

PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE



SATURDAY EVENING E-NEWSPAPER

Saturday 02 November 2024

BEEES BUZZING



The Emirates FA Cup brought some of its magic to the Pitching In Southern League this afternoon as Premier Central outfit, Harborborough Town, in the first round proper for the first time in their history, won 4-1 at higher-level Tonbridge Angels to breeze into Sunday's second round draw.

Our other representatives, Kettering Town, are in action at Northampton Town, in a game being screened live on BBC2. The game is still taking place as we write.

Back to League action and three teams now have 31 points at the top of the Premier South, with Merthyr Town going back to the top having won 4-2 at Plymouth Parkway. They are joined by AFC Totton, 2-0 winners at Marlow, and Gloucester City, who were held at home by Basingstoke Town.

In the Premier Central, Stamford were held at Leiston so missed the chance to leapfrog Kettering Town and go back to the summit. Redditch United had a good 3-0 away win at St. Ives Town and Bedford Town won by the same scoreline at Bromsgrove Sporting.

In Division One South, Yate Town were made to work hard for their 3-2 triumph at Falmouth Town and they remain top with Exmouth Town, who were 2-0 victors over Shaftesbury, still on their tail.

Helston Athletic lost for the second Saturday in a row with defeat at Bemerton Heath Harlequins, for whom Joe Smith and Leighton Thomas were on the mark again.

There was a much-needed return to winning ways for Evesham United as they came home from Melksham Town with a 1-0 success.

Over in Division One Central, Real Bedford continue to lead the way as they chalked up a commanding 5-1 victory over Kidlington to make it just one defeat from 12 and 40 goals scored. They lead from Aylesbury United, who were commanding 3-0 winners at North Leigh.

In the lower reaches of the table, Leverstock Green were denied victory at Hadley as the home side grabbed a stoppage time leveller, whilst Northwood secured only their second success of the season with a hard-earned 1-0 win at Ware to lift them off the bottom.

REPORTS FROM ALL GAMES | STATS | FEATURES



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PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER SOUTH

Gloucester City 1 Basingstoke Town 1

The high-flying hosts were rocked when the visitors took an early lead courtesy of Nnamdi Nwachuku.

Parity was soon restored, though, as Ben Richards-Everton found the net and that is how it remained.

Hanwell Town 1 Winchester City 1

The visitors went ahead in the tenth minute through Olli Griggs and it was a lead that they held on to until the second minute of stoppage time at the end when handball gave us a penalty. Josh McCormick was dismissed for the visitors and Jordan Edwards stayed cool equalise and see the spoils shared.

Hungerford Town 1 Tiverton Town 1

The home side edged ahead midway through the opening period thanks to Louis McGrory only for Josh Jones to restore parity with just under a quarter-of-an-hour to go.

In the end it was honours even as Rob Drey started his tenure in charge of the visitors with a hard-earned away point.

Marlow 0 AFC Totton 2

The visitors seized the initiative early on when Tony Lee fired home and he added another just past the half-hour mark.

This was to prove to be the end of the scoring as the visitors were able to hold on to their lead and bring home the points.

Plymouth Parkway 2 Merthyr Town 4

An early goal from Ricardo Rees gave the away team the advantage and Kane Simpson weighed in with a second goal just past the 30-minute mark. A goal from Lewys Twamley on 57 minutes put the Welsh outfit firmly in command, but Callum Hall had other ideas as he pulled a goal back for the hosts on the hour.

James Watts-Barciela then made it interesting with another home goal in the 66th minute only for Frazer Thomas to add a fourth goal for the away side soon afterwards to seal the win.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER SOUTH

Poole Town 1 Gosport Borough 3

The deadlock was broken in the tenth minute as Brad Tarbuck put the away team ahead and they were able to extend their lead late on the first half through Paul Agbeseyi.

A penalty from Jake McCarthy reduced the arrears with just over ten minutes to go before Alfie Stanley settled a few nerves amongst the travelling contingent with a late third goal to seal the away win.

Sholing 1 Frome Town 1

It was goalless during the opening period here, with the only action coming when Matt Wood was sent off for the visitors just past the half-hour mark.

The deadlock was eventually broken on 78 minutes when Curtis Jemmett-Hutson fired the visitors in front but they couldn't hold on as Seung Yang hit a 93rd minute leveller and the points were shared.

Swindon Supermarine 1 Dorchester Town 0

After a stalemate in the first half as both sides cancelled each other out, Harry Williams was quick out of the blocks to put the home side in front early in the second period and that's how it stayed.



Taunton Town 1 Bracknell Town 1

In first half stoppage time, skipper Tom Smith led by example to put the home team ahead.

The equaliser came with 20 minutes to go from Remy Coddington and that is how things remained as both teams shared the spoils.

Walton & Hershram 2 Havant & Waterlooville 0

There was little to separate these two teams until midway through the second half when Eoin Bolger gave the home side the lead.

Building on the momentum gained from the first goal, Thomas Olyott soon added another for the hosts to give them a much-needed return to winning ways.

Wimborne Town 1 Chertsey Town 3

Right on the stroke of half-time, Matt Burrows was able to put the home team in front and it was a lead they held until just past the hour-mark when Jack Mazzone levelled the scores.

With just over ten minutes to go, Lewis Flatman put the visitors in front and Mazzone hit another to secure the victory in stoppage time.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER CENTRAL

AFC Sudbury 1 Alvechurch 0

A neat finish from Joe Neal gave the hosts the lead with just under ten minutes to go in the opening period.

There was plenty of action in this one with both sides going close. The visitors went down to ten men late on as David Solademi was red-carded and with it went their chance to get anything out of this one as the home side held on.

AFC Telford United 4 Bishop's Stortford 1

It was the home side who got their noses in front early on thanks to Ellis Brown but the scores were levelled on the half-hour mark thanks to Isa Rotimi.

Matt Stenson restored the home sides' advantage as half-time approached and then with 20 minutes left on the clock, Ricardo Dinanga put some further daylight between the two teams and he added another goal in stoppage time to complete the scoring.

Banbury United 1 Hitchin Town 2

With ten minutes remaining of the opening period, George Ball put the home side in front. It was a lead that they were to hold until the 73rd minute when Daniel Stokoe was able to level matters.

The visitors went on to take the initiative and Henry Snee fired them ahead on 88 minutes and they held on to claim an excellent victory on the road.



Bromsgrove Sporting 0 Bedford Town 3

The away team opened the scoring through Ryan Blake within the opening couple of minutes and then a clever finish from Carl Mensah doubled the advantage on the quarter-hour mark.

Early in the second period, Blake weighed in with his second and the visitors' third goal to put them firmly in the driving seat as they secured an impressive away triumph.

Halesowen Town 2 Spalding United 1

The visitors struck first as Connor Tomlinson put them ahead in the 12th minute but the hosts restored parity with just over ten minutes to go thanks to a strike from Jordan Ponticelli.

Late drama saw Kieren Donnelly notch a stoppage time winner for the hosts.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER CENTRAL

Leiston 1 Stamford 1

The opening goal saw Jamar Loza calm to convert from the penalty spot to give the hosts a 20th minute lead.

With just over 20 minutes to go, Tendai Chitiza brought this encounter level and that is how is remained.

Royston Town 0 Stratford Town 1

The deadlock was eventually broken with just under ten minutes of the second period played as Jack Storer found the net. The visitors were able to see the game out to secure a hard-earned three points.

St Ives Town 0 Redditch United 3

After the two teams went in level at the break, it took the visitors just two minutes after the restart to take the lead through Johnny Johnston. Buoyed by the goal, it wasn't long before Billy Shaw added another and then Jaiden White made it 3-0 to complete a good afternoon's work on the road.

Stourbridge 0 Biggleswade Town 0

It was a frustrating afternoon for the home side as despite their best efforts, they were unable to find a way through a resolute and well-organised back-line. In the end the points were shared.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE SOUTH

Bemerton Heath Harlequins 3 Helston Athletic 2

In the sixth minute, Joe Smith continued his rich vein of recent scoring form by putting the hosts in front.

Just four minutes later Tyler Elliott levelled matters as he found the net and the scoreline was turned on its head on 32 minutes when Greg Eastman put the visitors in front.

A penalty in first half stoppage time brought the scores level once more as Leighton Thomas found the net.

The second half saw Smith to go on and restore the home team's advantage late on and they were able to hold on to secure a good three points.

Cinderford Town 2 Mousehole 2

As has been the case often recently, Alex Bonthron found the net to opening the scoring here for the home team with 17 minutes played.

The scores were levelled midway through the first half through Oliver Challinor before Hayden Turner put the visitors ahead going into the final 20 minutes.

The home side equalised on 75 minutes through Chris Bell and that is how the game finished.



Cribbs 1 Larkhall Athletic 2

Midway through the opening period, the away team grabbed the lead as Harvey Pritchard got his name on the scoresheet.

The returning David Duru levelled the scores on the hour-mark but that goal only acted to awaken the visitors once more as Alex Lambert fired them back in front.

A red card for Charlie Dashfield saw the hosts down to ten men and with it went their chances of getting anything out of this one as the visitors saw it out to take the points home.

Exmouth Town 2 Shaftesbury 0

It took until the 24th minute for Callum Shipton to get the high-flying home side ahead here.

The lead was doubled with quarter-of-an-hour to go as Tom Bath found the net and that is how it stayed as the hosts added another three points to their tally.

Falmouth Town AFC 2 Yate Town 3

The hosts grabbed an early advantage through Kian Thomas only for it to be cancelled out by James Byrne.

On the half-hour mark, the home team went back in front through Luke Barner but Will Christopher brought things back all-square again.

Our Game of the Day was proving to be quite a tussle and Ross Stearn was able to give the visitors the lead as the clock ticked down.

It ended with a hard-earned victory for the away team as both sides played their part in an entertaining encounter.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE SOUTH

Malvern Town 2 Bideford AFC 2

There was a busy start to proceedings here as Levi Francis headed the home side in front within the opening minute only for Jamie Hearsey to cancel it out a couple of minutes later.

With just over half-an-hour gone, Finn Roberts put the away team back ahead but the home side were able to hit back with 15 minutes to go when Alex Bell, who has been in a rich vein of scoring form from the right-back berth, equalised.

It was to prove to be the end of the scoring as the points were shared.

Melksham Town 0 Evesham United 1

It was the visitors who drew first blood as Josh Barlow opened the scoring but they went down to ten men just before the hour mark as Reegan Messenger received a second yellow card.

The away team had to roll their sleeves up to battle this one out as the hosts pushed for a leveller. It proved to be a much-needed return to winning ways for the Worcestershire outfit.

Tavistock AFC 3 Didcot Town 3

There were just five minutes on the clock when Luke Steer found the net to give the home side the lead.

As the half-hour mark approached, Connor Barrett made it 1-1 but it didn't stay that way for long as Ben Steer put the home side back ahead.

Cameron McNeill put this end-to-end contest back on level pegging as the interval approached.

The advantage went back to the hosts in first half stoppage time as Liam Pryn converted from the penalty spot. Another goal from Barrett, this time with just over 20 minutes to go, saw parity restored and that's how it stayed.

Thatcham Town 2 Bristol Manor Farm 1

The visitors wasted little time in getting in front here as Louis Britton opened the scoring in the third minute.

Just before the hour-mark, the visitors were reduced to ten men as Daniel Dodimead saw red and they were made to pay as Roberto Nditi equalised.

Another red card, this time for Jacob Spence, saw the visitors down to nine men for the final 20 minutes.

The home side had a red card of their own towards the end with Sam Tanner dismissed and then more drama followed as Andrew Matthews put the hosts ahead in stoppage time at the end to take the points.

Westbury United 1 Bishops Cleeve 0

An early penalty from Josh Jenkins set the home side on their way here and the visitors' cause was not helped when Matt Liddiard was dismissed just past the half-hour mark.

The home side had a man sent off in the second period, with Ryan Bole seeing red, but they were able to see things out and get the victory.

Willand Rovers 0 Bashley 1

The opening goal went to the away team as Luke Holmes scored ten minutes from the end of the first half.

There was no further scoring after the break as the visitors held on to their lead.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE CENTRAL

AFC Dunstable 1 Berkhamsted 3

Tom Newman gave the visitors the perfect start as he was able to guide the ball home to open the scoring in the opening exchanges.

The same player then added a second goal before ten minutes had even been played and then it was three as half-time approached thanks to Lewis Thorpe.

Kyle Brooks gave the home side hope as he pulled a goal back early in the second half and Jack Tompkins received his marching orders for the visitors, but the away team saw it out.

Biggleswade FC 2 Thame United 3

Lee Northfield was cool from the penalty spot to put the hosts ahead within the opening exchanges.

It didn't take long at the start of the second period for Carmichael Uchenna to add a second goal for the home team.

The visitors responded through Dan West who reduced the arrears just past the hour and then Brayden Daniel levelled the scores before putting his side in front soon afterwards and that proved to be the winning goal.



Flackwell Heath 0 Barton Rovers 3

The visitors drew first blood late on in the opening period thanks to Ryan Neufville and Taylor Rhiney went on to double their lead late on. There was still time for Jemale Olayinka to increase the visitors' lead in stoppage time at the end and complete an impressive away day.

Hadley 2 Leverstock Green 2

It took until the end of the opening period for Isaac Stones to put the home team ahead but the lead was cancelled out with just under 20 minutes to go through Luke Beckwith.

The visitors proceeded to take the lead through Ademide Baruwa on 75 minutes only for Stones to grab a stoppage time leveller for the home side as the spoils were shared.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE CENTRAL

Hertford Town 1 Beaconsfield Town 1

The opening goal came with ten minutes on the clock as Akiel Raffie was able to beat the 'keeper. It was cancelled out in the 63rd minute by Brian Garzon from the penalty spot.

Honours were even here as neither side could add to the scoring.

Kings Langley 2 Welwyn Garden City 2

The deadlock was finally broken with ten minutes left of the first half as Charne Lemba guided the ball home for the hosts. On 61 minutes the scores were levelled thanks to Edward Corbit before Lewis Jones went on to put the away side ahead with around ten minutes to go.

A late goal from Lewis Duberry brought the scores back level and that is how it finished.

Leighton Town 3 Stotfold 4

It was the hosts who edged in front here after 12 minutes thanks to a goal from Lynton Goss and he was on hand to notch another soon afterwards.

A lively opening to this game saw Haroon Meriai pull a goal back for the visitors and then Youssef Enajar levelled matters with just over ten minutes to go until the break.

The home side wasted little time after the restart to get back in front as Emmanuel Dahie got his name on the scoresheet, but moments later it was 3-3 thanks to Robbie Buchanan.

Matt Ball then gave the visitors a 78th minute lead and this proved to be the all-important winning goal.

North Leigh 0 Aylesbury United 3

The opening goal went to the visitors as Jack Wood was able to guide the ball home and then on the half-hour mark, Ben Stallard made it 2-0.

As the clock ticked down, Ben Peters weighed in with a third goal and that's how it ended.

Real Bedford 5 Kidlington 1

The hosts were able to break the deadlock on 24 minutes courtesy of a goal from Lee Watkins and Ben Stevens weighed in with a second with around ten minutes left in the opening period.

On the stroke of half-time, Jack Morrell completed a commanding half with a third goal.

The second period saw Tom Hitchcock add a fourth goal as the clock ticked down before Morrell added a fifth.

The scoring was complete deep into stoppage time as Powfil Raposo bagged a consolation for the visitors who were well beaten.

Ware 0 Northwood 1

There were just five minutes to go until the end of the opening period when Kelechi Etienne put the away side in front.

It proved to be the only goal of the game as the visitors saw it out to secure a much-needed win with their new-look side.



EMIRATES FA CUP FIRST ROUND PROPER

Tonbridge Angels I Harborough Town 4 (Emirates FA Cup first round)

Competing at this stage of the competition for the very first time, it was Harborough who drew first blood as the half-time interval approached when Paul Malone headed them in front.

The visitors were in dreamland on the hour-mark when Ben Stephens was able to double their advantage.

The same player then added another with just under 20 minutes to go to put his side firmly in the driving seat and dreaming of the second round.

With 85 minutes on the clock, Dan Forbes, put things beyond doubt when he was able to find the net for a fourth goal and although Sean Shields pulled one back for the hosts in stoppage time at the end, it mattered not as the Premier Central club were through and creating more history!

We congratulate everyone at the club on their achievement.

Northampton Town v Kettering Town (Emirates FA Cup first round)

This tie was still in play as we were being published.



**Emirates
FA CUP**

SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Gavin Blackwell boasts four decades of experience in the game, the majority of which has been spent in the Southern League, He has been physio for over 1,000 games at Step 3 and above. Here he gives an insight into life behind-the-scenes...

There is more written about promotion than relegation, more about cup winners than losers. Throughout the many leagues, from primary school right through to the Premier League, it's a competitive framework that sets the scene, season after season.

The few supreme honours are fought for to the end. Success boosts crowds, excites supporters, gives dreams of greatness to players and managers. Failure not only means disappointment but also the sack. When you're on the right side, you enjoy it because everyone knows the ramifications of being on the wrong side. Working with players and management teams is such a high pressurised situation. All clubs are in the business of playing football matches, fielding players and hopefully winning. Injury is a spin-off from this.

Physios are the men and women who treat the injuries at the clubs and, in the hard world of football, have their hands full. The arrival of October and November brings the next stage of the long 10 months, and, with it, the sacking season begins. Reality begins to set in and the early hopes are beginning to fade. Managers might not have reached the goals set during summer, perhaps the players brought in aren't delivering for one reason or another. Players not in the side get unsettled and start complaining.

One manager used to say; 'If you're playing well, you'd be in the team. You're out of it because you're not playing well.' Most managers work on the same principle. Unsettled players want to move on and their mood can affect others. The clocks go



back, the nights draw in. The weather changes, temperatures plummet, and you are suddenly playing in rain and heavy wind. Pitches become lusher, slower and heavier. As the clubs' hopes start to fade, fans start to moan. Only one team can win the league, don't they know that?

God they are fickle. Results affect numbers through the gate which, in turn, affects revenue. The minds of Chairmen begin to get made up. Occasionally, you can get a realistic Chairman who knows where the club is at and what building blocks need to be put in place for the long term but this seems a rarity these days. Instead, managerial sackings come thick and fast and dominate the game's media coverage and the merry-go-round starts. Football is a results business and in this world of 'now', we have to deliver. The fans think, 'great, a new manager'. However, there is a lack of appreciation among them because they don't know the suffering a sacked manager goes through. I learned very early on from experiences of other physios around the country that the arrival of a new manager could mean the sack. Although mainly to the coaching staff, it does happen to physios as well. Once in, the new broom begins to sweep clean and every player in the squad considers how it will affect him. Those in the team wonder if they'll keep their place, others on the edge get renewed hope. A new manager draws his own staff around him.

But there can be knock-on effects. You develop relationships and it's really important to develop relationships with managers, but it does make you feel you probably mourn a little bit when they leave. But we are all big boys now and we all realise the industry doesn't give much slack to negative results. So, if you're not getting results irrespective of the hard work on the training ground or at the club, no matter what job you do, if you're not getting the three points at the weekend then clubs have to make difficult decisions.

It starts with a phone call that the club have decided to change the manager. You are then informed about who is the interim manager or caretaker. It is usually a member of the current staff, a senior player or could be a complete outsider. It hits you again when you go in to training and the manager isn't there. Someone you have worked with, respected and developed that trusting relationship with, is no longer at the club.

The role of the manager can be very lonely at times, and when the pressure is on, there can be a number of negative influences looking to be disruptive, and that's where your trust and loyalty is so important. It's a difficult and emotional one to deal with but one that you have to quickly put your emotions to one side and concentrate on the players because they will also be affected. Importantly, there is usually a game in a couple of days' time that you still have to prepare for. You are employed by the club and have a job to do.

It's the one thing I absolutely don't like about football is those times of change when you're in the hands of the Gods because you don't know what's happening. The insecurity that you feel is absolutely awful. You're hearing all sorts of names being thrown about, and then you hear who the new manager is going to be. You then go back into your own personal point of view and start thinking: 'Who was the physio at his last job?'

Who's he worked with in the past? Does he bring a physio with him? Does he know about me? Does he want me?'

That also applies to the other staff left behind. All the questions. With football being football, people sometimes take it for granted that you know something that you don't. So, I then bump into the new manager on one occasion who's arriving with the Chairman. He says; 'Gavin Blackwell is the physio.' Does that mean I'm staying? People take it for granted that you know you staying now but you had all the insecurity that it might not be the case. All the time that you have been anticipating that cruel rejection that happens when a new manager brings in his own backroom team.

As someone who has experienced both situations (being hired and being sacked), times when it's benefited and times when it hasn't, core staff must prove their value to a new management team. If a manager hasn't time, he needs proven lieutenants to deliver. It's tough to develop relationships with people you don't know in the intensity of club life. But the bottom line is you could be working with one manager one day and, the next day, they are gone and a new one comes in. So, you need to be adaptable and be able to work with different personalities and management styles.

That's where I think the relationship you have with a manager is so important. They have got to trust you, that you're doing the right thing and that takes time to build up when you have a new manager. You know that you are learning that relationship again, starting from scratch. Every time a new manager is appointed a little voice suggests you might be walking out through the revolving door that the manager is entering with his own staff.

I have also worked with very pragmatic managers with no desire to bring in their own physio. They have assured me that they would defer any decision-making over injuries to me and wouldn't interfere in my management of rehabilitation. They were all true to their word. However, when a new manager comes in, you have to realise that although you're still working for the same club, a new manager will have their own ways of working so you're going to have a certain amount of nervous anticipation. Especially when you formed that good relationship with the previous manager.

Surviving managers is an achievement in itself. It didn't matter who came in. It was another manager change to survive and equally, a new manager may well bring in his own physio. The insecurity of being a football physio is largely because they answer to the manager, not the club. You could be out of football in a second due to the inherent instability of it. This cut-throat climate, where members of the backroom staff are disposable commodities depending on who the manager is at the time is not for everyone. It's not every manager who wants to retain its predecessor's physio.

It's the other side of this glamorous game - the one the one where people get hurt and where heartbreak is only a result away.



NEWS ROUND-UP

ENFIELD | BY GEORGE

It's every goalkeepers' dream. Your team is trailing 2-1, you've entered the sixth and final minute of stoppage time and win a corner. The manager gives you the nod to go up for it and not only do you score the equaliser, but you do it with an overhead kick.

The dream actually played out in reality last weekend as George Edgeworth created 'a moment to tell the grandkids' when he netted a dramatic leveller for Enfield as they came from two goals down to get a 2-2 draw from their Pitching In Southern League Division One Central encounter with Biggleswade FC.

"I said to their 'keeper as we were walking off at the end that this is something that every goalkeeper dreams about," said Edgeworth to his club media. "I've only ever been a goalkeeper so I've never scored goals before at any level, so when the ball hit the back of the net, I just didn't know what to do!

"It was crazy and certainly something to tell the grandkids one day. This is what football is all about, such a special feeling.

"We actually played some good football during the first half but they took both of the chances that they created and went in at the break two goals to the good.

"We spoke at half-time about how the next goal was going to be so important and we were able to get ourselves back in it.

"We always back ourselves to keep going right until the bitter end because we've done it a few times already this season and we were able to battle out a point.

"But for me to score the equaliser the way I did with the last kick is something that I will never forget."



LOWESTOFT TOWN | EMOTIONAL TIME FOR GODBOLD

There were emotional scenes at Lowestoft Town last weekend as Jamie Godbold oversaw his final game as manager of the Pitching In Southern League Premier Central club before moving on to a new role at FA Premier League club, Ipswich Town. Godbold has had a 20-year association with his hometown club that began as a player after joining from Stoke City in the summer of 2000, before going on to become skipper, amassing over 500 appearances along the way, before returning to the club and taking over as manager six years ago.

Last season he guided them to the Isthmian League North Division title and his work has been recognised by nearby Ipswich Town who headhunted him for the role of Coach Development Manager within the Academy.

Saturday's game saw them battle out a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Harborough Town.

"I've not been involved in too many 1-0 wins during my time at the club," he said with a smile to his club's media. "We were excellent during the first half, the only thing missing was a goal for our efforts.

"They were big, strong and physical opponents but we stood up to the challenge well, particularly in the second half when they threw everything at us.

"We managed to get ahead thanks to a fine free-kick from Harvey [Sayer] and then we were able to battle it out to hold on to our lead.

"Credit to everyone involved because questions have been asked about us in this type of game, but we stood up to the physicality of it.

"I was proud of the players, as I have been throughout my time in charge and all of the well-wishes that I have received have been much appreciated.

"Everyone at the club, from the Board to the players, staff, supporters and the amazing volunteers, they have all played their part in my journey here and I would like to say a massive thank you to them.

"I leave with so many fantastic memories. As a player, nothing can top getting to Wembley, there was also leading the team out as captain against Wrexham in the FA Cup. As manager, last season was amazing to get the club back into Step 3.

"The current season started slowly but there have been definite signs that things are starting to move in the right direction and hopefully this will continue.

"This club has been a big part of my life and that of my family; they've never known anything different, coming here is their Saturday afternoon, so it has been just as emotional for them as it has for me.

"I am truly humbled by all of the kind words. Now it's time to embark upon a new chapter.

"My role will be to support and develop the coaches, particularly those involved with nine to 14-year-olds, and be in and around the club on a day-to-day basis to support the academy coaches.

"The opportunities to work with the staff there is amazing - it really is - Ipswich is a Premier League club with a lot of good things happening.

"The lure of all those things was too tough to say no to - for me, my family, my career.

"It's a phenomenal opportunity - it really is too good a chance to turn down."



INFLUENCER

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

NICK McCOOTIE (YATE TOWN) > RONALDINHO

The way he played with a smile on his face, his array of skills and just his overall style inspired me to try things he did. A fantastic footballer.

TIVERTON TOWN | PERFECT FIT FOR DRAY

There is a new man at the Tiverton Town helm, after the Pitching In Southern League Premier South club appointed the experienced Rob Dray as manager this week.

The 55 year-old is an experienced campaigner who had six successful seasons at the helm of Taunton Town as well as being in charge of Bridgewater Town.

"This is the perfect fit for me," said Dray. "This is a club that is steeped in history. The vision of the Directors matches my own ambitions; there is some work to be done, but I can't wait to get stuck into it.

"There are plenty of raw materials to work with both on and off the pitch and these are exciting times for the club.

"I want to get the lads playing with smiles on their faces again and build on our last two performances.

"I'll be honest with the players, but in a human way. It's about talking to people at the right times and implanting the guidelines and levels of standard that we will need to adhere to in order to get ourselves moving up the table.

"The most important thing is the next game and Saturday sees us head to Hungerford Town, which is always a tough place to go.

"They play their pitch well but we go there with confidence and as long as my players run and give me plenty of effort, there will be no complaints from me. We can sort the other bits out as we go along.

"It's crucial that our fans get behind us. We need them turning up in good numbers and bringing plenty of positivity.

"Short-term we need to build on the last few games and continue to accumulate points and then beyond that, I have higher ambitions of what can be achieved here. We'll take things one step at a time and be realistic."



MIDWEEK ACTION

The Tuesday evening action was centred around the Pitching In Southern League Division One South and Central.

There was one game in the Premier South where Plymouth Parkway came from behind to beat Wimborne Town 2-1. Will Fletcher gave the visitors the lead on the quarter-hour mark but it was cancelled out early in the second half by Mitchel Beardmore before Rio Garside got the winner with 20 minutes to go.



In Division One South there were some good away wins. Exmouth Town chalked up a 4-0 triumph at Bashley as Tom Bath cleaned up with a second half hat-trick after Ollie Knowles had opened the scoring on the half-hour.

Cribbs came home from Bideford with a 2-1 victory. Ryan Caine set them on their way with an early goal only for Finn Roberts to level matters early in the second period. The winner came on 83 minutes from Kosuke Ono.

In-form Malvern Town have really taken flight this month and they earned the bragging rights in their Worcestershire derby at Evesham United with a 2-0 success thanks to goals from Levi Francis and Sam Clark.

Meanwhile a Liam Prynne brace earned Tavistock AFC a 2-1 win from their trip to Mousehole, who went ahead in the second minute through Tallan Mitchell.

Leaders, Yate Town, chalked up a 2-0 victory over Thatcham Town with Ross Stearn and Lucas Tomlinson on the mark. Having suffered their first set-back at the weekend, Helston Athletic bounced back with derby day triumph over Falmouth Town. Aaron Bentley put them ahead early in the second period only for Luke Barner to restore parity soon afterwards. Within two minutes of that, Jacob Smith had regained the lead for the hosts and that's how it stayed.

There was a 4-2 win for Bishops Cleeve as they came from behind to beat Cinderford Town. It was Alex Bonthron who opened the scoring on the half-hour mark, but Ross Langworthy equalised as the interval approached. Ethan Dunbar put the home side ahead soon after the restart and then Harry Burns and Ben McLean put them in command before Bonthron grabbed a late consolation.

The remaining game was decided late on as the returning Brett Pitman gave Shaftesbury a 1-0 triumph over Willand Rovers.

Over in Division One Central, Aylesbury United chalked up a 2-0 success against Kings Langley thanks to first half strikes from Sonny French and Luqman Kassim.

There was a good come-from-behind victory for Barton Rovers who beat Berkhamsted 2-1. Louie Collier put the away team ahead on four minutes but goals from Matt Moloney and Cameron Hyde turned the scoreline on its head.

Beaconsfield Town had a much-needed 3-0 triumph over North Leigh as Akiel Raffie set them on their way with a goal in the first half before a second half brace from Eremide Lawal sealed the points.

A Matthew Ball goal proved to be the difference as Stofold were 1-0 victors over Hertford Town, whilst a Jon Clements goal just before the break was enough to give Ware a single-goal success at Leverstock Green.

Also winning away were AFC Dunstable as they scored two late goals to win 3-2 at Thame United, for whom Greg Hackett opened the scoring in the seventh minute. Enrico Greco levelled just past the half-hour mark only for Hackett to put the hosts back in front with just under 20 minutes to go. Thomas Blennerhassett equalised near the end before Momodou Jallow notched a dramatic stoppage time winner.

The evening's other game saw Welwyn Garden City and Biggleswade FC play out a goalless draw.

On Wednesday evening, Real Bedford recovered from going a goal down early on at Enfield to win 3-1. Matt Hurley gave the hosts the lead in the second minute before second half strikes from Joe Evans and Ben Stevens, along with an own goal from Callum Taylor, saw the visitors take the points.

An early Dineen Hollifield Meegan strike proved the difference at Kidlington beat Leighton Town.

FIXTURES | THE WEEK AHEAD

Pitching In Southern League Premier South

TUESDAY 05 NOV 24

Walton & Hersham v Taunton Town

FRIDAY 08 NOV 24

Gosport Borough v AFC Totton

SATURDAY 09 NOV 24

Basingstoke Town v Poole Town

Bracknell Town v Dorchester Town

Chertsey Town v Swindon Supermarine

Frome Town v Winchester City

Hungerford Town v Walton & Hersham

Merthyr Town v Havant & Waterlooville

Plymouth Parkway v Marlow

Sholing v Gloucester City

Tiverton Town v Hanwell Town

Wimborne Town v Taunton Town

Pitching In Southern League Premier Central

TUESDAY 05 NOV 24

Lowestoft Town v Halesowen Town

SATURDAY 09 NOV 24

Barwell v Alvechurch

Bedford Town v St Ives Town

Biggleswade Town v Hitchin Town

Bishop's Stortford v Banbury United

Halesowen Town v AFC Sudbury

Harborough Town v Royston Town

Kettering Town v Redditch United

Leiston v Bromsgrove Sporting

Stamford v AFC Telford United

Stourbridge v Lowestoft Town

Stratford Town v Spalding United



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

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

Pitching In Southern League Division One South

TUESDAY 05 NOV 24

Malvern Town v Melksham Town

WEDNESDAY 06 NOV 24

Bemerton Heath Harlequins v Tavistock AFC

SATURDAY 09 NOV 24

Bashley v Bideford AFC

Bemerton Heath Harlequins v Melksham Town

Didcot Town v Shaftesbury

Exmouth Town v Malvern Town

Falmouth Town AFC v Cinderford Town

Helston Athletic v Bishops Cleeve

Larkhall Athletic v Evesham United

Mousehole v Bristol Manor Farm

Tavistock AFC v Willand Rovers

Thatcham Town v Cribbs

Yate Town v Westbury United

Pitching In Southern League Division One Central

TUESDAY 05 NOV 24

Barton Rovers v Kidlington

Berkhamsted v Kings Langley

SATURDAY 09 NOV 24

Beaconsfield Town v Barton Rovers

Enfield v Berkhamsted

Flackwell Heath v Ware

Kings Langley v AFC Dunstable

Leighton Town v Aylesbury United

North Leigh v Hadley

Real Bedford v Biggleswade FC

Stotfold v Kidlington

Thame United v Northwood

Welwyn Garden City v Hertford Town

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)



southern-football-league.co.uk

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