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FOOTBALL: Lee Bradbury's men out of the cup



Match action from Wealdstone vs Dagenham and Redbridge. Image: Jon Taffel

Daggers put out of FA Trophy by the Stones

WEALDSTONE put aside their recent poor league form to emerge victorious over Dagenham & Redbridge and book their place in the last 16 of the Isuzu FA Trophy.

An 81st minute strike from talisman Micah Obiero proved decisive, as the Stones knocked Lee Bradbury's National League South men out of the cup.

The hosts started the match on the front foot, forcing former Stone, Sam Howes, into an excellent reflex save in just the second minute of play, preventing an own goal from defender Sam Graham.

Wealdstone continued to enjoy the lion's share of possession throughout the early stages; however, they lacked

By NICOLE CHO-YEE

a cutting edge in the final third.

In the 26th minute, the Stones had an opportunity to break the deadlock when Olufela Olomola was played through on goal, but Graham produced a vital block to deny the striker.

Sam Cox's side were relentless in their quest for an opener and Anthony Georgiou nearly provided a moment of magic in the 32nd minute, rifling a venomous strike from range that had to be brilliantly tipped to safety by Howes.

The Daggers' first sight of goal came in the 35th minute when Dermi Lusala struck a long-distance strike

that flew over the crossbar.

After a dominant first half from Wealdstone, the teams went into the interval goalless, with Howes' acrobatics preserving the scoreline.

On the hour mark, the Stones won a free-kick in a dangerous position and Nathan Tshikuna stepped up with powerful effort, but it was straight at Howes.

The introduction of substitute Sak Hassan added impetus to the home side's attack and he teed up Tshikuna in the 69th minute with a strike that whistled over the bar.

As the contest approached the final ten minutes, the visitors rallied for a late winner themselves, and they were nearly fruitful in the 79th minute when Joe Haigh drilled a low

strike on target, but Dante Baptiste was equal to his effort.

In the 81st minute, Wealdstone finally got their deserved breakthrough, with the lively Hassan pulling the ball back from the byline for Obiero to convert from close-range and send his team into the next round.

In the penultimate minute of stoppage time, the Stones nearly added another goal, exploiting Howes coming up for a corner; but substitute Sean Adarkwa's shot came up just short.

Daggers boss Bradbury said: "It was never going to be a ding-donger in terms of goals because we set up to frustrate them, which we did.

"They've got some good players."

Successful season celebrated

GOLF

GRIM'S DYKE Golf Club in Hatch End, Pinner have been celebrating yet another successful trophy season on the fairways. Pride of place goes to the Rabbits and the Foxes, who both retained titles for the third year in a row.

The Rabbits, again skipper by Keith Robinson, retained the Stanley West Memorial Trophy for a hat-trick of wins with a thrilling 5-4 victory over Finchley in the best of nine singles matches at Sudbury GC. The high handicappers, however narrowly missed out on keeping hold of the Talbot Cup again for the third time, finishing runners-up to Moor Park at Ealing GC.

Andy MacPhee's Foxes again ruled Middlesex, retaining their County League crown with an impressive 4.5-1.5 victory in the final at Wyke Green GC against Sudbury, who had won the League One division. Grim's Dyke had been pushed all the way by Wyke Green in League Two - both clubs finished level with 13 points from their six matches - but Grim's Dyke topped the table thanks a better head-to-head score.

The Sabres Tigers just missed out on silverware. The low handicappers reached the final of the Bullivant Bowl, but lost 2-1 to Crews Hill at Wyke Green GC. In the Middlesex Sabres League, Grim's Dyke reached the three-team round robin final after topping their group. But despite drawing against The Inspiration Club (2-2) and beating Ashford Manor (3.5-0.5) they lost out on aggregate scores to The Inspiration. However, there was County success for brothers, Jack and Paul McCormack, who captured the Middlesex Scratch Foursomes title, defeating Pinner Hill in the final at Stanmore GC.

The Veterans had high hopes of defending the prestigious Felmingham Trophy - won last year after a 24-year interval. However, following impressive early round wins, Grim's Dyke lost a thrilling semi-final 5-4 to North Middlesex at Highgate GC. In their Inter-Club friendly matches, the veterans were unbeaten at home - winning all 12 matches. They also won seven of their 12 away fixtures, losing four and drawing one.

The Ladies' stout defence of the Middlesex Pearson Trophy ended in the semi-final, but they won the County Scratch Division Three title - and were promoted to Division Two. Grim's Dyke's Tracy Gorb and Julie Nash also captured the Middlesex Foursomes title, beating Enfield in the final while Joanna Lassman and Loraine Brier won the County Seniors Competition at Wyke Green GC. And to round off their season, Grim's Dyke made the most of home advantage in the Middlesex Autumn Meeting - their three teams finished first, second and fourth.