

PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE



SATURDAY EVENING E-NEWSPAPER

Saturday 12 October 2024

NEW LEADERS



There are new leaders of the Pitching In Southern League Premier South and Central.

Gloucester City took pole position in the Premier South courtesy of a dramatic late winner from Joe Hanks as they came from behind to beat Havant & Waterlooville. It was a similar story in the Premier Central where Bedford Town hit top spot after they came from two goals behind to win at Stamford AFC as Leon Lobjoit grabbed a hat-trick.

Elsewhere, Michael Elias-Fernandes hit a first half hat-trick for Swindon Supermarine in their 4-0 triumph over Tiverton Town, whilst Charlie Austin got his name on the scoresheet as AFC Totton beat Hanwell Town 2-0. Stratford Town are up to second place in the Premier Central following a 2-0 away win at Biggleswade Town. There were also away day successes for AFC Sudbury, who recovered from going behind early on to beat Redditch United, and Barwell who battled out a 1-0 triumph at St. Ives Town.

There were plenty of goals in the Pitching In Southern League Division One South and Central with plenty of drama also thrown in for good measure.

Our Game of the Day in Division One South certainly lived up to its billing as Bristol Manor Farm and Helston Athletic played out an incredible 5-5 draw. It means that the Cornish club remain unbeaten.

Another unbeaten team is Melksham Town who secured a good 4-2 away win at Mousehole, whilst there were five goals at Bashley – all in the first half – as visitors Evesham United went home with a 3-2 victory to move them into third place.

In Division One Central, leaders, Hadley, lost their unbeaten record with a 4-1 home reverse at the hands of Leighton Town. There were nine goals at Real Bedford as the home team beat Thame United 7-2.

Meanwhile Hertford Town chalked up a 5-3 win at Berkhamsted, Welwyn Garden City won 4-2 at Kidlington and Leverstock Green were 4-0 victors over AFC Dunstable.

In the Emirates FA Cup, Biggleswade FC did themselves proud but ultimately lost 3-1 to York City, Kettering Town won at higher-level Farsley Celtic and Harborough Town are in the first round proper for the first time having beaten Bury.

REPORTS FROM ALL GAMES | STATS | FEATURES



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PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER SOUTH

AFC Totton 2 Hanwell Town 0

Just before the half-hour mark, Charlie Austin was able to give the home side the lead and then in the 60th minute, Ashley Clarke got his name on the scoresheet with a second goal to confirm a deserved win for the hosts.

Frome Town 1 Basingstoke Town 1

After a goalless opening period, it was the visitors who got their noses in front eight minutes into the second half thanks to a goal from Liam Ferdinand. The home team were able to level matters with just under 20 minutes to go when Alex Monks was able to beat the 'keeper and it was to end with honours even.



Marlow 2 Dorchester Town 2

The visitors broke the deadlock with 19 minutes on the clock when Shaquille Gwengwe was able to turn the ball home. The home side were able to draw level as half-time loomed when Charlie Samuel beat the 'keeper. With ten minutes of the second half gone, Corby Moore put the away team back in front, but the day turned sour for Gwengwe when he was sent off with just over an hour played. The hosts took advantage when Naheer Nawaf levelled the scores on 72 minutes and it finished with the spoils shared.

Sholing 0 Poole Town 0

Despite there being no goals, this was an entertaining clash between two teams who were thwarted as defences were very much on top in this one. A draw was probably a fair result in the end.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER SOUTH

Swindon Supermarine 4 Tiverton Town 0

A goal on the half-hour from Michael Elias-Fernandes put the hosts in front here. It was the same player who made it 2-0 just five minutes later to put the home side in command.

A penalty just before the break allowed Elias-Fernandes to complete his hat-trick and further extend the hosts' lead. The second half saw young loanee, Anton Dworzak, add a fourth goal to complete a commanding and deserved win for his side.

Winchester City 2 Hungerford Town 2

The visitors went ahead through Baboucarr Jarra in the 13th minute before Elis Watts doubled the advantage ten minutes from the interval.

The home side were handed a lifeline when Kieran Douglas pulled a goal back right on half-time and then Luke Cairney levelled from the penalty spot just past the hour and that is how the scoreline remained.

Gloucester City 2 Havant & Waterlooville 1

It was an own goal that set the visitors on their way when the ball found its way into the net off the unfortunate Tyrone Duffus with 20 minutes gone. Just three minutes into the second half and Joe Hanks had the two teams level at 1-1 and then he went on to notch a dramatic late winner.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER CENTRAL

Banbury United 0 Bromsgrove Sporting 0

There was nothing to separate the two teams here as it ended in a goalless draw. The visitors looked solid and well-organised to frustrate the hosts in what was generally a game of few genuine scoring opportunities at either end.

Biggleswade Town 0 Stratford Town 2

There was very little to separate the two teams during the first half, but the second period was only four minutes old when Chris Hussey converted from the spot to put the visitors ahead. Dan Lafferty sealed the points with a late goal to double The Bards' lead and complete a good away display for them.

Hitchin Town 2 Spalding United 1

It was the home side who edged in front with a strike from Daniel Stokoe on 15 minutes, but the lead was cancelled out with ten minutes to go until the break by Bartosz Cybulski.

Coree Wilson was able to put the hosts back in front before half-time and they managed to hold on to their lead to claim the three points.

Redditch United 1 AFC Sudbury 2

Defender Max Ram came up from the back to give the home side an early lead as he forced home a free-kick to the far post.

The opener was cancelled out on ten minutes when Josh Allen levelled matters and then Charlie Lewis popped up late in the first half to put the visitors ahead and that is how the scoreline was to remain.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER CENTRAL

St Ives Town 0 Barwell 1

The visitors went ahead in the 73rd minute through Ethan Hill and despite their best efforts, the home side were unable to get anything out of the game, including having a late goal ruled out for offside.

To their credit, the visitors worked hard and looked like a solid unit.

Stamford 2 Bedford Town 3

The home side got the breakthrough that they deserved when James Blunden headed home the opener and it wasn't long until he repeated the feat with another header to double the lead.

The second period started with the visitors asking questions as Leon Lobjoit got them back in it with a goal on 50 minutes and then he levelled just moments later.

There was late drama in stoppage time when that man, Lobjoit, completed his hat-trick with the winning goal.

Stourbridge 1 Royston Town 0

The home side had to be patient here as the breakthrough finally came with eight minutes to go when Jourdain Masidi found the net and it proved to be the winning goal.

This was a hard-fought battle which in the end, the hosts deserved to win.



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PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE SOUTH

Bashley 2 Evesham United 3

The home side wasted little time in getting ahead in this one as Luke Delaney lashed home within the opening two minutes. Parity was restored before ten minutes had been played, though, when Reegan Messenger found the net.

A penalty from Levi Steele was coolly converted to put the visitors ahead just before the 30-minute mark but five minutes later, Lewis Ross levelled.

Just moments later, Messenger had the visitors back in front as he weighed in with his second of the day.

After five goals in the opening period, there was no further scoring after the break as the visitors held on to claim all three points.

Bishops Cleeve 1 Cribbs 1

The visitors went ahead just past the half-hour mark thanks to Bailey Croome's goal. Parity was restored early in the second period when Ben McLean was on hand to turn the ball home and in the end, the points were shared here.

Bristol Manor Farm 5 Helston Athletic 5

There was a lively start to our Game of the Day with chances at either end before the visitors drew first blood on the quarter-hour mark when the ball found its way home with the aid of a deflection off Jamie Adams.

The lead didn't last long for the visitors as Josh Bissett was on hand to equalise soon afterwards and then Rhys Thomas turned the scoreline around as he put the home team ahead.

This was an enthralling contest and on the half-hour mark, Jack Crago celebrated his permanent move to the Cornish club by making it 2-2.

Back came the home side and ten minutes from the break, Bissett put them back ahead with his second of the game.

With half-time approaching, Louis Britton got in on the scoring act to make it 4-2.

Just ten seconds into the second half and the visitors had a goal back as the ball went in off Harry Lucas and then just moments later Jacob Smith levelled the scores.

This crazy game continued as a Bissett hat-trick goal put his side 5-4 up before an hour had even been played!

On 77 minutes, Crago squared things up once more with the tenth goal of the afternoon and that's how it remained, although Crago did get a late red card to add to the drama.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE SOUTH

Cinderford Town 1 Bemerton Heath Harlequins 3

It was recent arrival, Alex Bonthron, who put the hosts ahead with 11 minutes on the clock only for Brad Waters to cancel it out with an equaliser as half-time approached. The early action of the second half saw Joe Smith fire the visitors ahead for the first time in the game and he went on to bag a second goal late on to secure the points for his side.

Didcot Town 0 Yate Town 1

The opening goal arrived just before the hour-mark when Jerry Lawrence was able to give the visitors the lead. They were able to see the rest of the game out to hold on to their advantage and keep the hosts at bay.

Exmouth Town 1 Larkhall Athletic 3

Midway through the opening period and Ben Griffith was able to put the home team ahead, but Ryan Beckinsale brought the sides level five minutes from the interval. A goal from Spencer Dymond-Hall put the visitors ahead for the first time in the 75th minute and shortly afterwards, Eben Mortimer-Taylor added a third goal to make it a successful away assignment for the away team.

Mousehole 2 Melksham Town 4

The home side grabbed the early initiative and got their noses in front in the seventh minute courtesy of Tim Nixon. Jacob Brown managed to bring the scores back level with a goal on the 15-minute mark and then Mark Cooper added a second to turn the scoreline on its head midway through the first half. There were just a couple of minutes to go before half-time when Nixon made it 2-2 with his second of the game only for Henry Sady to put the visitors back in front in stoppage time at the end of the opening period. A fourth goal arrived for the away team from the boot of Brown to put them firmly in the driving seat early in the second half and they were to see the game out to secure an impressive away win and maintain their unbeaten start to the campaign.

Shaftesbury 0 Falmouth Town AFC 2

Two goals from Oscar Massey gave the visitors a deserved three points here in what was a good, solid away performance. The home side were left frustrated for long periods as they failed to find a way through.

Tavistock AFC 2 Thatcham Town 0

With ten minutes to go until the interval, Liam Prynn broke the deadlock as he put the hosts ahead. There was a further goal late on from Harry French which sealed the points for the hosts.

Westbury United 2 Bideford AFC 2

The deadlock was broken on 24 minutes when Charlie Walton gave the hosts the lead but parity was restored in the opening exchanges of the second period when Ryan Turner made it 1-1. Josh Webber than found the net to give the advantage to the away team on the hour-mark only for Joe Beardwell to score a last minute equaliser to mean it was honours even.

Willand Rovers 1 Malvern Town 1

The home side went ahead with 20 minutes to go through Harvey Dorothy but that goal was cancelled out towards the end when Ibrahim Olateju marked his debut for the visitors with an equaliser. The draw puts an end to the visitors' losing run.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE CENTRAL

Berkhamsted 3 Hertford Town 5

The visitors got themselves ahead with quarter-of-an-hour gone as Tariq Bakkali got the goal, but JJ Lacey levelled the scores as he found himself in the right place at the right time in the 30th minute.

Matthew Bateman gave the home side the lead and then added another with virtually the last touch of the opening period to make it 3-1.

The second period started with Bakkali pulling a goal back and then player-manager, Ben Herd led by example as he equalised. In the final minute, Riley Carr put the visitors ahead before Bakkali added a fifth goal in stoppage time.

Enfield 3 Aylesbury United 2

The home side took the lead on 18 minutes when Callum Taylor was able to head home and then Kieran Southgate was on hand to double their lead midway through the first half.

A scrambled goal made it 3-0 as half-time approached with Myles John appearing to get the final touch.

The visitors were able to reduce the arrears early in the second period through Luqman Kassim before Songona-Mory Kone added a second to set up an enthralling final 20 minutes.

The hosts were able to hold on to claim the victory.

Flackwell Heath 2 Stotfold 0

The hosts had to be patient to make the breakthrough here and it finally came in the opening exchanges of the second half when Wiktor Makowski found the net.

The same player soon notched his second to double the lead and that's how the scoreline remained as the home side claimed another three points.

Hadley 1 Leighton Town 4

There was a shock for the unbeaten League leaders when Sam King crowned a good start for the visitors by putting them in front in the 25th minute.

King then grabbed a second as half-time approached to put his side into a strong position.

The hosts grabbed a lifeline early in the second half when Caoilan Mcgettigan was on hand to reduce the arrears only for Jack Sayell to restore the two-goal advantage for the away team.

Further gloss was added to the scoreline for the visitors when Kyle Boyce scored in the final minutes.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE CENTRAL

Kidlington 2 Welwyn Garden City 4

It was first blood to the visitors here as Zuriel Otseh-Taiwo gave them the lead in the opening exchanges. Right on the stroke of half-time, Bailey Stevenson was on hand to double the lead for the away team. Stevenson picked up from where he left off at the start of the second period when he fired home a third goal. A penalty from Powfil Raposo saw the hosts reduce the arrears and the same player then grabbed another to set up an interesting final ten minutes. Stoppage time saw Stevenson complete his hat-trick to give his side a 4-2 win on the road.

Leverstock Green 4 AFC Dunstable 0

The home side started on the front-foot and got their reward with a fourth minute opener from Rawn Seale. The lead was doubled early in the second half thanks to Radu-Mihai Stefanoaica before Ethan Mooney made it 3-0. Luke Beckwith completed a positive afternoon for the hosts with a fourth goal in stoppage time at the end.

Northwood P Barton Rovers P

A torrential downpour an hour before kick-off saw this game postponed.



Real Bedford 7 Thame United 2

There were just five minutes on the clock when Jack Morrell put the home team ahead and that advantage was soon doubled thanks to Joe Evans. The hosts were playing with real purpose and a third goal followed before half-an-hour had even been played as Joshua Setchell got his name on the scoresheet. The visitors came out with more purpose after the restart and got their reward with a Tom Mcelroy goal five minutes into the second half, but any hopes they had of a comeback were extinguished when Ben Stevens made it 4-1 on the hour-mark and then Setchell added a fifth soon afterwards. With just over 20 minutes to go, Setchell completed his hat-trick and despite Mcelroy pulling another goal back for the visitors, an own goal from Gregory Hackett saw the home team make it 7-2. Jack Tutton was sent off late on for the visitors to complete a miserable afternoon for them.

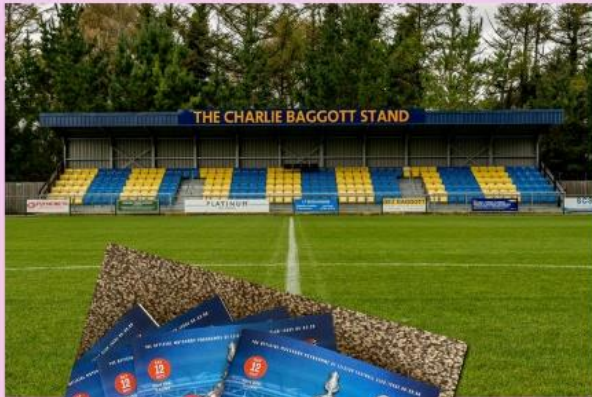
Ware 1 Beaconsfield Town 1

There were around 20 minutes to go when Johnny Allotey edged the home side in front in this hard-fought encounter. As the clock ticked down, Joshua Marcon was able to equalise and that's how it ended, with both sides taking a share of the spoils.



EMIRATES FA CUP FOURTH ROUND QUALIFYING

Biggleswade FC | York City 3
Braintree Town | Bishop's Stortford 0
Chertsey Town | Sutton United 3
Farsley Celtic | Kettering Town 2
Harborough Town | Bury 0
Leiston | Dagenham & Redbridge 5
Lowestoft Town | Weston-super-Mare 3
Plymouth Parkway 0 | Worthing 4
Taunton Town | Maidenhead United 1
Wealdstone 4 Gosport Borough 1



SATURDAY EVENING FEATURE

CHAIR CROW



It's been quite a journey for Tony Parsons, from supporter on the sidelines to this season becoming Chairman of Bristol Manor Farm.

The ambitious club has its sights firmly set on making it to the next level and live up to their pre-season billing as one of the favourites for the Pitching In Southern League Division One South title.

"I started coming along to games just over a decade ago," the ever-enthusiastic Parsons told us. "I was made to feel very welcome by everyone at the club, particularly the then Chairman, Geoff Selleck, who sadly passed away three years ago.

"The current manager, Lee Lashenko, was at the helm then, just as he is now, such a fantastically loyal man and an incredible football manager with so much knowledge of the game.

"Through the various friendships I made at the club, I agreed to become Commercial Manager and it was a role I did for quite a few years.

"When Geoff passed away, there was the possibility of me becoming Chairman then, but for various reasons, the time was not right.

"However, when the Chairmanship became available over the summer, I decided to accept the challenge"

One of the first changes that had to be made upon his appointment was a change of nickname. For many years he was known around the club and further afield as Tony the Scarecrow, this soon became Tony the Chaircrow.

"Becoming Chairman of this fantastic club is a great honour for me," he added. "It also brings great responsibility as this club now plays such a big role within the local community.



SCARE CROW TO CHAIR CROW | Tony Parsons at Mousehole last weekend

"One of my aims is to further strengthen that community outreach and bring local people together. Just as I was welcomed into the club with open arms in 2013, I want others to come along and enjoy the atmosphere at games and the direction that the club is moving in.

"Whatever their background or walk of life they come from, everyone is welcomed here. We all have a responsibility to represent our club in the right way and portray the right image because the local football club is very influential.

"I am enjoying the role so far; the biggest surprise, to some extent, is how much my phone keeps ringing. It's a small price to pay but it does give an indication of how much goes in to running a football club, and how important the volunteers are in the role that they play.

"It's the same throughout non-League. We may be at Step 4 but there is so much that goes on behind-the-scenes and it's the volunteers who deserve the real credit for a successful non-League club."

Just one defeat from six League games represents a solid start for the club and on Saturday they play host to a Helston Athletic outfit yet to taste defeat in their opening seven League encounters.

BRISTOL MANOR FARM | TONY PARSONS

“The season is going extremely well, apart from a little blip at the start where we exited the FA Cup, which was disappointing,” added Parsons. “We’ve put together a strong group of players who all get on well together, so that bodes well. “We’re on a strong run in the League and we’ve also got a mouth-watering Isuzu FA Trophy tie coming up against Havant & Waterlooville from the level above us. If we could win that, it would create history because the club has never reached the second round proper of this competition before.

“The Southern League is as strong as ever and we have the upmost respect for all of the teams in it. I firmly believe that everyone is capable of beating each other on their day and that’s what helps to make it so exciting.

“There are some extremely ambitious clubs involved who want to progress. We visited Mousehole last weekend and, like us, they are a team who look to play good football and as a club they are working hard to put the foundations in place for them to keep building and growing.

“I would like both clubs to push hard to achieve our objectives and I know that there are other clubs with the same ambitions too, so it really does make for a strong competition.

“Saturday’s game against Helston Athletic promises to be a cracker. Both sides are on a terrific run, so it has all the ingredients to be extremely hard-fought and entertaining, with both sides hopefully playing the good, open football that has got them into this position so far.

“We’ll need our Farmy Army and Bristol Uni students in full voice! They are the best in the League, with their flags and chants, although Falmouth Town’s F-Troop will give them a run for their money this season!

“We are working together to make this club stronger and more sustainable. It’s a big commitment, but it’s something we’re passionate about...”

That said, I have high praise for all of the supporters that I have encountered in Division One South; there’s a lot of passion for their clubs and they are all extremely loyal.

“Meeting so many people, be they supporters, players, volunteers or opposition boardroom members, is so enjoyable. I have made many, many friendships through my involvement with Bristol Manor Farm. The football community is a real joy.”

So, what are the short and long-term aims and ambitions of the club?

“We do not hide the fact that short-term, our aim is promotion,” continued Parsons. “We have hit the bar twice in the last couple of seasons by losing in the play-offs and this year we are determined to go one better.

“The League is as strong as it has ever been and we have no given right to be up there because there are so many other good clubs, but we will be giving it everything we’ve got as always and we’ll see where it takes us.

“Longer-term, our five-year business plan involves getting this club into the Vanarama National League South. We know that to achieve that a lot of hard work has to take place off the pitch as well as on it and we’re prepared to roll our sleeves up and get stuck in.

“Being Chairman means so much to me. The continued support of everyone here is fantastic and I know that collectively we’ll be doing all we can to achieve our objectives because we all want what is best for the club.

“We are working together to make this club stronger and more sustainable. It’s a big commitment, but it’s something we’re passionate about.

“The only downside for me is that I don’t get as much scarecrow time relaxing in my fields, but that is a small sacrifice for our great community club!”



FARMY ARMY | The Bristol Manor Farm fans are amongst the most vocal in the Southern League

NEWS ROUND-UP

BARTON ROVERS | CHAMPAGNE MOMENT

There was joy for Barton Rovers last weekend as they made it into the first round proper of the Isuzu FA Trophy for the first time in a quarter-of-a-century.

The Pitching In Southern League Division One Central outfit made the trip to Littlehampton Town of the Pitching In Isthmian League South East and came home with a 1-0 win in a tie that saw Alfie Warman pulling the strings with a Man of the Match display.

"As a group, this is a really special achievement, not just for us as players and management but for everyone involved with Barton Rovers," Warman told us. "For many of us it's a club we have a deep connection with, so to give back to the Chairman, committee and volunteers means so much to us all.

"There's people here who have been involved with the club for over 50 years, something the manager made us aware of in our first group meeting last season. It's much bigger than any of us so there's a lot of pride when you reflect on this achievement.

"Saturday's game was tough, as we knew it would be. They are a resilient side and although they have struggled so far this season, they haven't lost games by many goals. We had to be resolute defensively but the boys at the back and Tyler in goal were outstanding.

"After a tactical tweak in the first half, the momentum of the game swung and we got our goal at a time when we were on top in the game and we were able to hold on to the lead thereafter.

"For me personally, I was delighted to pick up Man of the Match. Towards the end of the first half I felt my involvement in the game growing and to contribute to the goal was really nice. Second half I had to be disciplined and help the defensive effort, which I felt I did well and was really pleased to contribute to the win and progress into the next round.

"It's been a mixed start to the season if we're being honest, but since the first two League games, performances and results on the most part have been good.

"We have developed a bit of consistency and a way of playing that has been successful for us. We believe we have so much more to give as a group and still want to achieve big things this season.

"I won't air publicly what we want to achieve, but we want to make our mark and having done that so far in the FA Trophy, it has been important for belief for what we can go and achieve in the League. For me personally, it's just about continuing to work hard and keep on playing well. I'm enjoying my football but am hungry for more."

TAUNTON TOWN | IRISH EYES SMILING

Heard the one about the club Vice-Chairman who woke on Saturday morning to a flurry of missed calls, played in goal that afternoon, kept a clean sheet and helped his team through to the next round of the Isuzu FA Trophy?

Well, that is what happened to Taunton Town for their third round qualifying clash with Pitching In Southern League Premier South rivals, Basingstoke Town, last weekend as Lloyd Irish stepped up to the plate to help them through to a fourth round qualifying showdown at Gosport Borough.

Irish is no novice, though, he has almost 400 appearances to his name from three spells with Taunton Town as well as turning out for the likes of Yeovil Town, Weston super Mare, Tiverton Town, Bideford and Barnstaple Town during a long career in the game in the south-west.

"I woke up on Saturday morning fully expecting to be in the board room as I'd hung up my boots and gloves at the end of last season and didn't expect to have to put them on again any time soon," the 36 year-old admitted to us. "But two weeks ago I signed forms just in case of an emergency, not really expecting it to happen.

"Then when I looked at my phone first thing on Saturday morning and saw missed calls from Luffers [manager, Richard Luffman] and Karl Lindsey [Football Operations Manager], I knew something wasn't right.

"The regular 'keeper had been taken ill and they needed me to step in. It was such short notice that I didn't have time to think about the game!

"I'd played in six of the last seven games of last season in the Vanarama National League South to cover for injury, but hadn't even touched a pair of gloves since, so I was a bit anxious to say the least when I got the call and had low expectations due to my lack of training over the past six months or so and my match sharpness.

"I must say that I was pleasantly surprised by my own performance and the team did really well in front of me; they're on a great run at the moment, playing with a lot of confidence, and it was nice for me to step in and be part of keeping that run going.

"I love the club and my role here is a different one these days. I am honoured to be the Vice-Chairman and it's great to be able to try and make a difference off the pitch having spent so much time since 2008 trying to help the club on the pitch.

"We've had an impressive start to the season. There were so many changes over the summer; a completely new management team, playing staff and a new-look board as well, so, to be where we are at this stage is fantastic.

"The Cup runs are really helping us to rebuild after the past few years and another win or two in either or both of the Emirates FA Cup and Isuzu FA Trophy would be a massive bonus.

"We've got a big FA Cup tie at home to Maidenhead United today that we are really looking forward to. The team is ten games unbeaten now and you can see the progress that is being made week on week, which is great."

We ended by asking whether he could see more games on the horizon for him now that he has the taste for it back?

"I've made it clear that I am available for emergencies only," he responded with a smile.

"This was an emergency and thankfully Adam [Parkes] is okay now.

"I'd consider helping out in the Somerset County Cup to give Adam a rest and now being sat on 395 appearances for Taunton, I guess it would be nice to reach 400. I'm talking myself into it here!"

INFLUENCER

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

BRANDON HALL (AFC TELFORD UNITED) > PEPE REINA

Pepe Reina was my idol. He brought the side-winder into the Premier League and generally made goalkeeping look fun!

NORTH LEIGH | LEARNING PROCESS

There was joy for North Leigh last Saturday as they secured their first victory of the season in the Pitching In Southern League Division One Central.

It was done in dramatic fashion too as they found themselves two goals down at the hands of Leverstock Green with just ten minutes left on the clock until a three-goal blast from Calvin Njoroge, Kyle Chester and Harlee Vozza turned the scoreline on its head and secured the three points.

For Kyle Chester, like a lot of his team-mates, this is his first taste of life in the Southern League and whilst its been something of a learning experience so far, hopes are high that the team can continue to develop and grow together.

"It was amazing that we were finally able to celebrate our first three points together," Chester told us. "We see this as a great platform now to hopefully kick-on and get more wins under our belt.

"The start of the season has been far from perfect, we accept that, but we've managed to develop a tight group of lads who are learning and growing together and the resilience that we have here certainly showed through in the way in which we were able to get back into Saturday's game.

"This is my first season at this level and it's the same for a number of the lads. It's been a learning experience; we're trying to take on board and absorb everything because we want to progress and prove that we are capable of competing at this level.

"From a personal point of view, it was nice to get my first goal at the weekend. It was certainly an exciting game to be involved in. It was end-to-end in parts but I felt that we were on top for much of the second half.

"When we conceded the second goal with around quarter-of-an-hour to go it would have been easy for our heads to drop and for it to knock the stuffing out of us, but we rallied and managed to pull a goal back, which was the catalyst for us to have the belief to go on and win it.

"As I say, we need to build on this now; we won't start to look too far ahead, we will continue to take it one game at a time. There will be ups and downs ahead, we know that, but the key is to take something from each of these experiences to help us keep improving game-by-game, week-by-week.

"My personal aim is to have 20+ goal involvements and score as many as I can to help the team. Last Saturday has certainly given me a taste for it!"



FEATURE | WHEN HENNING MET KEITH

There was a familiar face amongst the large crowd that gathered at Winchester City's Charters Community Stadium as they opened their new facilities for the first time for the Emirates FA Cup visit of Weymouth at the end of September.

Britain's favourite German comedian, Henning Wehn, was in the City to perform at the Theatre Royal later that evening as part of his UK-wide tour and took the opportunity to take in a game, as well as catch up with an old friend.

Wehn, who is a regular on panel shows such as *Have I Got News For You*, *Would I Lie To You?*, *Live At The Apollo* and *8 Out Of 10 Cats Does Countdown*, is a massive football fan and first moved to the UK back in 2002 when he landed a job within the Marketing Department at Wycombe Wanderers.

It was there that he began a friendship with Southern League President, Keith Allen, who, at the time, was secretary of the Buckinghamshire club, and the pair have remained close ever since.

"Keith is a solid bloke," Wehn told us. "Believe it or not, he has a great sense of humour, and it's always nice to see him and his wife. He's the type of person who makes things happen and he has such fantastic football knowledge.

"I really enjoyed my time working with him at Wycombe. Unfortunately, such is the nature of football that the CEO who brought me in to the club moved on and the one that came in to replace him starting bringing his own people in, so I eventually moved on, but I look back upon that time of my life with great fondness and Keith was a big part of it.

"I love football, always have. I think that we are all ground hoppers at heart and touring allows me to visit new grounds and watch football at different levels. I like discovering new grounds and really enjoyed my time at Winchester City the other week.

"It's such a nice facility that they have there, something that can be used 24/7 and perfect for getting the local community involved.

"I was very impressed; the pitch played well and there was some good football from both teams. The home fans created a great atmosphere and it was clear how proud they were of the new facilities that they now have at their disposal.

"It's just a pity that they couldn't get the win that they were looking for to take them through to the next round – their Wembley plans will have to be put on hold for another year!"

Wehn has been passionate about football for most of his 50 years.

"I was born into a football-loving family," he continued. "I've been into it since the age of five when I was taken along to my first Bundesliga game at VfL Bochum.

"I had a choice to make when it came to picking my team; it was either Borussia Dortmund and Schalke, I choose the latter and there's not much I can do about it now!

"I always enjoyed playing football, and still do today in five-a-side's, but my body doesn't agree anymore! When I played 11-a-side I was a right-back, the type of player that could run all game, just not very fast!

"Watching football gives me great pleasure and when I'm not touring I try to get along to Hastings United as often as I can."

Touring is going to play a big part in Wehn's life as he has just embarked upon a UK-wide tour that runs until November 2025.

'Acid Wehn' provides an unbiased look at climate change, a topic which is sure to delight audiences because, as Wehn himself puts it, "Everyone loves talking about the weather!"

The tour has already earned rave reviews during its opening month and arrives at Exeter, Torquay and Bridport during October before moving on to Norwich and Leicester Square Theatre, London next month.

"There are three parts to touring; the writing, the performing and the travelling," he added. "I thoroughly enjoy them all. It's early days on the current tour so far, but the signs are very promising.

"The show has come together well; it will refine over time but I am very happy with the start and the initial reaction from the audiences.

"Travelling to new venues, meeting new people and bringing joy and happiness is what it's all about... oh, and getting to tick new football grounds off my list too!"



FIXTURES | THE WEEK AHEAD

Pitching In Southern League Premier South

TUESDAY 15 OCT 24

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

SATURDAY 19 OCT 24

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

Pitching In Southern League Premier Central

MONDAY 14 OCT 24

Barwell v Redditch United
St Ives Town v Biggleswade Town

TUESDAY 15 OCT 24

AFC Telford United v Alvechurch
Banbury United v Bedford Town
Bromsgrove Sporting v Kettering Town
Hitchin Town v Leiston
Lowestoft Town v Bishop's Stortford
Royston Town v Spalding United
Stourbridge v Harborough Town

SATURDAY 19 OCT 24

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

Pitching In Southern League Division One South

TUESDAY 15 OCT 24

Bishops Cleeve v Tavistock AFC
Malvern Town v Bristol Manor Farm
Mousehole v Westbury United

WEDNESDAY 16 OCT 24

Exmouth Town v Willand Rovers

SATURDAY 19 OCT 24

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

Pitching In Southern League Division One Central

SATURDAY 19 OCT 24

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

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)

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