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Match action. Image: Jon Taffel

Wimbledon lose out in pre-season friendly fixture

WIMBLEDON fell to a narrow 1-0 defeat against Wealdstone in a pre-season fixture.

The start of the game under the evening sun left a lot to be desired, with neither side really creating any chances of note in the first 20 minutes.

James Tilley saw a free-kick from around 30 yards out strike the wall, and his follow-up effort deflected narrowly wide of the post.

Halfway through the first-half, Wealdstone broke forward and their Trialist B put the ball across to Dan Chesters who finished across the face of goal.

The game burst into life after the Stones took the lead, with Joe Newton putting in a cross-come-shot for the hosts, which nearly crept in past Trialist A in the Dons goal.

Wimbledon's Trialist C was brought down on the edge of the box just moments later, which allowed Tilley to step up again from about 20-yards out this time - though his effort was saved by Dante Baptiste.

FOOTBALL

By STAFF REPORTER

More Dons chances followed, with Alistair Smith seeing an effort on the half-hour mark go wide and Horan also headed just wide after getting on the end of a Kai Jennings free-kick.

With five minutes to go before half-time, Wealdstone struck the woodwork. Micah Obiero received the ball in the box and managed to hold it up and get a shot away which cannoned back off the post.

Going in a goal behind at the break, the Dons had work to do in the second-half to get back into the game.

After the restart, the hosts got off to a stronger start, with Jayden Harris being picked out inside the box. His effort on goal was saved well by Trialist A.

Ed Leach, who had come on as a second-half substitute, went on a surging run through

the middle and picked out Trialist C, though his effort was charged down.

It was end-to-end action early on in the second-half, Olufela Olomola had an effort charged down by Leach inside the box, while Junior Nkeng beat his man and fired an effort on goal that was parried away by Baptiste.

On the hour-mark, Wealdstone were awarded an indirect free-kick three-yards out from goal as Trialist A accidentally picked up a back pass. Despite the close chance, the effort was put over the bar by Harris.

Both sides made multiple changes as the half wore on and the game settled into a typical pre-season tempo with fitness being the main priority. Marcus Browne, who was amongst the changes, combined well with Leach, resulting in an effort that was narrowly wide.

That proved to be the last Dons chance of note, as the game petered out resulting in a 1-0 win to the Stones.



Matthew Cox Image: PA

Keeper Cox joins Barnet on a season-long loan

GOALKEEPER Matthew Cox has joined Barnet on a season-long loan from Brentford.

The 23-year-old joins the Bees in between the sticks for the 2026/27 campaign.

The shot-stopper's career began in Chelsea's academy at the age of eight and he spent six years with the Blues before being picked up by AFC Wimbledon, where he signed his first professional contract on his 17th birthday.

After four years with Wimbledon, Cox made the move to West London and joined Brentford's B team, before going on to be a substitute on ten occasions in the Premier League during the 21/22 campaign.

Cox's first loan saw him join Bristol Rovers for the 2023/24 season,

FOOTBALL

who were in League One at the time and he went on to make 34 appearances in all competitions.

More experience in League One saw the new Bees' goalkeeper join Crawley Town for the second-half of the 2024-25 campaign, with his most recent stint seeing him make 18 appearances for Shrewsbury Town in the latter stages of the 2025/6 campaign, including an appearance in the 0-0 draw when Barnet visited Croud Meadow in February.

Cox has also represented England at multiple age groups and played a part in the U19s Euros win in 2022 in Slovakia.

Sarries kick off season against Leicester Tigers

RUGBY

SARACENS will begin their Gallagher Prem campaign with a trip to Mattioli Woods Welford Road to face Leicester Tigers at 3pm on Sunday, September 27.

The first home fixture sees Sale Sharks head to StoneX Stadium on Sunday, October 4, with kick off at 3pm, giving supporters their first opportunity to see a new look Saracens side in North London.

The Men in Black remain at StoneX Stadium the following weekend, welcoming Bristol Bears on Saturday, October 10.

Saracens then travel South of the river for the much anticipated London Derby against Harlequins at The Stoop, before returning home to face Newcastle Red Bulls ahead of the Prem

Rugby Cup window during the Nations Championship.

Gallagher Prem action returns at the beginning of December as reigning champions Northampton Saints visit StoneX Stadium on Saturday, December 5.

As the festive period approaches, Saracens travel to Kingsholm to face Gloucester Rugby before making the trip to Sandy Park to take on Exeter Chiefs on Sunday, December 27.

Saracens begin the New Year by welcoming Bath Rugby to StoneX Stadium on Saturday, January 2, for a 3.05pm kick-off, before travelling to Kingston Park to face Newcastle Red Bulls.