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Danny Payne, right, says Dylan Kadji's red card gave Wealdstone 'a mountain to climb'. Image: Jon Taffel

Kadji's sending off gave us 'a mountain to climb', says Payne

FOOTBALL

By TOM NORTON

WEALDSTONE assistant manager Danny Payne described Dylan Kadji's red card as giving the team "a mountain to climb" after the ten-man Stones were beaten 2-1 at Barrow.

The Stones held off the Barrow onslaught for 35 minutes after Kadji was given his marching orders but eventually succumbed to Keaton Ward's 93rd-minute strike.

Asked to sum up the match overall, Payne said: "Exactly what we thought the game was going to be. It's a really tough place to come, and we knew it was going to be a real physical game. Not loads of football involved within us, and we knew to get a result here today, we had to stand up to that."

"It didn't disappoint. Everything we planned for, we knew was coming. It comes relentlessly here to be fair to them. They're good at it, and they are non-stop. They're aggressive in their manner, and it's really disappointing to not come away with something."

"The sending off gives us a bit of a mountain to climb with 35 minutes left. But when you get to the 94th minute and for us to con-

cede a goal in the manner we did, it's really disappointing."

"I feel for them," he added. "The lads who were in there for 35 minutes with ten men worked their socks off. They put their bodies on the line, which is everything we've been about. But we keep giving away late goals, and that isn't what's acceptable."

The Stones were reduced to ten men on 58 minutes as Dylan Kadji was shown a second yellow card for tugging down Thierry Latty-Fairweather.

Having had a man sent off for the third time this season, Payne was asked how much of a concern the lack of discipline is within the group.

"It doesn't help. He (Kadji) knows that, but he's got to learn from it, and he's got to learn quickly," he said. "I think that's the second or third sending off this year. We know that we are a team that plans to operate when

we've got everyone on the field, and when you come to places like Barrow, you need everyone."

"It makes it harder. It's a really tough place to come, and that gave us a bit of a mountain to climb."

Earlier in the week, Wealdstone defender Mason Barrett was confirmed to have sustained an injury to his anterior cruciate ligament during the 1-1 draw with Forest Green Rovers.

And during the celebrations for Ronan Maher's equaliser against Barrow, the Wealdstone players came together to show support for Barrett by presenting his shirt to the away fans.

"We're all gutted for Mason. He's worked so hard to get back from the last one. I saw it firsthand," said Payne.

"He was getting back to his best, and you could see how distraught he was the other night. He's got his results now (from the scan), and he's been really positive with the players and the staff. We made a conscious effort today to make it about Mason."

"It's a game that would have been great for Mason today."



Enfield Ignatians opened the season with a heavy loss

Image: Steve Corcoran

Ignatians handed harsh lesson as Harrow hit 96

RUGBY

A YOUNG Enfield Ignatians side, including six Senior Academy debutants, began their league campaign with a 96-19 defeat by Harrow at Wood Lane.

Harrow's power and experience exposed Ignatians, but the visitors showed enough to offer encouragement despite the heavy defeat.

Ignatians were at their best in an entertaining first half, with number eight Sam Rushmer earning Man of the Match after a standout display.

Rushmer scored one of Ignatians' two tries and fly-half Jack O'Toole added the other as the visitors attacked from the start.

Scrum-half Daniel Shaw converted both tries to keep Ignatians in touch during the opening period.

Ignatians created more chances

but lacked the composure to turn them into the extra tries needed for a bonus point.

Harrow punished every mistake with clinical finishing. The match stayed competitive at times, but Harrow's attack took over and left them 49-19 ahead at half-time.

Harrow crushed any hopes of a second-half revival by taking complete control after the break.

Ignatians rarely threatened Harrow's line as the hosts scored seven more tries in a one-sided second half.

Two yellow cards made matters worse for Ignatians, and Harrow exploited their numerical advantage to extend the lead.

Saracens fail to capitalise on two-man advantage at Sale

RUGBY

SARACENS director of rugby Brenden Venter gave full praise to Sale Sharks as he witnessed his side lose 21-17 in their opening home 2026-27 Gallagher PREM Rugby fixture at Hendon's StoneX Stadium last Sunday.

Sarries failed to capitalise fully on a two-man advantage that lasted for 27 minutes against a lock-tight Sharks defence despite Eroni Mawi's try before the half time break (5-7).

Former Sarries Alex Lozowski was shown yellow for his high tackle on Alfie Barbary while Jacques Vermeulen was handed a 20-minute red card for his illegal clearance offence on new-recruit Tomos Williams.

And despite Sione Vaenuku and Charlie Bracken scoring tries in

between, Sharks responded from their opening round 34-42 defeat to Bristol Bears and secured a rare victory in North London through second converted half tries from Tom O'Flaherty (41mins) and Ben Bamber (64mins).

This was The Original Club Of North London's first league defeat of the season.

Venter congratulated good friend, Shark's chief coach Alex Sanderson, who incidentally was Saracens' former player and assistant coach, telling TNT Sports: "I think losing to Al (Sanderson) makes it a little bit softer because he is a very good friend and they (Sale Sharks) were much better than us."