

# SPORT

## One-off Roberts

### Ex-England defender plays for Stones then is named as new Chesham manager

FORMER Chelsea, Glasgow Rangers and Tottenham defender, Graham Roberts, enjoyed a somewhat brief spell with Wealdstone this week.

Stones boss Gordon Bartlett signed the former England international on Friday night, he made his debut in the 3-1 victory over Hungerford on Saturday, and two days later he was named as the new player-manager of Chesham United, replacing former Harrow Borough midfielder Steve Emmanuel, who was sacked by the Bucks club after their 0-0 draw against Dagenham.

Roberts, who recently left his post as manager of Conference club, Yeovil Town, following the much publicised 'fax to Newcastle' incident, had agreed to play for Wealdstone until another managerial post came along.

Said Gordon Bartlett after Saturday's game: "He's looking to get back into management so we're really looking at it as a short term arrangement which will help him and also help us while we've got some injury problems."

With Roberts taking over at Chesham, it has proved very short term indeed. Stones were aware that a holiday in Malaya would prevent him playing for the next two weeks, but he had indicated to Bartlett that he had enjoyed the match and on his return he would have been quite happy to play for them again.

Although Bartlett knew that Roberts had al-

By **John Comfort**

ready received two managerial offers, he harboured hopes that if the right opportunity didn't come along, Roberts might stay until the summer. But it was not to be.

On Saturday 38 year old Roberts joined another player in the twilight of his career at Wealdstone in former Blackburn striker Simon Garner, also 38. When he walked into the changing room and saw Garner, Roberts was said to have remarked: "Blimey - there's someone here older than me."

As far as Bartlett was concerned, though, age was immaterial. "As long as they can play I don't care how old they are, whether it's 38 or 17," he said.

Bartlett has added to his squad with the signing of former Harrow Borough midfielder/defender Paul Benning from Aylesbury. He also made his debut against Hungerford.

Both Matt Corbould and Nathan Beckett have now left the club.

This Saturday Stones are away to Windsor and will be without Brian Jones, who joins Fergus Moore on the sidelines through suspension, but Keith Boreham returns and Bartlett is hopeful that Paul McKay, Roy Marshall and Dennis Greene will be fit for action.

Wembley midfielder Jesse Hall about to take a tumble after a challenge by a Leyton Penant defender in Saturday's game at the Farm. The Lions failed to ease their relegation fears, losing 3-2 after being 2-0 up at half time. Report on page 127.



## Walters is back for Wembley

WAYNE Walters returns to the Wembley line-up after suspension for Saturday's home game with Grays, but Carlton Mitchell is banned and joins the sidelined Ian Bates and Les Thompson.

After having five pins inserted in his broken leg, Ashley Cumberbatch has been released from hospital and is unlikely to play again until next season at the earliest.

Wembley's latest signing is Tony Millard, a defender who was formerly with Northwood and Ware.

With David Hook suffering a torn back muscle injury, Harrow Borough

boss Alan Paris is desperately seeking a new keeper for Saturday's home game with Bromley.

Other new signings are also imminent as an injury crisis looms with Darren Coleman out with an ankle injury, while Jeremy Lord, Ian Rutherford, Pat Gavin, Richard Cobden and David Green are all struggling.

With Martin Beard returning to Carshalton, available players are decidedly thin on the ground at Earlsmead.

Mark Ivers is almost back to full fitness and could figure in Edgware's home game with Leighton. A suspension

rules out Joe Harmer. Gary Dolling is available after suspension for Kingsbury home game with promotion chasing Harlow Town.

### Fixtures

**Saturday March 6**  
 Ryman League Premier Div: Harrow Borough v Bromley (Earlsmead, 3pm)  
 Ryman League Div One: Wembley v Grays Ath (Vale Farm, 3pm)  
 Ryman League Div Two: Edgware Town v Leighton Town (White Lion ground, 3pm); Windsor & Eton v Wealdstone.  
 Ryman League Div Three: Kingsbury Town v Harlow Town (Silver Jubilee Park, 3pm).

**Tuesday March 10**  
 Ryman League Premier Div: Harrow Borough v Basinstoke Town (Earlsmead, 7.30pm).  
 Ryman League Div Two: Wealdstone v Whitham Town (White Lion ground, 7.45pm).

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## It's over and out of Cup for problem plagued Borough

**Harrow Borough 1 Uxbridge 2**  
 BOROUGH'S season was effectively ended with this dismal defeat in a Middlesex Senior Cup semi-final tie that almost did not take place, writes **John Comfort**.

Beset by injuries, Borough had considered withdrawing from the competition over the worst of them, a torn back muscle sustained by David Hook after they had been refused special dispensation by the County FA to sign a new keeper after the deadline for eligibility.

However, they decided to play, but a strange looking line-up took the field, with defender Martin Beard in goal and striker Pat Gavin at centre back. Gavin and Alan Paris both played despite suffering from hamstring injuries.

Despite their problems, Harrow were given a

good start thanks to Uxbridge defender Gary Bamford handling Mark Xavier's powerful goalbound header from an Nko Ekoku corner in the 8th minute.

But after Kenny Webster had buried the spot kick to put his side ahead, Borough were sadly unable to build on that lead, their best effort being a fierce angled drive by Sean James that brought a good save from keeper Sean Dawson.

Uxbridge were allowed to gradually work their way back into contention and two minutes into the second half they drew level when a long throw from Mark Gill was cleared out to Bamford who made amends for his earlier blunder by crashing a 25 yard blockbuster past Beard.

13 minutes later the visitors were ahead when

Gill headed home a Jamie Cleary corner, and for Borough there was no coming back.

Xavier fluffed a golden chance of equalising when he miscued wide from close in after being set up by Gavin, and later Ekoku had an effort blocked in the goalmouth.

But after Dawson did well to turn Gavin's far post header over the bar, the cup trail was well and truly over for the Earlsmead outfit.

With their last chance of silverware gone, only the task of ensuring they retain their Premier Division status remains - and given more performances like this, that is far from being a certainty.

**Harrow Borough:** Beard, Jones, James, Gavin, Paris, Webster, Ekoku, Issott, Denny, Xavier, Bates. Subs: Cotton, Coleman, Rutherford.

## Wasps given golden cup chance

WASPS were presented with a golden opportunity of reaching their fourth Cup Final when Monday's Tetley Bitter Cup semi-final draw paired them with last season's beaten finalists, Sale, at Loftus Road, writes **Alan Bodenham**.

The match will take place on Saturday March 28 with a kick off at 4pm.

The clubs have met just once previously in the knockout competition, in 1995 when Wasps triumphed 18-9 at Heywood Road.

Earlier this season the Cheshire club notched a 38-22 victory at Loftus Road but Wasps were in the middle of a bad run at the time and have improved dramatically since, as their comprehensive quarter final victory demonstrated.

Sale in contrast have struggled recently and by all reports were less than convincing when defeating West Hartlepool last Saturday.

Wasps chief executive Geoff Huckstep expressed the club's delight with the draw. "We're really looking forward to a great Loftus Road occasion," he said "and we expect a bumper crowd."

Meanwhile Wasps return to Allied Dunbar Premiership action on Sunday when they go to Vicarage Road to take on Saracens.

Title chasing Sarries narrowly beat Wasps 19-15 at Loftus Road before Christmas and have only lost one Premiership match all season, against Leicester.

Nigel Melville has yet to select his line up but warned: "the cup will go on the back burner for the moment for such a vital game as this."

**2 for 1 ticket offer for Wasps v London Irish**



**In Observer Sport next week**

## Towers target Trophy hat-trick

EXIDE London Towers look to set the seal on one era in Sunday's Uni-Ball Trophy Final while their opponents, Sheffield Sharks, hope to start another.

Towers go in search of a third consecutive trophy when the competition reaches its climax at Birmingham's NEC but must first dispose of a Sharks club looking to end a maddening run of three runners-up medals and four semi-

final defeats over the last two seasons.

For Towers coach Kevin Cadle, the game offers the chance to win the trophy three years running with two different teams. He guided Kingston to a hat-trick between 1990 and 1992.

"Three in a row is something I'll think about when it's over," says Cadle, who for the time being has enough on his plate trying to outwit one very hun-

gry coach in the Sheffield Sharks box.

Chris Finch has experienced heart ache as a Sheffield player in recent times but stands poised to celebrate his first season in coaching. At the other end of the coaching scale from Cadle, Finch has a good option, having watched Paul James guide Thames Valley Tigers to the National Cup in January in his first season coaching in the top flight.

**Win tickets to see England Schoolboys v Brazil - page 125**

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