

# PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE



## SATURDAY EVENING E-NEWSPAPER

Saturday 11 January 2025

# BUCKS FIZZ

The freezing weather and fog put pay to a large number of games across our four divisions.

In the Pitching In Southern League Premier South, there were five games that survived and amongst them, leaders, Merthyr Town, drew a rare black as they were held to a goalless draw by a hard-working Dorchester Town outfit.

There were goals aplenty at Plymouth Parkway where the hosts lost a topsy-turvy encounter 3-2 to Swindon Supermarine. Meanwhile Basingstoke Town took the bragging rights in their derby against Winchester City. Over in the Pitching In Southern League Premier Central, only two games took place with Bedford Town's encounter with AFC Telford United providing plenty of entertainment as the visitors won it 3-2 with two late Matty Stenson goals (pictured).

The other game saw Harborough Town battle out another three points thanks to a 1-0 victory over Hitchin Town. Fog put pay to Barwell's home game against Bromsgrove Sporting as the kick-off time was originally put back and then the game was postponed with visibility poor.



Four games went ahead in the Pitching In Southern League Division One South with Bishops Cleeve and Bristol Manor Farm playing out a humdinger that went one way then the other before finishing 3-3 as the visitors grabbed a stoppage time leveller.

High-flying Exmouth Town left it late to win their Devon derby against Tavistock AFC as a last minute penalty proved to be the difference to leave them in second place. Meanwhile Mousehole are up to third as they beat Thatcham Town 2-0 in muddy conditions. Whilst Malvern Town were triumphant 3-2 against Bemerton Heath Harlequins in the fog at the foot of the Malvern Hills. Only two games survived in the Pitching In Southern League Division One Central and they both ended in 3-1 away wins.

Real Bedford kept up their challenge at the top as they came from behind to beat Ware, whilst Leighton Town came home from Beaconsfield Town triumphant to lift them above their hosts and just outside of the top ten.

REPORTS FROM ALL GAMES | STATS | FEATURES



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# PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER SOUTH

## **Basingstoke Town 2 Winchester City 0**

Just past the half-hour mark, Nnamdi Nwachuku put the home team in front with a deft header.

A goal from Liam Ferdinand on 81 minutes put the hosts in command here as they earned the bragging rights from this local derby.

## **Gosport Borough 1 Taunton Town 1**

There were just three minutes on the clock when Jack Rice-Lethaby found the net to give the visitors the lead.

As we entered the final 15 minutes, Joe Morrison levelled up the scores for the home side and that's how it finished in what was an entertaining encounter.

## **Merthyr Town 0 Dorchester Town 0**

The free-scoring hosts were left frustrated following a determined and resolute display from the visitors. There was just no way through as the away team worked hard to earn the point from this goalless stalemate.

## **Plymouth Parkway 2 Swindon Supermarine 3**

The home side went ahead midway through the opening period through Callum Hall but the equaliser arrived four minutes into the second half through Michael Elias-Fernandes.

It was rather appropriate in these conditions that Taylor Scarff was to get his name on the scoresheet as he put the hosts back in front ten minutes into the second half.

The scores were level again on the hour mark as Elias-Fernandes grabbed his second of the afternoon before Harry Williams put the away team ahead in the 72nd minute and it proved to be the winning goal in what was a topsy-turvy encounter.

## **Wimborne Town 3 Marlow 1**

The 13th minute was unlucky for the home side as they fell behind to a goal from Naheer Nawaf for the visitors.

In stoppage time at the end of the first half, Josh Carchmichael put the home side back on level terms.

The hosts went in front courtesy of Matt Burrows with just over ten minutes to go before Sam Jackson rounded things off with a late third goal to give his side all three points.





## PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER CENTRAL

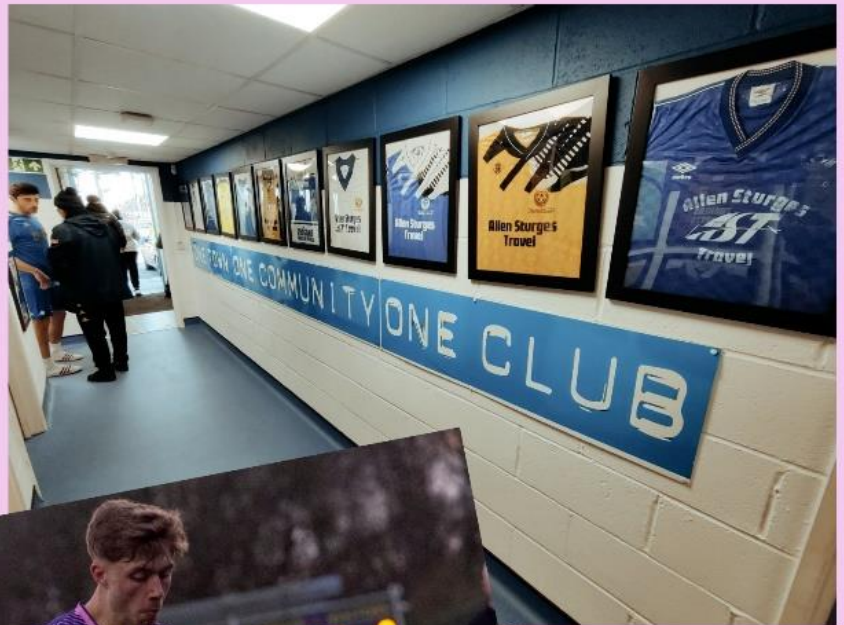
### **Bedford Town 2 AFC Telford United 3**

There were 17 minutes on the clock when Ryan Blake opened the scoring by putting the home side ahead.

The visitors came out for the second period with real purpose and they got their reward with a leveller from Ricardo Dinanga.

However, the home side regained the lead with just over 20 minutes to go through Leon Lobjoit.

Parity was restored through Matty Stenson in the final quarter-of-an-hour and then he won it late on with his second goal of the afternoon to give his side the victory in a dramatic encounter.



### **Harborough Town 1 Hitchin Town 0**

The opening goal arrived just before the half-hour mark and it went to the hosts as Ben Starkie found the net.

It was to prove to be the only goal of this contest as the home side saw out another hard-earned but deserved victory.



## PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE CENTRAL

### **Beaconsfield Town 1 Leighton Town 3**

After a goalless first half, the second period was only three minutes old when Luke Pyman put the away team in front.

Buoyed by the goal, Lynton Goss then doubled the advantage a couple of minutes later and the same player added a third goal in the final quarter-of-an-hour.

The hosts got a consolation goal in stoppage time through Akiel Raffie.

### **Ware 1 Real Bedford 3**

It was the home side who went ahead as Stefanos Georgiou found the net with ten minutes on the clock.

The visitors were able to restore parity early on in the second half with a goal from Joey Evans and then forged ahead through Tyriq Ward with just over 20 minutes to go.

With the visitors in full flow, Ben Stevens netted a third goal and that wrapped things up on a decidedly chilly afternoon.





# PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE SOUTH

## **Bishops Cleeve 3 Bristol Manor Farm 3**

It was first blood to the hosts when Ross Langworthy gave them an early lead but it was cancelled out midway through the opening period by Daniel Dodimead.

The scoreline was turned on its head in first half stoppage time when Evander Grubb put the visitors ahead.

Within a couple of minutes of the restart, Langworthy levelled things up to make it 2-2 and then Josh Nelmes put the hosts back in front with just under 20 minutes left on the clock.

Right at the death, Harry Lucas scored a dramatic equaliser for the visitors as honours ended even.

## **Exmouth Town 1 Tavistock AFC 0**

We had to wait until the final minute for the opening goal in this closely-fought Devon derby as Tor Swann gracefully found the net for the home side with a coolly-taken penalty kick.

It gave the hosts a hard-earned three points whilst the visitors were left to lick their wounds.



## **Malvern Town 3 Bemerton Heath Harlequins 2**

The deadlock was finally broken here in the fog in the opening exchanges of the second half when Dion Molyneux powerfully headed home from a corner.

It didn't take the visitors long to get back on level terms through Olly Balmer, but they succumbed to another headed goal, this time from Charlie Johnson, as the clock ticked down.

There was a late red card for Brandon Mundy for the visitors as he picked up a second booking and their afternoon got even worse when Sam Clark made it 3-1 to the home side in stoppage time at the end.

With virtually the last kick, Jim Ward further reduced the arrears for the away team but it proved to be too little, too late.

## **Mousehole 2 Thatcham Town 0**

The hosts caught their opponents cold early on when they took the lead through Oscar Massey and then towards the end of the half, Tallan Mitchell was able to double the advantage.

This was to prove to be the end of the scoring as the home side saw it out in extremely muddy and tough conditions.





# NEWS ROUND-UP

## TIVERTON TOWN | DEVELOPMENT PLANS

As we step into the New Year, there are some exciting community-focussed plans at Tiverton Town.

The plans centre around a FIFA-approved all-weather playing surface at the Pitching In Southern League Premier South club that will be ready for next season.

As well as the introduction of a 3G synthetic grass pitch that replicates the feel and playing characteristics of natural turf, the club plans major improvements to the ground's infrastructure.

"Our aim is to transform the ground so that it becomes a facility and a hub, not only for Tiverton Town, but for the town of Tiverton," said Vice-Chairman, Matthew Conridge. "Initially, in addition to the pitch installation, we will be focusing our energies on four key upgrades; the creation of new changing-rooms behind the main stand; the redevelopment of the existing changing-rooms; LED floodlights; and solar panel installation."

The change to the playing surface will enable the Devon outfit to share use of it with local clubs and youth organisations, as well it being used to train and play by the club's own teams.

"We are looking at a high-quality FIFA Pro pitch that will allow us to progress up the leagues," continued Conridge. "We could have gone for a slightly lower quality pitch, which would have been cheaper but would have prevented us from going up any further in the league.

"It is a higher quality pitch than the normal pitches and it will be one of the best pitches in the South West of the country."

The club now hopes to bring together interested parties from across the locale, including politicians, the business community and youth organisations, to unite as a team-of-all-talents and bring the plans to fruition.

A meeting of all interested parties have been set for next month as the project starts to take shape.



## LOWESTOFT TOWN | RANGEL DELIGHT

There was quite a see-saw battle last Saturday in the Pitching In Southern League Premier Central as Lowestoft Town recovered from going two goals down in the opening 20 minutes at Redditch United.

Having got themselves back on level terms in first half stoppage time, the Trawlerboys then fell behind again in the opening exchanges of the second period, only to level things up once more and then go on and get the winner five minutes from time. Finding the net for the second game in succession was Portuguese ace, João Soares Rangel, who put in a Man of the Match display for his side as they reached the 30-point mark after 22 League games.

"It was a real battle out there," the former Portugal U15 international told us. "Credit to our hosts for making it so tough for us, but I am proud of the way in which we responded as a team.

"Going two goals down so early on was challenging but we stuck to our game plan, remained patient and took our chances when they came.

"I was pleased with my performance and it's always a great feeling to get on the scoresheet with my goal bringing it back to 3-3 soon after they had regained the lead.

"That goal gave us a big boost and helped to turn things in our favour. It was a collective effort that saw us go on to get ourselves in front for the first time with five minutes to go and that resilience and determination helped us hold on to our lead and fight to the end to bring home the points.

"The season up to this point has been a bit of a roller-coaster, but we've showed a lot of promise recently and the hard work that we are putting in is starting to pay off. It's all about consistency, of course, and we have to continue to push ourselves to grow and achieve our objectives.

"This is such a competitive League where you are up against strong opponents and talented players every week. Because of the strength, it makes it even more rewarding when you get the results, especially in the manner that we did at the weekend. It really pushes us on to constantly improve and adapt to our surroundings.

"I want to keep building on my experience and contributing to the team. I am always looking to develop my game for the benefit of the team and our goal is to finish as high as possible and build a strong foundation for future success.

"We are a work in progress, but at the heart of it we want to be competitive in every game and give our fans something to really be proud of."

Rangel was part of the Norwich City youth set-up from U9s to U16s, he then signed a two-year scholarship at Barnsley but there was no professional deal at the end of it and he eventually moved to Portugal with Académica de Coimbra, where he played for a year.

He then spent a season with Nogueirense before coming back to England, initially with Gainsborough Trinity, a move which gave him an introduction to the rough-and-tumble of Step 3 football, as did a loan switch to Pontefract, where he started to make his mark.

A move to King's Lynn Town didn't work out as planned and so he headed to Wroxham where his confidence returned and it led to a move to Lowestoft Town as they look to get to grips with life back in the Premier Central.

"It's been quite a journey for me," he added. "There have been plenty of ups and downs along the way and I have learned so much.

"I am enjoying my football right now and I am really excited by what lies ahead for me and this team."

## INFLUENCER

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

### JIMMY GINNELLY (BARWELL) > DIEGO MARADONA

The player that most influenced me during my own playing days was Diego Maradona, such a class-act.



## BERKHAMSTED | DEVANE INTERVENTION

Chris Devane is a happy man. His Berkhamsted side are sitting pretty at the top of the Pitching In Southern League Division One Central table with 17 wins from their 21 games, alongside successive PST Sport Club of the Month awards and with works ongoing to improve their Glencar Community Stadium home, there is plenty to look forward to.

"I think the group have done brilliantly," he told us. "It's not an easy assignment to try and re-group after a relegation and the lads have been great. "We had a sloppy start to October where we lost three in a row, but since then we have been in tremendous form, losing only one out of our last 14 to go into the New Year full of belief.

"This is actually the toughest I have known Division One Central. It's a lot more competitive than when we were last in the division. Real Bedford are a brilliantly coached team and they set the standard in my opinion.

"In terms of my own management style, on the pitch it's front-footed, attacking football. Sometimes it is our downfall but we go after everyone we play, with press and high energy. Off the pitch I like to create an environment where, first and foremost, people enjoy being there and things are done professionally in terms of preparation and training.

"If you have a group of players who want to play for you and the club, it's a formula that usually works.

"Of course, being in the position we are it is hard not to look forward, but we have been in this position before and know there are going to be plenty of ups and downs for us to deal with in the weeks and months ahead, so it's one game at a time.

"Since we first reported back for pre-season training during the summer, the aim has been to finish in the top five and earn promotion through the play-offs. That hasn't changed; we've put ourselves into a fantastic position but there is a lot of hard work to be done to get to where we want to be."

The club were due to host Hadley today before heading to Real Bedford on Tuesday evening.



## WALTON & HERSHAM | FINDING FORM

There was high drama at the Elmburgh Xcel Sports Hub last Saturday and Dawid Rogalski was at the heart of it all.

We selected Walton & Hershham's home clash with AFC Totton as our Game of the Day in the Pitching In Southern League Premier South and it certainly lived up to its billing.

The visitors got their noses in front early in the second half through Tony Lee, but his strike was cancelled out by new arrival, Ralph Vigrass just past the hour-mark and with the scores finely balanced going into the closing stages, that's when the drama really started.

Rogalski put the hosts ahead for the first time with barely five minutes to go but the visitors, with just one defeat from their previous 20 games, found a way back into the game two minutes into stoppage time at the end courtesy of the evergreen Scott Rendell.

You would be forgiven for thinking that would have knocked the stuffing out of the Swans, who themselves sit on the fringes of the play-off places, but not so as Rogalski popped up with the winner in the 96th minute.

It means that between them, the top two, Merthyr Town and AFC Totton, have lost only four League games all season and Walton & Hershham have been responsible for half of their defeats having beaten the Welsh outfit 5-2 at home back in August.

"To get that winning goal in front of our fans was such a special feeling for me,"

Rogalski told us. "AFC Totton are second in the table for a reason; they are a physical and defensively-solid side who concede very few goals, so to come back and beat them in the way we did was crucial for us.

"It was a good game between two committed teams and the atmosphere was absolutely fantastic. We played really well as a team and deserved the victory in the end.

"We're starting to turn things around with our recent form. We've won three of our last four games now and the defeat at Merthyr Town was unlucky as a key red card decision went against us very early on.

"As a team it's fair to say that we've had our ups and downs this season. We started well then hit a bit of a challenging spell, but with the quality that we have and the way we play, I am confident that we can make a big push in the second half of the season and keep building on the momentum.

"From a personal point of view, I would have liked to have had more goals to my name by this stage, but at the same time I am pleased with the number of assists that I have contributed.

"The League is so competitive and consistency is absolutely key if you are to achieve anything. It's a physical and direct competition. Merthyr, who have a similar style to us, are deserving of their place at the top but there is plenty of quality amongst those teams battling it out just below them.

"We are aiming for a place in the play-off places and if we can get in there, then there's no reason why we can't go all of the way. Personally the dream would be to get at least 30 goals and help us win the play-offs."





# FIXTURES | THE WEEK AHEAD

## Pitching In Southern League Premier South

### TUESDAY 14 JAN 25

Chertsey Town v Poole Town  
Marlow v Tiverton Town  
Merthyr Town v AFC Totton  
Plymouth Parkway v Bracknell Town  
Taunton Town v Gosport Borough

### SATURDAY 18 JAN 25

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

## Pitching In Southern League Premier Central

### TUESDAY 14 JAN 25

Bishop's Stortford v Bromsgrove Sporting  
Halesowen Town v Stamford  
Harborough Town v AFC Sudbury  
Hitchin Town v Redditch United  
Lowestoft Town v Alvechurch  
Royston Town v AFC Telford United  
Spalding United v Stourbridge  
Stratford Town v St Ives Town

### SATURDAY 18 JAN 25

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

We are extremely proud of the Southern League Goals of the Week Show that David Square and his team work so hard to produce on our behalf each week of the season and we urge clubs to please send your goals footage for use in the show each week.

The email address to send your footage to, by 7pm each Tuesday evening, is:

[thesouthernfootballleague@gmail.com](mailto:thesouthernfootballleague@gmail.com)

The show can be viewed via our Official You Tube Channel from 7pm every Wednesday evening.

## Pitching In Southern League Division One South

### TUESDAY 14 JAN 25

Bashley v Bishops Cleeve  
Thatcham Town v Bideford AFC

### WEDNESDAY 15 JAN 25

Exmouth Town v Cinderford Town

### SATURDAY 18 JAN 25

Bashley v Shaftesbury  
Bemerton Heath Harlequins v Evesham United  
Bideford AFC v Helston Athletic  
Bristol Manor Farm v Cinderford Town  
Cribbs v Didcot Town  
Larkhall Athletic v Yate Town  
Melksham Town v Malvern Town  
Tavistock AFC v Bishops Cleeve  
Thatcham Town v Falmouth Town AFC  
Westbury United v Mousehole  
Willand Rovers v Exmouth Town

## Pitching In Southern League Division One Central

### MONDAY 13 JAN 25

Biggleswade FC v Leighton Town

### TUESDAY 14 JAN 25

AFC Dunstable v Barton Rovers  
Flackwell Heath v Northwood  
Leverstock Green v Hertford Town  
North Leigh v Stotfold  
Real Bedford v Berkhamsted

### SATURDAY 18 JAN 25

Biggleswade FC v Kidlington  
Flackwell Heath v Enfield  
Hadley v Ware  
Hertford Town v Aylesbury United  
Kings Langley v North Leigh  
Leighton Town v Barton Rovers  
Northwood v Berkhamsted  
Real Bedford v Leverstock Green  
Stotfold v Beaconsfield Town  
Welwyn Garden City v Thame United

*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](http://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](mailto:news@southern-football-league.co.uk)  
Enjoy the rest of your weekend...

Andy Poole (Editor)





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