

Sport

JENNINGS IS NEW STONES MANAGER

By **Aaron Cransby**



● New Wealdstone boss Tony Jennings

TONY Jennings took over as the new manager of Wealdstone on Tuesday declaring: "I've jumped out of the frying pan into the fire."

The former Dagenham boss, who quit the East London club last week, is under no illusions about the task facing him at Lower Mead, but is hopeful about the future.

"Dagenham had certain financial problems which led to me resigning, and if I thought I would be in the same situation at Wealdstone, I would not have taken the job," he said.

"I have been told that money will be available for players and I am hopeful that it will be forthcoming to give the club a half-chance of staying in the league.

"Our league position is somewhat precarious and although we would love to do well in the FA Trophy, I think everyone would concede that for a run of results in

the Conference."

Only last week, Jennings was publicly ruled out of the race for the Wealdstone job by vice-chairman Alan Clifton. But Clifton says he had to make that statement.

"At the time I was involved in somewhat delicate negotiations and I could not say anything that might have prejudiced the appointment."

"It was vital that we got the right man and I think Jennings is a good choice. I feel sure that he is the right man to get us out of trouble."

"He is a man who has got his feet firmly on the ground and is aware of the difficulty of his task. He has the confidence of the board of directors and has a lot of distinction as a player and manager."

Town ground is shut in loo row

KINGSBURY Town have had their ground closed and been fined £1,000 because the Vauxhall-Opel League says the ladies toilets at Silver Jubilee Park are not up to scratch.

And the decision, taken by the league's management committee last Friday, has been slammed as "ludicrous" by Kingsbury manager Terry Dyson.

Kingsbury were originally given until November 6 to build outdoor toilets for ladies, and the deadline was extended to November 27. A league inspection committee visited Silver Jubilee Park and found they were not completed.

But Terry Dyson says the toilets are usable. "They are not quite completely finished but they are definitely usable — it's just a matter of doing some tiling."

"The league are slaughtering us with this action. It is absolutely diabolical what they are doing to this club. The toilets will be completed by the end of this week, yet we have had our ground closed and have had to switch Wednesday night's home game with Staines to their ground. It is ludicrous."

"What are they trying to do? The league is meant to support clubs not to be against them. We all agree that grounds should be improved but the league must be realistic about this."

"We have worked very hard to get this ground right and have been sweating blood to get these toilets finished. It is ridiculous to fine us and close the ground when we are doing all we can to get them finished."

Dyson went on to slam the league secretary Nick Robinson and his colleagues who made the decision.

"Robinson and his team are like dictators, they have far too much power and don't know about all the work that is going on here to get this done. They just sit up in their committee room and make stupid decisions. The £1,000 we have been fined could have gone towards further ground improvements here but now we have lost it."

But league secretary Nick Robinson said: "When we inspected the ground, we found the doors were not even on the toilets and the club had already asked for extra time to get them finished. We decided to fine them to give them even more incentive to get them finished." He said the ground would re-open when the toilets were completed.

"Out of the frying pan into the fire" he says

Jennings, who is 37, took over at Dagenham two years ago following the resignation of Ken Knighton, under whom he was a coach at the club.

As a player he won FA Amateur Cup and FA Trophy winners' medals with Hendon and Enfield and also captained the England semi-professional side. His other representative honours include Isthmian League, Middlesex Wanderers and various FA teams.

He finished playing by choice at the age of 31, going out on a high note in the FA Trophy final for Enfield against Altrincham at Wembley.

He is the assistant manager of the England semi-pro squad, a position he hopes to continue holding.

He says he is aware of the capabilities of Wealdstone's current players. "I know more about the Wealdstone players than they would expect me to," he said.

"I am the sort of manager who keeps up-to-date records on players whenever I see them play, just as Brian Hall does. I have played with Alex Welsh at Enfield and know Paul Bowgett, Dennis Byatt and Robin Wainwright, having played against them in the past."

But he says he will not be afraid to bring new faces to Lower Mead. "If the club is going to get back to the heights of a few years ago, it will require different players to those it has now. The side will have to be re-structured."

Hero Cordice returns to Lower Mead

ALAN Cordice has made a sensational return to Wealdstone after two years in the wilderness and is in line to play against Banbury in the FA Trophy on Saturday.

The news that Wealdstone's favourite footballer is to make a comeback was revealed exclusively to the Observer by the man who negotiated his return, Wealdstone vice chairman Alan Clifton.

Cordice is now 32, but is still the hero of the Lower Mead terraces, and last week showed he had lost none of his pace or trickery when he turned out for Robin Wainwright's testimonial against Luton Town.

The speedy striker officially retired at the end of 1985-86 after two injuries in a year. In one incident, he crashed into advertising boards after being fouled and broke his arm and chipped his knee. It was common knowledge that he was fed up with the treatment he was receiving from opposition defences.

Earlier this season, Cordice rejected the chance to return to Wealdstone when former boss Colin

Meldrum was trying to rebuild his side. But now his enthusiasm has been rekindled.

Wealdstone always retained Cordice's registration so that should he ever make a comeback, it would have to be with Wealdstone. And Alan Clifton has been trailing the striker for some time.

"In the end, he didn't need that much persuading," said Clifton. "He had always said that if he did play again it would be for us."

"We have always liked him at the club and I am sure he will be welcomed back by everybody. He has just been waiting for the right time to make his return, his heart has always been in the club."

"I think the Robin Wainwright testimonial fired his enthusiasm again. He was able to be in the dressing room, be with the players and get the feel of the place again."

"I think Alan's return will be a particularly great boost for our supporters. He always did wonders for this club and he will have a great influence on the team."

Cordice has not signed a contract but has made an agreement with Alan Clifton to play for Wealdstone until the end of this season.

"He has agreed to come back until the end of the season and then his future will be subject to further negotiation," confirmed Clifton.

Cordice joined Wealdstone originally on August 2, 1980 and played his first game for the club against Edgware Town in the Middlesex Charity Cup. In all, he played 281 games, scoring 97 goals for the club before retiring at the end of 1985-86. His last game was on March 21 1986 against Bath City.



● Wealdstone favourite Alan Cordice.

Tough Trophy tasks for Boro' and Stones

GM Conference high flyers Weymouth and Beazer Homes League Banbury bar the way to Wembley for Harrow Borough and Wealdstone on Saturday in the first round proper of the FA Challenge Trophy.

Just four days after meeting Weymouth in the GMC Cup, Borough swift return to action with the Dorset club, looking to avenge Tuesday night's defeat.

Following the familiar pattern of the season, Borough boss Keith Chamberlin again has selection problems for the big match. Definitely out is Robbie Johnson who starts a two match suspension for being sent off at Tooting.

Steve Bateman and Lawrence Holmes are expected to be okay after

suffering in Saturday's bruising battle with Hendon but Matt Loddy ruled himself out of contention when he severed knee ligaments after falling through a ceiling at work. He will be in plaster for six weeks.

Ray Duffy and Phil Dicker are both in line for places in a side which has a tough task before it.

"Their record speaks for itself," said Chamberlin. "In terms of games played they are the best in the Conference."

"All bar one of them are ex-pros and it's going to be tough. They are an uncompromising unit."

The match kicks off at 3pm at Earlsmead and if a replay is necessary it will take place at Weymouth on Tuesday.

Wealdstone's trophy opponents Banbury play in the Beazer Homes (Southern) League Midland Division — two leagues below Stones — and have had an

inconsistent season.

They are currently managerless with former coach Brian Robinson in caretaker charge of the team. But he is not looking to do the job permanently.

Banbury are in the lower half of the division but beat Grantham 1-0 last Saturday. They play at the Stadium and expect a crowd of around 500 for the tie, their usual gate being around 200.

Wealdstone hope that Paul Bowgett, Dennis Byatt and Robin Wainwright will

all have recovered from the flu and will be available. New signing Tony Lynch is also in the frame and Wealdstone's players will be out to impress new boss Tony Jennings.

The supporters' club will be running a coach to the game, departing at midday from the club car park. Further details are available from travel secretary Steve Field on 863 6941 or 683 9879 (evenings).

Any replay will take place at Earlsmead on Tuesday night, kick off 7.30pm.



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Soccer fixtures

Saturday December 19	Hellenic League Premier Division: Bishop's Cleeve v Rayners Lane.
FA Trophy Round One: Banbury United v Wealdstone; Harrow Borough v Weymouth (Earlsmead, 3pm).	Green King Spartan League Premier Division: Edgware Town v Crown and Manor (White Lion Ground, 3pm).
Vauxhall-Opel League Division One: Bracknell Town v Kingsbury Town; Wembley v Oxford City (Vale Farm, 3pm).	Middlesex League: Brook House v Harrow St Marys.

Christmas deadlines

BECAUSE of revised deadlines over the Christmas holiday period, reports must reach our offices by no later than first post next Monday to ensure publication in Observer Sport next week.

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