

SPORT

Merry Christmas to all our readers

'No confidence' as Lane slump again

Rayners Lane 2, Thame United 3

RAYNERS LANE slumped to their third successive Hellenic League Premier defeat on Saturday, beaten 3-2 by mid-table Thame United at Lucas Avenue.

The visitors sliced through the Lane defence at will to build up a commanding 3-0 lead and, even though Lane pulled two goals back they did not have the confidence to spark a true revival.

Thame went ahead in the 18th minute when a striker was left unmarked at the far post to bundle in a misdirected shot, following a quick break by the visitors.

Another quick break gave Thame their second goal two minutes from half-time and they went further ahead nine minutes after the restart with a

well-worked goal.

Lane pulled one back in the 60th minute, Tony Verni forcing the ball home after Phil Lynn's header, from Lee Bignell's corner, was cleared off the line.

Then, with 10 minutes left, a deep cross fell just right for Paul Abell and he stabbed the ball over the Thame keeper to give Lane hope.

But Lane failed to make the breakthrough, leaving a disappointed Don Durkin to reflect:

"We do not seem to have any confidence at the moment. We are not playing up to anything like our true potential. We seem to be scared of the opposition.

"We badly needed a win to get our confidence back again."

Line: Russell, Hanson, Lynn, Mills, Abell, Verni, Meany, Barton (Robson), Bignell, Matthews, Finlay.

Wares' deadly duo

Beaconsfield 0, Edgware 5

RON TULLY and Laurence Murphy led the rout as rampant Edgware proved too strong for Spartan League opponents Beaconsfield on Saturday.

A two goal blast in the first five minutes set Wares on their way and left manager Brian Rider purring about the deadly duo's contributions.

Beaconsfield's badly organised wall made it easy for John Walsh to fire Wares ahead from a free kick.

Tully got off the mark in the 5th minute when he chipped the keeper after a fine run down the right.

From a spectator point of view, the first half ended there, and it took a few choice words from Rider at half time to spur his team into action again.

Murphy, who is being tracked by Crystal Palace and an unnamed first division club, was the first to respond, beating three players and lobbing the home keeper for a marvellous goal.

Tully then fired home from 15 yards and the irresponsible Murphy scored an identical goal to his first as Beaconsfield gave up the ghost.

Edgware: Whelan, Smith, Mangan, Finney, Ede, Dennis, Charalambous, Walsh, Tully (Sub Milton), Hills, Murphy. Other sub: Appleby (not used).

Christmas fixtures

Friday December 28
 8:45 Westhall Conference: Wealdstone v Kettering Town (Lower Mead, 11:30 am)

Saturday December 27
 Vauxhall Opal League - Premier Division: Harrow Borough v Hayes (Earlsmead, 3) Division One: Stevenage Borough v Wembley, Tilbury v Kingsbury Town.



Dyson puts brave face on defeat

Grays 4, Kingsbury 0

KINGSBURY TOWN manager Terry Dyson put a brave face on defeat after his side's defensive problems had been cruelly exposed at Grays on Saturday.

The scoreline gives the impression of a one-sided encounter. But Town would have come away with at least a point if they had taken their chances and tightened up their marking.

"It was not as bad as it

looks," said Dyson. "Our problem is that we are a little bit naive at the moment. Players are rushing forward and are not marking as tight as they should be.

"This might sound funny but I was quite pleased with the way we played, particularly in the second half."

Paul Fitzgerald had already missed a chance for Kingsbury when Grays went ahead. And

the home side clung onto their lead courtesy of an amazing treble clearance off the line just before the break.

Cecil Collins, Bobby Hutchinson and Stuart Atkins all had efforts hacked away within the space of a few seconds.

These misses proved costly as Grays hit Town with three second half sucker punches. A deflected free kick, a soft head-

er and a mistake by keeper Steve Ardener gave the scoreline an unrealistic look — and left Dyson shaking his head in disbelief.

One bright note on a depressing day were the performances of former Hillingdon midfielder Derek Payne, signed last week by Dyson, and teenager Patrick Jackman.

Kingsbury Team: Ardener, Hill (Brown 15), Shields, Lewis, Fitzgerald, Collins, Jackman, Zacharia, Payne, Atkins, Hutchinson. (Other sub: Farlow (not used)).

STEVIE WONDER!



Super Tapley's Christmas cracker

Wealdstone 1, Maidstone United 1

DEFENDER Steve Tapley scored his first goal of the season to earn Wealdstone a deserved FA Trophy draw with high-flying Maidstone at Lower Mead on Saturday.

Tapley popped up with a cracker of a goal in the 19th minute — less than 60 seconds after the prolific Steve Butler had put the visitors ahead.

Stones were due to travel to London Road on Monday for a daunting first round replay against the Kent side.

But Maidstone, and their striker Steve Galloway, in particular, should be kicking themselves for not wrapping this disjointed affair up in the second half.

Galloway, who spent a month on loan at Lower Mead

earlier this season, fluffed a glorious second half chance before he was replaced by John Bartley late in the game.

Bartley then showed why Maidstone paid £8,000 to resign him from Welling by forcing Stones' keeper Bob Iles into action three times in the last three minutes.

To be fair, defeat would have been an injustice to Brian Hall's men. With Neil Cordice in the unaccustomed role of right back and Tapley deputising for the out-of-favour Paul Bowgett at centre half, they did just about enough to earn a second bite at the cherry.

The ever dangerous Butler had already warmed up with two wayward shots when he finally found the target in the 18th minute, sliding home George Torrance's low cross from the left at the far post.

Stones, however, wasted no time in replying. Brian Greenaway's free kick was blocked on

the edge of the box by the Maidstone wall and keeper Derek Richardson could only help Tapley's 20-yard shot into the net.

Richardson, who arrived only five minutes before kick-off because his car broke down, was never seriously tested after that.

McClure and Miller both blazed first half efforts wide, while Dennis Byatt was only inches off target with a fine 63rd minute shot.

At the other end, Stones were kept on their toes by Butler and the impressive Torrance.

It was Torrance who set up the 67th minute chance for Galloway that should have resulted in the visitors' second goal.

Galloway, however, mis-kicked badly after Torrance's delightful chip had split the Stones' defence wide open.

Wealdstone: Iles, Cordice, Tapley, Byatt, McClure, Greenaway (Greaves), Wainwright, Wallace, Doyle (Toogee), Miller, Donnellan.



GOAL: Steve Tapley celebrates his Trophy strike against Maidstone.



HEADS UP: Brian Greenaway gets his head to the ball despite a Maidstone challenge.



SPOT THE BALL: Wealdstone apply pressure to the visitor's goal.

Boro's blues as Daggers strike

Dagenham 2, Harrow Borough 0

HARROW BOROUGHS FA Trophy fate was decided in a 60-second spell at Dagenham.

The game turned on the hour when the Boro defence ignored manager Keith Chamberlin's pre-match warnings to their opening goal.

Then, straight from the re-start, Lawrence Holmes fluffed Boro's best chance of the game, ballooning the ball over when clean through.

"The whole game turned in those 60 seconds," said Chamberlin. "There were two chances — they took theirs, we missed ours and it was all over. Who knows what would have happened if we had scored."

Dagenham had the better of the early exchanges, with former Wealdstone player Lee Holmes hitting the crossbar with a header from a 20th minute corner and then forcing a fine save from Boro keeper Stuart MacKenzie.

Boro's best first-half chance came from a Robbie Johnson free kick. He curled the ball around the wall, only to see home keeper Williams pull off a fine save.

The second half was disrupted after just five minutes when the referee was accidentally elbowed in the face by a Dagenham player. He ended up in hospital, the players were taken off for a further 10 minutes, a linesman took control of the game and a spectator stepped

from the crowd to run the line. With play flowing from end to end, it was Dagenham who got the vital breakthrough, 25 minutes from the end. The Daggers won a free kick on the left, Goyette floated the ball in and Nicky Bissett headed home at the far post.

"That goal was particularly disappointing from my point of view," said Chamberlin. "We had a meeting before we went to Dagenham and one of the things we talked about was picking up Bissett at set pieces.

"We knew how dangerous he could be. Paul Morris was given the job of picking him up and he just did not do it."

He added: "It was always going to be a game in which whoever got

the first goal was going to be in control."

A minute after the Dagenham strike, Lawrence Holmes beat the home side's offside trap but, with only the 'keeper to beat, he sent the ball high over the bar — and with it Boro's hopes of forcing a replay.

Dagenham wrapped up their victory 15 minutes from the end when Lee Holmes latched on to the ball in a goalmouth scramble to fire into the top corner.

"Dagenham have won their last five games and are right in the middle of a great run," said Chamberlin. "It might well have been a different story if we had played them six weeks or so ago."

Boro: MacKenzie, Payne, Bennett, How, Johnson, Emmanuel, Oat, Morris, Adams, Ford, Holmes.

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