts at the Essex club's ground was shorter than the legal requirement, has been rejected by the Football Association.

The FA have declared that the match was void and that it should be replayed, as ordered by the League.

Stones, who lost the match by 3-0 back in August, therefore get a second chance. The game has now been re-arranged for Tuesday March 9.

Wealdstone manager Gordon Bartlett was naturally pleased at the outcome.

"It wasn't a situation that was down to us but I'm glad that we'll get another opportunity because that 3-0 defeat was our worst of the season," he said.

"It turns things round and after complaining about us letting in goals, suddenly we've got the best defence in the division."

The chance of another three points also keeps Stones well in touch for a promotion place, but sadly it would be academic.

With the White Lion ground not having the required ground grading

for Premier Division soccer, they would not be able to go up.

However, that does not prevent Bartlett from wanting to finish as high in the Division One table as possible.

"I've got to look at it from a football point of view and we'll strive to do the best we can for 90 minutes in every game."

Patches of ice on the Grosvenor Vale pitch caused the referee to call off Wealdstone's Middlesex Charity Cup match at Ruislip Manor on Monday. The game had been re-arranged for tonight (Wednesday), kick off 7.30pm.

Paul Lamb, who will be out for three weeks with a hamstring injury, and Brian Jones (jaw injury) will both be missing, but striker Carl Holmes is expected to return after being sidelined for a month following an appendicitis operation.

Wealdstone's League game at Oxford City on Tuesday January 26 will now become the Puma Cup clash between the clubs. A new date for the League fixture has yet to be arranged.



A taste of life at bottom for Charlton

Bognor Regis Town 4 Wembley 1

THE first thing that Wembley's new manager, Michael Charlton, has quickly discovered, as he assessed his lowly side's latest demise at leaders Bognor on Saturday, was that football life at the bottom is tough, writes Richard Markiewicz.

There is no denying that Bognor were the better side and deserved to win this con-

test, but the outcome may well have been different had the Lions managed to build on a one goal advantage and also not suffered several injuries to key players during the course of the second half which ruined their momentum and any hopes of claiming at least a point.

Bognor's 4-1 win in the end was a very unrealistic scoreline.

After surviving an early on-

slaught, with keeper Adrian Creamer in outstanding form, Wembley, during a rare attack, had the impertinence to go in front in the 27th minute.

Leon Callender, trying to fasten onto Sean McCarthy's cross, was impeded in the goalmouth and Glenn Robson, one of three newcomers in the visitors line up, converted the ensuing penalty.

Wembley's lead, however, was short lived as they threw

away their advantageous position by allowing Guy Rutherford to capitalise on some indecisive defending to knock in the equaliser three minutes later.

Re-charging their batteries during the break, Bognor recommenced a full assault on the Wembley goal.

More heroics from Creamer followed before he was eventually beaten in the 61st minute when full back

Matthew Hussey popped up in the Wembley penalty area to rifle home Bognor's second goal.

Having already been forced to replace the hobbling Dave Vincent, Wembley's chances of retrieving the situation was further hampered when new boy Darren Morley was also taken off after suffering a serious facial injury and, with Creamer needing lengthy treatment after colliding

against a barrier, their cause became extinguished.

Creamer bravely continued but Bognor took full advantage to punish the weakened Lions and late strikes from Neil Scammell and Michael Birmingham, who made it 4-1 in the final minute, added to Wembley's woes.

Wembley: Creamer, Larsen, Kirwan, Walters, Morley (Bennett), Brennan, Bates, McCarthy, Robson, Vincent (Levene), Callender. Other sub: Henderson.

Last-gasp goal thwarts Boro'

St Albans City 1 Harrow Borough 1

BOROUGH paid a high price for squandering several good late chances on Saturday when high flying St Albans crashed home an equalising goal in the fifth minute of added time at the end of this tough backs to the wall struggle at Clarence Park, writes Paul Davidson.

Borough were up against it from the first minute when Alan Paris had to block a good shot from Piper for a corner and this was to prove the pattern of the match as St Albans rained cross after cross into the

visitors area for almost the ninety minutes plus.

Many Borough fans took advantage of the generous pre-match odds of 4-1 for an away win and thanks to a magical piece of skill from Frankie McCormack in the 8th minute, were only seconds away from collecting a surprise Christmas bonus.

Following a great save by David Hook from Morrison's hard angled drive, Borough got the ball upfield to Roberts who broke away into home territory and his astute crossfield pass found McCormack on the edge

of the Saints penalty area. The winger then cut inside his marker, Meredith, and chipped the ball delightfully over a helpless Newell to put the visitors in front.

St Albans missed a great chance to equalise on 15 minutes as the ball rolled untouched across the middle of the Borough area but when it was cleared downfield, McCormack missed a good chance when his fierce shot was blocked, with the rebound going agonisingly just past the post for a corner.

Hook did well to push a

rocket shot from Clark round a post but Borough managed to hold onto their lead to the break and almost increased it when home centre half Pollard managed to chip his own keeper from 25 yards under no pressure. But Newell hurled himself backwards as the ball rolled towards the line and pushed it away for a corner.

The second half again saw Borough defending under tremendous home pressure, but with Coleman and Paris superb in defence, they repelled everything the Saints threw at them.

With the home side tiring,

Borough carved out two chances that could have wrapped the game up - but contrived to miss them.

But then deep into stoppage time disaster struck. A long throw into the box was headed out by Coleman to Kane. His fierce shot was blocked by Hook, but only as far as Dominic Gentle who gleefully smashed in the equaliser from six yards. Seconds later the final whistle went.

Harrow Borough: Hook, O'Brien, James, Roberts, Coleman, Paris, Adolphe, Bates, Gavin, N. Kumah (Fardall), McCormack. Other subs: Webster, Dodds.

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Soccer fixtures

Wednesday December 23 Middlesex Charity Cup: Ruslip Manor v Wealdstone (7.30pm)

Monday December 28 Ryman League Premier Div: Harrow Borough v Hendon (Earlsmead, 3pm). Ryman League Div One: Wembley: Leyton Pennant

(Vale Farm, 3pm); Berkhamsted Town v Wealdstone (3pm).

Ryman League Div Two: Edgware Town v Northwood (White Lion ground, 3pm). Ryman League Div Three: Southall v Kingsbury Town (at Yeading FC, 3pm).

Early reports please

BECAUSE of early New Year edition deadlines, all reports for next week's paper must reach our offices no later than 10am on Tuesday.

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