PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE

SATURDAY EVENING E-NEWSPAPER

Saturday 17 August 2024

FIVE-STAR SWANS



On another afternoon of drama, there are now just two teams left in the Premier South with 100% records after three games.

Basingstoke Town have made a solid start and they were 2-0 victors over Dorchester Town thanks to second half strikes from Liam Ferdinand and Nnamdi Nwachuku, whilst AFC Totton battled out another victory thanks to a goal on the quarter-hour mark from veteran Scott Rendell at local rivals, Poole Town. The Game of the Day was at Walton & Hersham who smashed Merthyr Town's winning start to the campaign by beating them 5-2 with Nana Owusu grabbing a

hat-trick amongst some stunning strikes.

Over in the Premier Central, Stamford are the only team left with a 100% record as they beat Stourbridge I-0 and in doing so took away The Glassboys' perfect start. This was a hard-fought encounter that was settled by a penalty from home skipper, Rob Morgan.

There were goals galore at AFC Telford United as their home clash with Hitchin Town swung one way then the other. In the end, the home side were able to get the points from a 5-4 thriller.

Meanwhile, new-boys Bedford Town enjoyed a 4-1 away win at Halesowen Town for their first victory back at this

The Emirates FA Cup meant that there was a limited number of games in Division One South and Central. In fact, there was only one game in the South as Bashley got into action for the first time and came from behind to beat Cinderford Town 2-1.

Meanwhile, Flackwell Heath sit pretty at the top of Division One Central thanks to their third League win in a row as they beat Hertford Town 3-1.

At the other end of the table, Barton Rovers got their first points on the board after winning away at a North Leigh outfit who remain pointless.

Congratulations to all of our Member Clubs who made progress in the Emirates FA Cup this weekend as Preliminary Round ties were played on Frday and Saturday.

REPORTS FROM ALL GAMES | STATS | FEATURES



Ever thought of volunteering to help your local football club?

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Please visit

Pitchinginvolunteers.co.uk

to find out more









PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER SOUTH

Basingstoke Town 2 Dorchester Town 0

After a goalless first half, it took five minutes into the second period for Liam Ferdinand to give the hosts the lead. The hosts went on to make the points safe late on with a second goal through Nnamdi Nwachuku.

Frome Town | Bracknell Town 2

There was nothing to choose between the teams in the first half before Dan Roberts opened the scoring for the visitors.

On the hour, James Ollis, as he did so often last term, was in the right place, at the right time to level matters.

With time running out, Roberts bagged his second to regain the lead for the away side as the hosts suffered their second home set-back of the week.

Gloucester City I Wimborne Town 0

These two teams were two divisions apart last season, and it was the hosts who went ahead late in the first half courtesy of Brandon Smalley.

There were no further additions to the score as the hosts saw out the three points.



Hanwell Town I Swindon Supermarine 0

Four minutes into stoppage time at the end of the opening period and Jordan Edwards lashed the ball home for the hosts with a superb strike to put them in front.

It was a goal worthy of winning any match and that was the case here.

Havant & Waterlooville I Plymouth Parkway I

The deadlock was broken early on here as James Watts-Barciela gave the visitors the lead. As the hosts got into their stride, they were frustrated by a resolute opposition defence who cleared one off the line as the interval approached.

Midway through the second period and Leon Maloney was able to draw the hosts level and that's how it stayed as the spoils were shared.

Hungerford Town I Taunton Town 0

After a goalless opening period, things soon came to life in the second half when Elis Watts, a regular on the scoresheet last term, put the home side ahead.

There was no further scoring as the home side were able to battle out a good three points.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER SOUTH

Poole Town 0 AFC Totton I

This fiercely-contested derby saw the evergreen Scott Rendell put the visitors in front on the quarter-hour mark.

The hosts were unlucky not to get back on level terms as the opening period went on but then in the second half, both sides tended to cancel each other out as it ended in a single-goal success for the visitors.

Sholing I Marlow 0

The deadlock was finally broken in the 43th minute when Jake Hesketh found a way through before guiding the ball home. It was harsh on the visitors who had looked the better of the two teams for long periods.

The second half ended with Louis Rogers sent off for the visitors who were unable to get back on terms despite their best efforts.

Tiverton Town 2 Chertsey Town 3

The home side came out of the blocks with purpose and were rewarded when Joe Parker was able to turn the ball home within the opening ten minutes.

The lead didn't last long, though, as Jack Mazzone was able to add to his tally for the visitors.

Things went from bad to worse for the home team when Josh Jones was red-carded just before the half-hour but they showed great character to regain the lead just before the break through that man Parker.

Ten minutes into the second period and Mazzone notched his second of the afternoon to make it 2-2 and then Gianluca Botti put the visitors ahead for the first time in the game with less than ten minutes to go and that's how is remained.

Walton & Hersham 5 Merthyr Town 2

This battle of two fancied sides saw the hosts lead early on through Mason Obeng. That was how it stayed until the opening exchanges of the second half when Nana Owusu tucked the ball into the bottom corner to double the advantage.

Minutes later and Owusu scored a superb goal to make it 3-0 and really knock the stuffing out of their previously unbeaten opponents.

After Ricardo Rees had pulled one back, shortly afterwards a fourth goal for the home side duly followed for Dawid Rogalski as he turned the ball home from close range.

Owusu completed his hat-trick to make it 5-I and then Kane Simpson pulled another back as our selected Game of the Day lived up to its billing.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER CENTRAL

AFC Sudbury I Royston Town I

A mistake in defence by the visitors allowed Joe Neal to open the scoring with nine minutes gone and that's how it stayed until first half stoppage time when Ben Weyman was able to take the teams into the interval on level terms.

There were chances at either end in the second half but neither team were able to take the initiative and it ended with honours even.

AFC Telford United 5 Hitchin T 4

This was always going to be a test of character for the hosts following a heavy home reverse on Tuesday and they responded well early on here as Alex Gudger put them in front on 7 minutes. A neat move led to Coree Wilson firing home the equaliser on the quarter-hour mark and then soon afterwards, the scoreline was turned on its head when a long ball was knocked on to Liam Brooks who made no mistake.

It was turning into a hum-dinger as big Sam Whittall came up from the back to put the hosts back on level terms to make it four goals in just 25 minutes.

The pendulum swung back in the hosts' favour when Dior Angus was brought down for a penalty, which he duly stepped up and converted in the opening exchanges of the second half, but Brooks fired home to level with just over 20 minutes to go. The home side were back in front when Ricardo Dinanga found the net at the second attempt and then Ellis Brown made it 5-3 with an effort than went in off the 'keeper.

This was not the end of the drama though, as Jack Dreyer pulled another back at the death as a breathless game ended 5-4.

Alvechurch 2 Biggleswade Town I

With two draws from each of their opening games so far, the visitors got themselves in front in this one when Ed Panter beat the 'keeper.

The home side came out with renewed vigour after the restart and soon Dan Sweeney had them back on level terms before he fired home an 88th minute winner.

Barwell I Lowestoft Town 2

The visitors took the lead here on 22 minutes through Louis McIntosh and then Jake Reed was on hand to double their advantage as the half-time break approached.

However, within a minute of that goal, Deen Master was able to reduce the arrears but his side were unable to get anything out of the game.

Bromsgrove Sporting 2 Spalding United 0

The home side went ahead ten minutes from the break when Charlie Wragg stayed cool before slotting the ball beyond the reach of the 'keeper.

Early in the second half, a penalty from Kieran Cook was able to double the lead for the hosts as the visitors saw Sam Warburton dismissed for a second yellow card as the clock ticked down to end what was a day that they will probably want to forget.

Halesowen Town I Bedford Town 4

The visitors made the perfect start when Leon Lobjoit, who scored some important goals in their promotion-winning season last term, found the net with just two minutes on the clock.

With the interval fast-approaching, Ryan Blake was able to double the visitors lead.

Adi Yussuf gave the hosts hope with an early goal in the second half, only for Lobjoit to pop up again with a third for his side and Blake rounded things off nicely with a late fourth to secure a convincing win.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER CENTRAL

Kettering Town | Stratford Town |

In what was a cagey opening period that ended goalless, it took just seconds for things to come to life after the restart when Wes York was on hand to open the scoring for the home side.

Owen James was able to bring the sides level on the hour and that's how it stayed in front of a crowd of approaching 1,000.

Leiston I Harborough Town I

It was first blood for the new-boys as Ben Stephens set them on their way with the opener but the hosts were able to restore parity early in the second half through George Quantrell.

The visitors' cause was not helped when Riley O'Sullivan was dismissed, leaving them with ten men for the final quarter-of-anhour, but they were able to hold on to their point.

Redditch United I Bishop's Stortford 0

The home side edged in front just past the quarter-hour mark when recent arrival, Reuben Wyatt, fired home.

Further chances came for the hosts before Ryan Charles was dismissed for the visiting team who went home pointless in a game that was delayed due to a medical emergence in the crowd.

St Ives Town 2 Banbury United I

After being the victims of a late goal last weekend, the home side benefitted this time around when last season's top scorer, Jonny Edwards put them in front with less than five minutes to go.

He then added a second just moments later before AJ George pulled a consolation goal back deep into stoppage time.

Stamford | Stourbridge 0

This battle of two sides with 100% records from the opening two games was closely-fought throughout the opening period with neither side able to make the breakthrough.

Five minutes into the second period and a penalty from home skipper, Rob Morgan, broke the deadlock and that proved to be the difference between these two well-organised teams.





PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE

Cinderford Town I Bashley 2 Division One South

For the visitors, this was their first League action of the season and they fell behind midway through the opening period when Blaine Waugh was on hand to fire home for the hosts.

The leveller came on 50 minutes as Connor Whiteley was able to fire home and boosted by the goal, Steve Walker put the visitors ahead to give them their first three points of the season.

Flackwell Heath 3 Hertford Town I Division One Central

The home side have started the season well and they began brightly here in the opening exchanges, which saw Matty Ayres, who we spoke to earlier this week on their opening day success, finding the net to open the scoring in the third minute. As the visitors hit back, they were rewarded when Tariq Bakkali levelled matters with 11 minutes on the clock with his first goal for the club.

With just over an hour gone, Michael Harding put the hosts back in front and Christian Johnson made another three points safe late on.

North Leigh 0 Barton Rovers 2 Division One Central

With both sides looking for their first points of the season, it was the visitors who took the initiative when last season's leading scorer, Taylor Rhiney, was able to turn the ball home.

The same man was on hand to double the advantage for the visitors as half-time approached to put them firmly in command and they saw out the second period to get their season up-and-running.

Real Bedford | Welwyn Garden City 2 Division One Central

Stalemate at the break, but the hosts were able to edge in front early in the second period through Isaac Galliford, only for Brad Wadkins to cancel it out with just under 20 minutes to go.

It wasn't long before Bailey Stevenson turned the scoreline on its head for the visitors as they ended strongly to claim a good three points.









EMIRATES FA CUP PRELIMINARY ROUND

Friday 16 Aug 24

Hinckley AFC 2 Malvern Town 5

Saturday 17 Aug 24

Barnstaple Town 4 Falmouth Town AFC I

Basildon United | Kings Langley 0

Bemerton Heath Harlequins I Laverstock & Ford 3

Bideford AFC I Wellington AFC I

Biggleswade FC 3 London Lions I

Biggleswade United | Enfield FC 2

Bishops Cleeve 4 Lydney Town 0

Cribbs 2 Roman Glass St George 0

Easington Sports 3 Bristol Manor Farm I

Exmouth Town A Brixham AFC A

Hartley Wintney 0 Larkhall Athletic 2

lyybridge Town 0 Tavistock AFC I

Kidlington 0 Yate Town 4

Leighton Town 2 Waltham Abbey 3

Leverstock Green | Heybridge Swifts |

Little Oakley I Berkhamsted 4

Mousehole 2 Willand Rovers 2

Newport Pagnell Town 0 AFC Dunstable 1

Royal Wootton Bassett 0 Didcot Town 2

Shaftesbury 0 Melksham Town 0

Stotfold | Takeley 0

Thatcham Town I Andover New Street 2

Ware 0 Brentwood Town I

Westbury United I AFC Portchester 0







SATURDAY EVENING FEATURE

TEENAGE DREAMS

The story of
Calogero Scannella's
rise to become one
of the co-owners of
Walton & Hersham is
a fascinating one.

Still in his early 20s, he and a group of friends took over the running of the Pitching In Southern League Premier South club whilst in their teens.

It's a journey that began when his dad took him along to a game at the age of five, but the club that he returned to during a break in his university studies some years later was very different.

Fighting relegation and playing to sub-50 crowds, the club was on its knees. Scannella knew he had to do something to help. He mobilised a group of school friends and put the idea of buying the club to them. It took some persuading but eventually seven of them were able to purchase the club for a nominal fee in the summer of 2019, taking on all of the liabilities in the process.

There may have been initial skepticism, but they have proved that they mean business and have lifted the fortunes of the club both on and off the field over the past five years, including two promotions and a place just outside the play-offs at the end of last term.

Some tough decisions have had to be made along the way; it's certainly not been all plain-sailing and it's taken plenty of hard work and determination, but Scannella is loving every minute of it.

"I've been having to pinch myself recently when I realised this is my sixth season in charge of Walton & Hersham," he admitted to us. "It only seems like yesterday that I was sitting at a table charging £2 entry for our first pre-season friendly against Hastings U18s, for which we had an attendance of I2.



PROGRESSION | Calogero Scannella is seeing things move forward

"The journey since 2019 has been unbelievable and has taken me through every possible emotion. What I can safely say is there's nothing I'd rather be doing in life.

"The biggest thing I've learned is that you have to constantly learn and adapt. I truly believe that there is something to pick up from every club you visit and as long as you can accept a different way of thinking, there are always things to improve.

WALTON & HERSHAM | CALOGERO SCANNELLA

"As for whether I am still enjoying it; absolutely! It might be mad of me to say but every year I seem to have more energy to grow this football club."

Finding themselves amongst the leading pack for much of last season, they ended up just three points shy of making the play-offs.

"I would asses last season as a huge s uccess," he continued. "We finished just outside of the play-offs in a new League and our crowds increased!

"Having been at the club through Step 6 to Step 3, naturally the step up to Step 3 has been the biggest. Some of the grounds we went to last season really showed the magnitude of football clubs we now compete against and we have to work harder than ever to compete on a footballing level whilst maintaining financial stability at the club.

"The Southern League is a tough league and everyone knows it. Last season only Hungerford Town came down from The National League South, but this season we have welcomed Taunton Town, Havant & Waterlooville and Gloucester City. "Solely from that I can expect this season to be even more competitive than last. I think last season showed this is a





SMILES BETTER | Some key summer signings leave the club hopeful of challenging amongst the leading pack once more

league in which anyone can hurt anyone on their day and we need to be ready for that.

"It's been a busy summer to put it lightly, with change quite literally everywhere you look. That brings many more challenges, but it also brings a lot of opportunity and excitement, so let's see what happens!" We ended by talking about the short and long-term vision that Scannella has for the club.

"As it stands, I barely have a plan for next week," he said with a smile. "I've just been forced to start using a Google calendar as I keep forgetting meetings!

"I think ultimately, we want to create something that our community and catchment area can be proud of. A place that can provide good entertainment for an affordable price.

"We can't wait to keep moving this club in the right direction." The club started the season with a 1-0 defeat in a feisty encounter at AFC Totton before securing their first win on Tuesday evening courtesy of a commanding 3-0 triumph over new-boys, Marlow.

They faced another big game this afternoon with the visit of early League leaders, Merthyr Town, who scored eight goals without reply from their opening two games.

COVERED | The club produces a printed Matchday Programme as part of the matchday experience

NEWS ROUND-UP

STOURBRIDGE | BROTHERHOOD

It was a result that made everyone sit up and take notice in the Pitching In Southern League Division One South as Stourbridge went to AFC Telford United on Tuesday evening and ended up taking three points back to the Black Country courtesy of a resounding 5-1 victory.

The Glassboys have seen plenty of changes this summer with a new management team and a whole host of new players arriving at the club, but it was one of the few players that remain from last season who set them on their way with Harvey Portman notching an early opener.

"The boys were absolutely unreal on Tuesday," Portman told us. "We said before the game that there was no reason why we couldn't go there and get the win. It was a great time to play them on the back of their opening day draw and we knew that we could hurt them.

"Even we didn't expect to win quite so convincingly! The first two games of the season have been class; the squad is very new and we're still learning about how each other plays, but it's been a case of so far, so good.

"I'm playing in a slightly different role to last season as then I was more of a centre half, but I've started the first two games of this season at left-back and I have to say that I am loving it there.

"It felt great to find the net on Tuesday. I don't score many so hopefully this can lead to me chipping in with a few more as the season goes on.

"The progress that we have made since our first pre-season game has been massive. There's still a lot for us to do, of course, but the Gaffer and his staff have really worked hard with us and we're buying into their vision.

"The Gaffer is very big on building a togetherness and brotherhood between the group. It's served him well in the past and we've been able to show signs of that in these opening games."

A trip to Stamford was on the agenda for the new-look Glassboys this afternoon.

THATCHAM TOWN | BOURNE IDENTITY

Thatcham Town pick up their first win of the season on Tuesday evening in the Pitching In Southern League Division One South as Oliver Bourne's early goal proved to be the difference against fellow new-boys, Shaftesbury.

"It's always a great feeling to get on the scoresheet, but it being the club's first home game and win in this League made it extra special for me," Bourne told us with a smile. "I was glad I could help give the fans the first win of the season.

"We had the better of the chances during the first half and could have gone in at the break three or four goals up, but our opponents started to see more of the ball after the break and we had to work hard.

"We proved to be very hard to break down and, in the end, we fully deserved our clean sheet and three points.

"The game was all about how we reacted to the defeat in our opening game; we know as a group the levels we have to reach and these last two games have proved that.

"The important thing now is to keep the momentum and hopefully add more wins. This is a tough League and we are learning more about it all of the time.

"There are a lot of new teams and players that we will be coming up against and I am excited to see what is in store for us.

"Personally, as a defender, my primary focus is on getting clean sheets and if we could get into double figures with this, I will be happy.

"As a group we have plenty of belief in ourselves and there is no reason why we can't be challenging for the play-off places."

Bourne is a product of the club's youth ranks. His progress saw him get his first chance in men's football during 2021/22 and from there he went on to establish himself in the first-team before dual registering with Reading City last term.

"The time with Reading City was really beneficial for me," he added. "I was able to play my part in helping them reach the play-offs and lift the Southern Combination Challenge Cup.

"It has stood me in good stead for the challenges ahead here this season and I am looking to play my part in a successful season for the club."

There's a break from Division One South today as they take on Andover New Street in the Emirates FA Cup.



INFLUENCER

We find out which players most influenced our Pitching In Southern League stars...

ROCKO TAMPLIN (THAME UNITED) > RONALDINHO / MODRIC

The player I have always looked up to is Ronaldinho because he plays with a smile on his face and was always so entertaining to watch. Another player would be Modric because his vision and technique is unreal. Both are outstanding footballers.

NEWS ROUND-UP

MALVERN TOWN | 20:20 VISION

Having bagged 20 goals in a newly-promoted side last season, Malvern Town front-man, Jack Watts, is looking to pick up where he left off during the campaign ahead.

Watts has been a regular on the scoresheet throughout his career and gave opposition defenders sleepless nights in the Pitching In Southern League Division One South throughout last term.

His form has continued into the new campaign as he bagged a brace on Tuesday evening in a commanding 5-1 victory over Didcot Town as The Hillsiders claimed their first victory of the season.

"20 League goals in a promoted side is something that I was particularly pleased with," he told us. "The fact that it finished me second in the goalscoring standings shows how strong this League was last season. "In terms of targets for the season ahead, I usually say 20+ goals as I feel that at Southern League level, that's a good season.

"It would be nice to better last season's total, but as long as Malvern Town are pushing at the right end of the table, that's all that matters and I will be happy.

"Division One South for me this season looks potentially the most open it could possibly be. Last time around, the two teams that got promoted were levels above the rest of the League and thoroughly deserved it, but for the season ahead, every team is capable of beating each other.

"We're all going to have to be on it every minute of every game, but I am relishing that particular challenge.

"The way we finished last season got me excited for what's ahead, particularly seeing the new signings that we have been able to bring in over the summer, alongside the core of the team which has stayed together.

"It's a massive credit to the club that all of

the lads want to stay together and help continue to take this great club forward." Watts was in action last night as Malvern Town travelled to Hinckley AFC in the Emirates FA Cup.





BIGGLESWADE TOWN | MARTIN ON A MISSION

Biggleswade Town manager, Jimmy Martin, may be going it alone this season in the sense that co-manager, Danny Payne, stepped down from his role following promotion into the Pitching In Southern League Premier Central at the end of last season, but the duo have remained in close contact over the summer as the Waders plot their assault on Step 3.

"I enjoyed working alongside Danny last season and what we achieved together can never be taken away from us," said Martin. "We still speak on the phone most days, so not much has changed in that respect!

"He's been really supportive and he'll still be around the football club as we face this new challenge in a new League.

"I wouldn't say that I know the new League we're going into inside out, but then that was the same about Step 4 and we went on to win it!

"There'll be new grounds to visit and new players to come up against, it's an exciting time but we're also under no illusions about how tough it's going to be.

"We've gone into the new season with completely different expectations than we had last season.

"Two draws from these opening games represents a solid start. We showed character to come from behind to take a point against an AFC Telford United side who many expect t be up there challenging, and then on Tuesday we recovered from conceding two quickfire goals to get a share of the spoils at AFC Sudbury.

"There are things to work on, of course, but there are also plenty of encouraging signs.

"The supporters will have a key role to play; we saw an increase in numbers towards the end of last season and this needs to continue. We have to keep growing the fanbase and showcasing what we are all about.

Martin takes his Waders' side to Alvechurch today.

FIXTURES | THE WEEK AHEAD

PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER SOUTH

Sunday 18 Aug 24 Winchester City v Gosport Borough

Saturday 24 Aug 24
AFC Totton v Hungerford Town
Bracknell Town v Tiverton Town
Chertsey Town v Frome Town
Dorchester Town v Gloucester City
Gosport Borough v Basingstoke Town
Marlow v Poole Town
Merthyr Town v Hanwell Town
Plymouth Parkway v Winchester City
Swindon Supermarine v Havant & Waterlooville
Taunton Town v Sholing
Wimborne Town v Walton & Hersham

PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER CENTRAL

Saturday 24 Aug 24
Banbury United v Leiston
Biggleswade Town v Barwell
Bishop's Stortford v Stamford
Halesowen Town v St Ives Town
Harborough Town v Bedford Town
Hitchin Town v Kettering Town
Lowestoft Town v Bromsgrove Sporting
Royston Town v Alvechurch
Spalding United v AFC Telford United
Stourbridge v AFC Sudbury
Stratford Town v Redditch United

PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE SOUTH

This midweek is when any Emirates FA Cup Preliminary Round replays are played.

Saturday 24 Aug 24
Bashley v Yate Town
Bishops Cleeve v Bemerton Heath Harlequins
Bristol Manor Farm v Bideford AFC
Falmouth Town AFC v Willand Rovers
Melksham Town v Exmouth Town
Mousehole v Malvern Town
Shaftesbury v Evesham United
Tavistock AFC v Larkhall Athletic

PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE CENTRAL

This midweek is when any Emirates FA Cup Preliminary Round replays are played

Saturday 24 Aug 24
Berkhamsted v Welwyn Garden City
Enfield FC v Thame United
Flackwell Heath v Leighton Town
Leverstock Green v Beaconsfield Town
Northwood v Aylesbury United
Real Bedford v North Leigh
Ware v Barton Rover

Fixtures are subject to change. Compiled in association with Atos.



There is plenty of great action coming up throughout the Pitching In Southern League. Please show your support wherever possible and if you are interested in getting more involved and finding out about volunteer opportunities, check out the Pitching In Volunteer Hub via: southern-football-league.co.uk/Pitching-In-Volunteer-Hub

We hope that you enjoyed this edition as we look to showcase all that is good within the Pitching In Southern League. Feedback is always welcome, please email: news@southern-football-league.co.uk

Enjoy the rest of your weekend...

Andy Poole (Editor)



THE BACK PAGE















