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FOOTBALL



Waddock lamented Wealdstone's poor finishing that saw him begin his reign as boss with defeat at home to Morecambe

We got punished, admits new Wealdstone boss

GARY Waddock says "we are all frustrated and disappointed" with the 3-2 home loss to Morecambe as the new Wealdstone boss began his reign as manager with defeat.

Waddock was appointed as manager last week following the dismissal of Sam Cox in late February, but a first-half equaliser from Christopher Popov and a pair of strikes either side of half-time from Jack Nolan condemned the former QPR and Millwall manager to a losing start.

"In the first half, I thought we played really well. We had a lot of possession, and we created a lot of chances. We needed to be more clinical and take those chances when they occurred," said Waddock.

By TOM NORTON

"If you don't, you get the result that we got tonight. We're all frustrated and disappointed, and we have to move on from tonight to Saturday's game. If we play like we did in the first half, more often than not, we'll get a result, but unfortunately we didn't tonight.

They (Morecambe) were more clinical. They're probably a bit more experienced as well. They're on a decent run and have a good manager in charge who's turned it around.

"But saying all of that, I was pleased with the first half. We con-

ceded some goals that we should have been able to deal with. If we go into the next game and play like that, create those chances and be more clinical, we'll pick up more points."

Waddock has only had a couple of training sessions to implement his ideas and philosophy on a team group that was well drilled in the attacking facets of the game under the previous regime, but the newly appointed Waddock wants his side to be harder to break down at the other end of the pitch.

Speaking to the club website after the defeat to Morecambe, the new Stones boss said, "When you come in mid-season, it's really difficult. The club has recruited for

that system and formation, and I work with the same one. I feel for the players tonight because they should have got something out of the game with the effort they put in."

"The way we played in the first half, I was pleased with. But, we've got to take those chances. If you don't, you get punished, and we got punished tonight. They're a good side, and we didn't take those opportunities when they arose."

Wealdstone travel to fellow National League strugglers Braintree Town (3pm kick-off) on Saturday looking to turn their dreadful run of form around and escape the threat of relegation for the third successive campaign.

England had 'clear-the-air meeting'

RUGBY



England have underperformed

BEN Earl insisted England have a "glint in their eye" following a clear-the-air meeting in which players put their hands up to underperforming against Scotland and Ireland.

Senior players gathered last Wednesday to pick apart the reasons for the successive emphatic losses which removed the team from Guinness Six Nations title contention with two rounds still to play.

Italy in Rome are the next assignment and Earl, who will win his 50th cap at the Stadio Olimpico on Saturday, believes England are ready to emerge from the ruins of another disappointing championship.

"These are the weeks where boys have a little glint in their eye. They mean business," the British and Irish Lions back row said.

"You look at some of the big guys in our squad and go 'something good is coming'. We're all hoping that is going to materialise on Saturday.

"It's come from within. If we're being honest, there's been some challenge from within the playing group. A few of us had a meeting last Wednesday and we've stripped it bare.

"There are people in the squad who don't feel like they've pulled their weight or performed well enough. Some people have come forward and said they need to be a lot better at this or have been a bit off on that.

"Once you get that out there, it's about how you move forward. There's no point sulking about it.

"Hopefully it's something we can look back on again when we play more big games over the next 18 months and we can say 'I won't forget those conversations'.

"I don't want to say it's a turning point and I don't want to downplay it. But it's another big moment on our journey."