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## SOUTHEND United beat Wealdstone in FA Trophy



Match action from the final Image: Jon Taffel

# Southend hold nerve to win trophy on penalties

SOUTHEND United held their nerve to beat Wealdstone 4-2 on penalties in a tense FA Trophy final at Wembley yesterday.

After a close-fought 90 minutes ended without a goal, the Shrimpers triumphed on spot-kicks with Gus Scott-Morriss scoring the decisive strike after goalkeeper Collin Andeng Ndi had previously saved two of the Stones' penalties.

Before the penalty drama unfolded, Southend started on the front foot and came within a whisker of taking an early lead when Scott-Morriss teed up Harry Cardwell who sent a low angled shot against the inside of the left post.

Moments later, a deflected long range shot from Oli Coker was easily held by Wealdstone goalkeeper Dante-Astor

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Baptiste before James Golding sent a long range effort wide of the left upright.

Wealdstone replied with a their own spell of pressure during which a left wing corner from Dominic Hutchinson was awkwardly punched clear by Blues goalkeeper Andeng Ndi while under pressure.

But Southend hit back and soon had the ball in the back of the net following a left wing corner from Coker with Scott-Morriss appearing to get the final touch but only after a foul had been given on Baptiste.

A relieved Wealdstone hit back with

Micah Obiero curling a left footed shot wide of the left post before play switched to the other end of the field with Leon Parillon firing over from long range.

But the half ended with Wealdstone coming close to scoring as Anthony Georgiou saw a well struck left footed shot tipped over the crossbar in fine fashion by Andeng Ndi.

The Blues goalkeeper was called into action at the start of the second half as he got down low to his left hand side to smother a shot from Obiero.

Southend boss Kevin Maher quickly responded with a double change with Keenan Appiah-Forson replacing Coker in midfield and Joe Gubbins coming on for an injured Ben Goodlife at the back.

With chances remaining few and far between, Maher made another change

in the 72nd minute with Charley Kendall replacing Cardwell in attack.

Southend immediately took control on in the shoot-out.

Bridge scored Blues' first effort before Andeng Ndi saved Olufela Olomola's opening penalty for Wealdstone.

Joe Gubbins netted next for the Shrimpers before Jack Hinchy saw his effort saved.

The tie took another turn when Kendall was denied by Baptiste but Obiero, Harry Boyes and Connor McAvoy all netted to give Scott-Morriss the chance to win.

And the wing-back gleefully made the most of the opportunity as he sent his spot-kick into the centre of the goal to spark wild celebrations among players and fans.

## Saracens still chasing play-off spot

RUGBY



Bath's Josh Bayliss (second left) is tackled by Saracens' Rotimi Segun (left)

Image: PA

Saracens' director of rugby Mark McCall insists his side's ambitious hopes of reaching the Gallagher PREM Rugby end of season play-offs is firmly in their own hands.

The Original Club of North London's grand race with Exeter Chiefs to secure that final fourth spot and join already qualified Northampton Saints, defending PREM champions Bath and Leicester Tigers in the play-offs continued after posting a 30-14 success over Gloucester Rugby at Hendon's StoneX Stadium last Saturday.

In their fourth straight victory, the hosts went 18-0 up after 29 minutes through two tries from Enfield-born winger Rotimi Segun while Fergus Burke bootied a conversion and penalty.

Ben Earl touched in three minutes after the break then on 51 minutes Theo Dan got Sarries' fourth try in which substitute Owen Farrell converted.

Although the contest was already done and dusted, the visitors did score two late converted tries in the last seven minutes through Will Joseph.

After 16 matches done Saracens leapfrog Bristol (who lost 94-33 heavily at table-toppers Northampton Saints) into fifth spot with 52 points while Exeter Chiefs, after their surprise 41-41 defeat at Harlequins, remain fourth on 55 points.

Sarries' last two fixtures of the regular season see them play cross-London rivals Harlequins on May 30 and then travel to fellow-playoff chasers Exeter Chiefs a week later (June 6).

"Six weeks after Sale Sharks [where Saracens won 85-19] it's in our hands now," McCall continues. "We welcome Harlequins here who obviously they had a great result against Exeter that obviously helps us."