

**SIX pages  
this week**

**INSIDE**

**Marathon  
day nears**

THE Harrow Charity Marathon takes place on November 1 — and this week we are offering late entrants a chance to join in the fun.

An entry form for the event appears on Page 29 — so if you want to go in either the full or half marathons, fill it in and return it to the organisers NOW.

**Darts hits  
the jackpot**

CLUBS and pubs throughout Middlesex are preparing themselves for the biggest darts event the county has known — The Middlesex Open Pairs tournament.

Big cash prizes are on offer for the winners. See page 28 for details and an entry coupon.

**PLUS**

■ **SQUASH** - Herga go for the top P.28

■ **POOL** - New boys flying start P.29

■ **SOCCER** - Fab Fergie's Royal show P.30

■ **SUPERSUB** - Ripley's the saviour P.31

■ **RUGBY** - Courage Clubs Championship P.32

**More sport  
on 28-32**

# MELDRUM IS SACKED

## Axed Stones manager hits out at men who ended his short reign

WEALDSTONE manager Colin Meldrum was sensationally sacked on Tuesday after only seven months at Lower Mead.

And just hours after he left the club, 46-year-old Meldrum launched a bitter attack on his former employers.

### Stones off the mark

Wealdstone 1 Enfield 0

MANAGERLESS Wealdstone won their first game of the season just hours after Colin Meldrum's shock dismissal, but his departure was still the main talking point even after the victory.

Club skipper Dennis Byatt, who took charge of the team said: "The players were quite surprised, though not totally bearing in mind our league position."

"But the club has made a decision and I think it was probably the right one. For a month we have been the laughing stock of the league."

Vice President Eric Fletcher said: "Having an absentee manager didn't really work. Meldrum had a good run for his money and we hope there will be a turn for the better."

And Supporters Club secretary Nick DuGard revealed his group had planned a meeting with vice-chairman Alan Clifton to discuss the situation.

"We were most unhappy at the way things were developing, and although we wish Colin Meldrum well, we would fully support the action of the directors."

Tuesday's crowd of 916 watched in virtual silence until the 78th minute when the busy Byron Walton struck to earn Stones three points.

Wealdstone: Welsh, McCarthy, Bourget, Byatt, Hether, Wainwright, Perry, O'Keefe (M Hirst), Ferguson, Walton, Cordice.

"I resent the way it was done and feel I have been treated very badly," he said. "I can see no justification in my sacking — I am leaving the club with my head held high."

Meldrum was given the news at 10 am by Stones director Alan Clifton, who said the decision to sack him was taken by the whole board.

He and his fellow directors held an amazing telephone conference on Monday night with club Chairman David Morrill, who is in the United States.

"We had an open line to the States for 45 minutes," said Clifton. "We decided in the end that he had to go. It just hadn't worked out."

### Error

Clifton admitted that the club may have made an error appointing Meldrum in the first place, and claimed that he had not lived up to their expectations.

"In our judgement, we didn't think he was doing the job as he should have done it," explained Clifton. "In 19 competitive games, from Boston last season to Telford on Saturday, we had won only two matches."

"We found him a very nice and pleasant guy but at the end of the day it is results that count. We felt it had to be done now."

"Some of Meldrum's ideas were exceptionally good. But in the final analysis it just didn't gel."

However, Meldrum claimed this week that he was never given a chance to prove himself.

And he slammed Chairman Morrill for not being present to give him the news personally.



■ **HAPPIER TIMES ...** for Colin Meldrum, with Wealdstone Chairman David Morrill in February after being appointed manager.

### By Simon O'Neill and Aaron Gransby

"I was given a reason for being sacked but I did not understand it," he said. "While I am being sacked David Morrill is in America ... that is just typical of directors."

He added: "I told Morrill when I joined that I would need two years to get things right at Wealdstone."

"I also warned him there would be problems along the way. But they look at the league table, see Wealdstone bottom and say to themselves 'let's get rid of him.' I can take it, I've been in soccer a long time. It's the players I feel sorry for."

Clifton insisted however, that the sacking was not a panic decision.

### Crisis

"There is no crisis at Lower Mead," he said. "This was a measured and calculated decision. We have a responsibility to the people who pay their money to watch us play."

And he revealed that a new appointment was imminent. "We are confident that by Saturday a new manager and coach will have been appointed, both with league and non-league experience."

"We are conducting talks with them at present and we hope to make the appointment in the next couple of days."

Clifton added: "Propping up the league is something that is alien to this club. We are optimistic that we are going to sort out our present problems and move out of the danger area."

"We are not willing to be middle of the road and money will be made available to the new manager to buy players."

## Dreams of a league place soon vanish

COLIN MELDRUM took over at Lower Mead in February this year, following the resignation of double winning manager Brian Hall.

Club Chairman David Morrill said then he believed he had found the right man to take Wealdstone into the Football League.

But nothing went right for the former Arsenal and Reading player from the start.

His first game in charge was a crushing 4-0 home defeat by Boston and over the next 18 competitive matches, Stones won only two, drew six and lost ten.

He commuted to Lower Mead from his home in Lytham, Lancs, staying at a Morrill-owned house during the week.

The backbone of the club was ripped out with the close season departures of the likes of Steve Tapley, Derek Doyle and Mark Graves.

And their absence, plus an injury and suspension crisis that robbed Meldrum of anything resembling a cohesive squad, spelled the beginning of the end.

Ironically, the man who Morrill passed over in favour of Meldrum is now thriving elsewhere.

Barry Nevill, caretaker boss after Hall's departure, is currently boss of VOL Premier Division side, Tooting.

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## Loddy ready to boost Boro

HARROW BOROUGH are still without the injured Mark Adams and Richard Evans for their home Vauxhall-Opel League game with Basinstoke Town. But Matt Loddy will be available following a successful run-out in the reserves.

Wembley return to Vauxhall-Opel League action with a game against Leatherhead at Vale Farm.

Kingstony Town entertain Uxbridge on Saturday and are resigned to being without at least two players. George Costa is suspended for a month and Dave Silman has a thigh injury.

Rayners Lane will have Paul Abell and Reg Barton available for selection against Wallingford.

### FIXTURES

Saturday September 19  
GM Vauxhall Conference: Wealdstone v Macclesfield Town  
Lower Mead.

Vauxhall-Opel League Premier Division: Harrow Borough v Basinstoke Town (Earlswood, 3); Division One: Kingsbury Town v Uxbridge (Silver Jubilee Park, 3); Wembley v Leatherhead (Vale Farm, 3).  
FA Vase Preliminary Round: Milton Keynes v Edgware Town.  
Herts League Premier Division: Rayners Lane v Wallingford Town (Lucas Avenue, 3).  
Middlesex County League: Evershed Social v Harrow St Marys.

### Tuesday September 22

AC Delta Cup First Round: Harrow Borough v Grays Athletic (Earlswood, 730); Hemel Hempstead v Wembley; Southchurch v Kingsbury Town.  
Suburban League: Hendon v Harrow Borough Reserves.

### Wednesday September 23

GM Vauxhall Conference: Maidstone United v Wealdstone.  
Green King Spartans League: Edgware Town v Redhill (White Lion Ground, 7.30).

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