

SPORT
SOCCER

Problems for Bartlett as Wealdstone leak goals

Centenary year starts but there's nothing to celebrate

Wealdstone 0 Maidenhead Utd 3

By **John Comfort**

THE first game in the club's Centenary Year - but there was precious little for Wealdstone to celebrate from this abysmal display.

The removal of the 3-0 defeat at Grays after the Essex club's 'goalpost' appeal had been rejected by the FA instantly gave Gordon Bartlett's team the best defensive record in the Division.

But Wealdstone's abject rearguard swiftly put the record straight with last Monday's abomination at Berkhamstead and

then compounded their seasonal apathy with this defensive stinker on Saturday to lose by another three goal margin.

Paul Bowgett, skipper of Wealdstone's historic 1985 double winning team was amongst the unfortunate watching at the White Lion ground. How Stones could have done with his like on Saturday!

Bartlett's selection was hampered by the unavailability of Barry Forshaw, injuries to Brian Jones,

Paul Lamb and Mick Swaysland and Ian Waugh being ill. Lamb and Swaysland both played anyway but the former failed to finish and his hamstring injury could now well require lengthy recovery time.

Swaysland was suffering with a groin injury, which was perhaps reflected in some of his finishing, but the tactic of playing him as a lone striker did him few favours and was hardly a

winning one.

Wealdstone could not have got off to a much worse start, going a goal behind after only 35 seconds.

The back pass by Richard Horner, recalled after joining Conference Club Farnborough, was perhaps not a great one but a clearance by Noel Imber seemed a relative formality.

However, the backside of the onrushing Chuk Agudosi obviously proved

a far more tempting target for the keeper than the back row of the stand and the ball cannoned off the Maidenhead striker and across the penalty area to the grateful Mickey Creighton who fired into the unguarded net to put the visitors in front.

That early shock left stunned Stones with the look of a beaten side about them for the rest of the half. Maidenhead took full advantage of their rivals' ineptitude and with

34 minutes gone they doubled their lead.

Tim Cook's long throw was inexplicably headed back towards his own goal by Shaun Fleming and with Imber making no positive move, Agudosi slotted the ball home from close range.

Stones had their first attempt at goal a minute later when Chris Walton was just over from the edge of the area after Steve Bircham's corner had been half cleared to him,

and with 39 minutes gone Maidenhead keeper, Gareth Ormshaw, almost fumbled a Horner header over his line from another Bircham corner.

But the half ended as it had begun with a Maidenhead goal.

The home defence failed to clear a Creighton corner and Agudosi latched onto the loose ball and found the net with an angled shot, despite the presence of a posse of defenders around him.

Three down and with Lamb limping off, Wealdstone were effectively dead and buried, but to their credit they came out after the break following Bartlett's tongue lashing looking to try and undo some of the first half damage.

The hailstorm which engulfed the ground at half time, and threatened a possible abandonment, seemed their best hope of salvation. But that rained and Stones were left to go in search of a miracle.

With 15 minutes gone hopes were lifted that it could actually happen when Swaysland had his leg hooked away from him in the area and Wealdstone were awarded a penalty.

Swaysland took the spot kick himself, and struck it well, but Ormshaw dived to make a fine save.

Salt was rubbed into the Wealdstone wounds when from the resulting corner by Bircham, Walton's shot was cleared off the line.

Stones upped the tempo with Stuart Kent and Steve Dell brought into the action, but scoring remained elusive.

Fleming had a good rising drive tipped over by

Ormshaw and a fierce Swaysland effort from 30 yards received similar treatment.

A goalbound shot from Bircham was deflected wide by Gary Attrell and from Lewis Reid's corner Horner was just off target with a glancing header.

Wealdstone's inadequate finishing was summed up in the 76th minute when Swaysland headed wide of an open goal from Kent's cross and the striker was denied again minutes later when Reid put him clear but his shot was too close to Ormshaw who made a comfortable save.

With such a convincing lead Maidenhead rarely needed to venture forward in the second half. But when they did on the break in stoppage time they almost got a fourth goal. Agudosi, looking well offside, was put clear by Gavin Mernagh, however, justice was done when Imber made a good save.

But Stones still ended up soundly beaten by a side that last won back in early October, and the damage was all of their own doing.

Manager Bartlett offered his apologies to fans after the Berkhamstead debacle. After this demise, hari kari seemed somewhat more appropriate.

Wealdstone: Imber, Dicker (Dell), Fleming, Sterling, Horner, Lamb (Benning), Walton, Reid, Swaysland, Bircham, McKay (Kent).



Wealdstone striker Mick Swaysland outpaces a Maidenhead defender and makes tracks for goal.

Another defeat gives sad Wares that sinking feeling

Hungerford 4 Edgware Town 1

By **Paul Gregory**

EDGWARE dropped another three points in this, their first game of the New Year, on Saturday and as a result have slipped four places down the Division Two table in the space of only five days.

The Wares played the first period decidedly uphill in very muddy conditions. However, they looked good, with player-manager Steve Newing commanding his more usual forward position.

After a scrappy start by both teams, Christian Glynn made a superb run through the centre of the Hungerford defence in the 20th minute, beating three defenders. He clipped a short pass

to the feet of Peter Sutton and the striker made no mistake with a low volley, beating keeper Mark Teasdale in the home goal to put the Wares in the lead.

The celebrations were short lived however, as within two minutes the home side's strong attacking play produced a corner which was headed home by the unmarked Martyn Churchward for the equaliser.

That seemed to signal the demise of the Edgware team as any real force in the game. Not one of them seemed capable of passing to a green shirt and what efforts there were on goal after

that were either over the bar or wide.

Edgware started the second half looking better for the break but the revival was only temporary for with only nine minutes played Sly and Bailey combined well to put Hadgkiss through to beat Andy Carter and put Hungerford in front.

The conditions deteriorated after two hailstorms but the home side continued to play football, while Edgware's efforts were little more than kick and hope.

A third goal by Matthews and a fourth from a penalty conceded by Christian Glynn, which was converted by Stevens moments before the end, completed Edgware's humiliation.

Other than attempting to prevent the opening goal, Hungerford's keeper was only forced into one other save during the whole of the 90 minutes, and that came from Newing in the dying moments.

Edgware's performance was put in perspective by the fact that Hungerford's record is not good, being placed 18th in the league having won only two games at home all season, and just three in total.

For Edgware it is 'back to the drawing board' if they are to revive their fortunes for the matches ahead.

Edgware: Carter, Sheridan, Makamian (Morgan), Hurd (Murray), Elliott, Newing, Glynn, Roche, Sutton, House, Lyons (Valenti).

Christmas over but Wembley are still handing out the gifts

Yeading 3 Wembley 0

By **Richard Markiewicz**

CHRISTMAS may well be over but charitable Wembley are still dishing out the presents, which resulted in their latest defeat at Yeading on Saturday.

If Wembley, still languishing at the bottom of the Ryman League Division One table, do do down, and this has become a distinct possibility following their failure to beat a side just one place above them in the

table, then they may well look back at the amount of goals that they have conceded this season as a consequence of defensive lapses.

To illustrate the point, all three of Yeading goals came from poor Wembley defending. Adrian Creamer gifted the

home side's first goal in the 5th minute when he allowed a low cross to slither from his grasp and Steve Conroy slid in to poke the loose ball over the goaline.

Non-existent marking culminated in Yeading's second goal ten minutes later when the unchallenged Andy Hedge dived in full length to head home a looping right wing cross to the far post.

And it was anybody's guess

where the Wembley defence was in the 65th minute as Nathan Tapley appeared in the visitors' box completely unmarked to fire in Yeading's third goal.

Wayward shooting, a couple of excellent saves from Creamer and the woodwork prevented the home side from extending their lead.

Wembley, meanwhile, produced some neat football at times but did not create one

worthwhile goalscoring chance. Another problem signifying their present circumstance.

It was Wembley's fifth successive League defeat and their crisis does not look like ending.

Wembley: Creamer, Levene, Kirwan, Walters, Norris, Brennan, Bates, McCarthy (Keane), Socco, Klempson (Linsley), Hunt. Other sub: Henderson.

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