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## FOOTBALL



Waldstone manager Gary Waddock and first-team coach Danny Payne. Image: Jon Taffel

# Waddock torn over form after stalemate

WEALDSTONE manager Gary Waddock believed his players "played extremely well" in the 1-1 draw with Scunthorpe United, despite conceding a last-gasp equaliser.

Declan Howe netted in the 89th minute to secure a point for the visitors at Grosvenor Vale to cancel out Jack Wells-Morrison's first senior goal, which looked like it had been enough for all three points for Waddock's team.

Stones' goalkeeper Dante Baptiste made several saves to deny the away side, and Waddock was torn in his assessment of the performance.

"I thought the players played extremely well. We created a number of chances against a team in the play-off area," Waddock told the club website.

"I just said to the players in there, 'We

Tom Norton

went up to Rochdale and went toe-to-toe with them, and we've done the same today'. I was really pleased with the performance but disappointed in the end because we've got to manage the game better and see the game out."

Dominic Hutchinson and Enzo Boldejiwn pulled out of the starting XI before kick-off due to injury as the Stones' fitness woes continued to pile up.

On the injuries sustained by the duo, Waddock revealed: "It's a common theme at the moment. We go out for a warm-up, and all of a sudden, someone gets injured. Dom will be okay. He will

probably train on Thursday.

"Enzo, we don't know. He's been playing with it (the injury) for some time. Today, he went out for the warm-up, and he just couldn't get himself going, so we'll have to gauge that. It's concerning, really. We're losing some good players, but hopefully it's not too bad."

The Stones head to Southend to end their National League campaign with little to play for, having cemented their status in the fifth tier for another season.

Waddock's side then travel to Wembley for the FA Trophy final against the same opposition.

"We want to go there and put in a good performance first and foremost. We want to go there and win," said Waddock on his side's first clash with

the Shrimpers. "It'll have no bearing on the game in the final.

"We don't know what Southend are going to do in terms of their approach. We're going to go there and put on a good, strong performance and see what we can get."

Waldstone have gone up against strong opposition in the National League of late but are winless in their last three heading into the final week.

Asked if his team would have enough momentum heading ahead of the double clash with Southend, Waddock added: "I'd like to think so because we have played some top sides recently and done really well. There's no reason why we can't go to Southend and put in another strong performance against a team in that area of the table (play-offs)."

## Robson smashes century

CRICKET

SAM Robson hit a determined 162, his first century of the season, as Middlesex drew with Northamptonshire on the final day of this Rothesay County Championship match at Wantage Road.

Robson batted for over six hours, showing great patience in waiting to put the bad ball away, with 21 boundaries around the wicket. He and Max Holden (86) had resumed with Middlesex on 109 for one and a slim lead of 41 as they looked to make the game safe.

Northamptonshire banked on an early burst from Ben Sanderson and Harry Conway to try to make early inroads. But as the Middlesex second wicket pair extended their overnight partnership to 165 in 47 overs, a draw became the most likely outcome.

Holden fell to leg spinner Calvin Harrison on the stroke of lunch, but Middlesex skipper Leus du Plooy countered in the afternoon with an aggressive 66 not out. He shared a stand of 152 with Robson, who passed his previous highest score of 126 not out against the Steelbacks.

Ultimately, with 63 overs lost to bad light on the first three days, there was not enough time for either side to force a result. The teams shook hands on the draw after tea after the light again caused the players to go off early with Middlesex 353 for three, leading by 285.

Earlier, Robson survived after offering a tough chance to short midwicket from the second ball of the day, running a single to bring up his half-century.

He played a silky cover drive off Conway to mark the century partnership with Holden, who reached his own 50 by pulling Sanderson behind square.

They saw off the initial burst from Sanderson and Conway and found it increasingly easy against an ageing ball, 102 runs scored in the morning session. Robson moved through the eighties as he leant into a glorious cover drive off Liam Guthrie and drove Harrison through the covers. Holden departed trying to pull one from Harrison which turned sharply and kept low.

Northamptonshire rotated their spinners after lunch, moving ahead of the over rate, Robson driving Nathan McSweeney through cover before running a single to bring up his century. Captain du Plooy showed positive intent, cutting and sweeping to take Middlesex past 250. He reached his second half century of the match by pulling a drag down from Harrison, before driving Saif Zaib through mid-off.