

PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE



SATURDAY EVENING E-NEWSPAPER

Saturday 21 September 2024

RAINING GOALS

There were goals aplenty this afternoon across our four divisions.

Leading the way were Hungerford Town who scored nine in a crazy 9-3 victory over Plymouth Parkway, in a game which saw the visitors actually take an early lead!

Elis Watts (pictured) helped himself to a hat-trick, whilst Dawid Regula bagged a brace for his first goals for his new club.

Elsewhere in the Premier South, Havant & Waterlooville hit five without reply against Frome Town and Taunton Town ran out 5-2 winners over Marlow with skipper, Tom Smith, helping himself to two of the goals.

In the Premier Central, Hitchin Town secured their first points of the season in fine style by going to Halesowen Town and winning 4-0. Kettering Town also hit four, with Nile Ranger amongst the scorers in their 4-1 triumph



over Lowestoft Town for his first League goal for the club.

The division also featured two five-goal thrillers as St. Ives Town came home with all three points from a 3-2 success at Bromsgrove Sporting, whilst Spalding United came from behind to win by the same scoreline against Biggleswade Town.

In one of only two games in Division One South, Willand Rovers had a commanding 4-0 triumph over Cribbs, whilst in Division One Central, King's Langley trailed 1-0 with just two minutes to go against Northwood, but recovered to win 3-1.

There was also Isuzu FA Trophy second round qualifying action for some of our clubs. Flackwell Heath hit six in their 6-1 victory over Broadbridge Heath. Well done to all of our Member Clubs who made it through, a full list of results is contained within.

REPORTS FROM ALL GAMES | STATS | FEATURES



Ever thought of volunteering to help your local football club?

There are many different volunteer roles in non-league football and Southern League football clubs need your help with them.

The Trident Leagues and Pitching In's online Volunteer Hub is the place where you can find opportunities and contact your local football club.

Please visit
PitchingInvolunteers.co.uk
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PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER SOUTH

Basingstoke Town 1 Sholing 1

The deadlock was finally broken on 64 minutes when Brad Targett gave the visitors the lead only for Curtis Angell to level the scores just over ten minutes later and that's how it remained as the spoils were shared.

Bracknell Town 1 AFC Totton 1

The visitors took an early lead when Ethan Taylor found the net in the third minute but the home side soon restored parity through Joel Rollinson.

After two goals within the opening six minutes, there was no further scoring as the game ended level.

Dorchester Town 3 Chertsey Town 1

Having bagged a brace last weekend, Olaf Konzsela was back on the goal trail to open the scoring for the home side midway through the opening period.

Then, on the stroke of half-time he bagged his second of the afternoon to double the advantage for his side.

Just before the half-hour mark a goal from Shaquille Gwengwe put the hosts firmly in the driving seat and the visitors' cause was not helped by the dismissal of Reuben Collins.

It was the away team who got the next goal through William Montague to reduce the arrears but it was too little, too late for them.

Hanwell Town 0 Gloucester City 0

There was no separating the two teams here as they played out a goalless draw. The visitors had a great chance to take the points with around 20 minutes to go but it was a case of defences on top here.

Havant & Waterlooville 5 Frome Town 0

There were nine minutes on the clock when Callum Kealy gave the hosts the lead here.

The lead was doubled with virtually the last kick of the first half from Leon Maloney before Brendan Wilson put the hosts well in command with a third goal in the opening exchanges of the second period.

With the hosts riding the crest of a wave, Harvey Bradbury made it 4-0 on 66 minutes and then completed the scoring with another in stoppage time.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER SOUTH

Merthyr Town 0 Gosport Borough 0

This game finished in a statement but there was an exciting finale as both sides had great chances to nick it late, which they were unable to take advantage of as the spoils were shared.

Poole Town 1 Walton & Hersham 1

The deadlock was broken by the visitors on eight minutes when Dan Rowe lobbed the ball home for his first goal for the club. An equaliser arrived with just under a quarter-of-an-hour to go thanks to Gerson Da Costa and that's how it remained as both sides had to settle for a point apiece.

Taunton Town 5 Marlow 2

The deadlock was broken by an intelligent goal from Owen Brain for the home side with 23 minutes on the clock and moments later, Alfie Moulden doubled the advantage.

More joy was to follow for the hosts before the half-hour mark when skipper, Tom Smith, continued his scoring form to make it 3-0 and he went on to notch another early in the second half to further extend the lead.

The visitors refused to let their heads drop and it wasn't long before Elijah Oladunjoye pulled a goal back but Tom Purrington stroked home a fifth for the home team. Harry Hoath hit a second for the away team as he made it 5-2 late on.

Hungerford Town 9 Plymouth Parkway 3

An early penalty for handball saw the visitors take the lead as Shane White converted from the spot with just a couple of minutes on the clock. Matters were levelled in the 11th minute courtesy of a goal from Elis Watts and by the quarter-hour mark, Joe Shepherd had turned the scoreline on its head.

In what was an open game, Watts weighed in with his second to make it 3-1 with just 17 minutes gone and four minutes later, Dawid Regula celebrated his first start with a fourth goal.

As half-time approached, Watts completed his hat-trick to heap more misery on the visitors and there was still time right at the end of a crazy opening period for Mitchel Beardmore to pull a goal back.

The second period in a similar vein to the first half as Regula hit his second of the afternoon to make it 6-2 on 49 minutes and then Dylan Jones pulled another goal back soon afterwards.

On the hour-mark, Baboucarr Jarra hit a seventh goal for the home team before Zidan Akers made it eight and Ramarni Medford-Smith weighed in with a ninth goal on a crazy afternoon.

Tiverton Town 2 Winchester City 1

Just before the half-hour mark, the home team got their noses in front when Joe Parker was able to fire home.

The equaliser came in the opening exchanges of the second period when Oliver Griggs was on hand to find the net.

Late drama saw Dylan Jones fire home to win it for the hosts at the death.

Wimborne Town 0 Swindon Supermarine 0

The visitors thought that they had taken the lead early in the second half when Michael Fernandes converted from the spot, but the effort was ruled out and Fernandes duly received his second yellow card.

This game may not have had goals, but it had another red card when Sam Jackson was dismissed for the home side late on to make it 10v10.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER CENTRAL

AFC Sudbury 2 AFC Telford United 2

It was the visitors who broke the deadlock midway through the first half when Jordan Piggott found the net but just before the half-hour mark the scores were levelled thanks to a Joe Neal penalty.

Just past the hour-mark, Liam Pearce was able to give the home side the lead for the first time in the game.

On 88 minutes, Myles Cowling was sent off for the home side, as the visitors won a penalty which Dior Angus converted to make it 2-2.

Alvechurch 0 Stamford 1

The top two went head-to-head in our Game of the Day and it was a cagey encounter with neither team able to take the initiative until Will Glennon broke the deadlock with a quarter-of-an-hour to go. That is how it remained as the visitors took home a big three points to go back to the top of the table.

Barwell 0 Leiston 0

Neither team were able to make the break through here as defences remained on top. A heavy rain storm saw the start of the second period delayed slightly before the sun came out but it failed to inspire any goals.

Bedford Town 2 Redditch United 0

The hosts were finally back in action at their home ground and celebrated by taking the lead early in the second half through Rob Howard.

Leon Loboit was able to double the advantage just before the hour-mark to make it a successful homecoming for his side.

Bishop's Stortford 3 Stourbridge 1

It didn't take new signing, Souleyman Mandey, long to get into his stride as he gave the visitors a sixth minute lead here.

The home side managed to turn things around with an improved second half showing as Kian Harness got them back on level terms and less than five minutes later, Charlie Castle put them ahead.

They made the points safe through Rashawn Scott at the end.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER CENTRAL

Halesowen Town 0 Hitchin Town 4

It was the visitors who took the lead here when Lewis Barker was able to head the ball home and they were in dreamland as Rio Deall added a second goal shortly afterwards as he was alert to stroke home a rebound.

The second period was just three minutes old when George Morrall further extended the visitors' lead.

A thoroughly miserable afternoon was complete for the home side when they conceded a fourth in stoppage time as Joseph Chidyausiku got his name on the scoresheet.

Kettering Town 4 Lowestoft Town 1

Five minutes before half-time and the home side took the lead when Dan Jarvis' strike took a wicked deflection on its way into the net to open the scoring.

The second half was just four minutes old when Luca Miller doubled the home side's lead and then Nile Ranger went on to add a third just past the hour-mark with his first League goal for the club.

As the clock ticked down, Jarvis grabbed another goal to make it 4-0, but the visitors kept plugging away and were rewarded when Joseph Duffy notched a consolation effort.



Royston Town 1 Banbury United 0

The first goal arrived midway through the first half when Luke Johnson edged the hosts in front and that is how it remained as the home side were able to secure a deserved three points in what was a closely-fought encounter.

Spalding United 3 Biggleswade Town 2

The deadlock was broken by the away team when Cyrus Babaie-Gumbs was on hand to turn the ball home but it was cancelled out when Tyler Winters equalised right on half-time from the penalty spot.

The second period was just seconds old when Lewis Hilliard put the hosts ahead direct from a corner but a second goal from Babaie-Gumbs levelled matters just past the hour-mark.

A firm header from Glenn Walker put the hosts back in front and it proved to be the winning goal in an entertaining encounter.

Stratford Town 0 Harborough Town 0

This was a game of two halves as the hosts looked the better side in the first half and then the visitors had the edge after the break.

The away team missed from the penalty spot in the second half as both teams had to settle for a point each.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE SOUTH & CENTRAL

Didcot Town 1 Westbury United 0 (Division One South)

After a goalless first half, it took just seconds after the restart for Jenson Wright to give the hosts the lead and that was to prove to be the all-important goal as the home team were able to secure all three points.

Willand Rovers 4 Cribbs 0 (Division One South)

The home side wasted little time in getting their noses in front as Harvey Dorothy fired home within the opening three minutes.

There was a second goal for the hosts right on half-time as Owen Howe was in the right place at the right time to double the advantage.

A late effort from Oliver Sully made the points safe for the hosts before River Allen finished a flowing move at the death to make it 4-0.

Kidlington 1 Biggleswade FC 3 (Division One Central)

The home side edged in front when Cheyce Grant found the net just past the quarter-hour mark but they were pegged back in first half stoppage time as Lee Northfield was able to level the scores.

The visitors went in front when Dan Bond stayed cool to convert from the penalty spot with 15 minutes left on the clock and he added a third in stoppage time to make the points safe.

Kings Langley 3 Northwood 1 (Division One Central)

This game finally came to life on 52 minutes when Archie James put the visitors in front but their hearts were broken late on when Charne Lemba was able to produce an equaliser and Rayan Clarke proceeded to score a 93rd minute winner for the hosts.

There was added gloss put onto the scoreline as Clarke helped himself to another with virtually the last kick.

Ware 1 Welwyn Garden City 2 (Division One Central)

It was Bailey Stevenson who drew first blood for the visitors as he fired them ahead on the 20-minute mark.

As the half-time interval approached, Joe Dearman was able to level the scores.

With 20 minutes to go, the home team were reduced to ten men when Lewis Thomas saw red for his second booking and there was further woe when Reece Cameron fired a stoppage time winner for the visitors.

The Railwaymen

Didcot Town

Westbury United
21st Sept
KO 3PM

Pitching In Southern League
Division One South

ISSUE NO. 04
2024/25

PITCHING IN

SINCE



ISUZU FA TROPHY SECOND ROUND QUALIFYING

Real Bedford 4 Leighton Town 0 (played Friday)
Berkhamsted 4 Tilbury 0
Evesham United 2 Bristol Manor Farm 2 (Bristol Manor Farm win 5-3 on pens)
Exmouth Town 1 Horndean 2
Felixstowe & Walton United 2 Enfield FC 1
Flackwell Heath 6 Broadbridge Heath 1
Hadley 4 Ipswich Wanderers 1
Leverstock Green 3 Barton Rovers 4
Melksham Town 2 Bishops Cleeve 0
Mousehole 3 Falmouth Town AFC 1
Tavistock AFC 3 North Leigh 0
Westfield 1 Thame United 3
Yate Town 2 Bideford AFC 0



Congratulations to all of the winners, the draw for the next round will take place on Monday.



WHERE'S MY TOWEL?

These are heady days for Helston Athletic. Sitting proudly on top of the Pitching In Southern League Division One South in what is their first-ever taste of Step 4 football, life is good for the Cornish club.

Director of Football, Steve Massey, has achieved much in the game. As a player he graced the likes of Stockport County, AFC Bournemouth, Peterborough United, Northampton Town, Hull City, Cambridge United and Wrexham, for whom he appeared and scored in the European Cup Winners' Cup competition, during a 15-year career as a professional.

He has also managed and coached at a number of clubs, including Truro City, where he had three separate spells at the helm, and Falmouth Town. These days, he clocks up the miles travelling to games to watch forthcoming opponents and potential signings in action.

He has a wealth of stories from his time in the game, alongside some strong opinions, all of which he has put into several books, including one on his fascinating life story. "Deciding to sit down and attempt to write my life story – both in and out of football – was not the result of a single 'light bulb' moment," he admitted to us. "In one sense, it had been a thought nagging away in the back of my mind for years. Several factors then brought this vague idea into sharper focus. I had a mild stroke in January 2021 and a health scare like that is a wake-up call.

"It made me think about my own mortality, about priorities and making sense of what had happened – for better and for worse – during the sixty-odd years I had been alive. "Writing my autobiography was a way to put my life in order. This undoubtedly was one of the reasons I decided to step away from the hot-seat of managing a non-League football club the following year..



FAMILY MATTERS | Steve Massey and family at his book launch

You could say that these two events made it seem like the ideal moment to put pen to paper, or finger to keyboard.

"Nevertheless, the thought of sifting through the misty memory banks – childhood, professional football career, marriage, children, running businesses, divorce etc. – was a daunting prospect. Where would I start? I put a message out on social media along those lines; 'Would love to write a book about my career and life, but...'

"A football fan who follows me on Twitter – as it was called back in 2022 – replied, suggesting that I should get offline, pick up a pen and start at the beginning. 'Stop procrastinating!' Without realising it, he had hit the proverbial nail on the head. I'm very good at putting things off. Nor did I have the ability and discipline to write a book by myself. I lacked self-confidence when it came to both the writing process itself and the reliability of my memory, particularly since that stroke. I needed help if the autobiography was going to be anything more than a pipe dream.

"After exchanging a series of private messages, that football fan – Rodney Marshall – suggested we meet up and discuss writing the book together. I knew that he had watched me play during my 18 months at Northampton Town back in the early 1980s. However, I knew nothing else about him. Mildly concerned that he might be some sort of 'anorak' with old photos from my playing days on his bedroom walls, I googled him and found that he had written dozens of books on a wide range of topics. Maybe this could lead to a collaboration after all.

HELSTON ATHLETIC | STEVE MASSEY

“We met up on a hot June weekend in a brand-new hotel in the centre of Milton Keynes. We sat on the top floor, the glass walls offering panoramic views of the park, canal and cityscape. Rodney had done his homework on my career, arrived with notes, a miniature tape recorder and suggested that we should record our first session. He even had a proposed title for the book, taken from an anecdote I told him over the phone about arriving in non-League football and – as a pampered ex-pro – expecting everything to be laid out in the dressing room for me.

“I was already impressed! I also liked his suggestion of how we could approach the project. He would ask me questions, and I could ramble on about my earliest memories. The following day he would go back to Suffolk, I would drive home to Cornwall, and wait to hear from him. If I liked the way he had assembled my memories into written form, we could continue the arrangement.

“I wasn’t expecting to hear from him for a week or two. We had recorded six hours of memories and transcribing would be a long, laborious process. I had also gone off on tangents. Not surprisingly, I guess, when you consider that I had been mentally time travelling back to the 1960s! Less than 48 hours later, the opening two chapters ‘dropped’. Somehow, he had turned my chaotic ramblings into polished prose. I was reading my own memories, the beginning of my life story, in what was still my ‘voice’, but Rodney had given it structure and order. I was incredibly excited.

“Over the next six months we met up every four weeks and continued the collaborative process. Always face-to-face, never remotely. Each time he arrived prepared; armed with statistics, firing difficult questions, even challenging some of the decisions I had made, professional and personal.

“After a couple of hours, I’d feel my head frazzling. It was mentally draining, and – at times – emotionally so when I recalled either people like my father who had passed away, or moments of personal elation or deflation.

Nevertheless, as the months passed, and the book was growing, it struck me that the process was incredibly therapeutic. It was as if my life had been jigsaw pieces stuck in a box and now we were piecing it together, forming a clear picture.

“We revisited a few of my old haunts, such as the County Ground Northampton, where the football pitch and the club’s main stand that my family used to sit in have long since vanished; and the seafront at Bournemouth where we would be sent on punishing pre-season runs along the beach from one pier to the other. You could almost feel the past still lingering, like a friendly ghost.

“When you collaborate with someone closely on your life story, you develop a rapport, a mutual trust. By the time we completed the book, Rodney was often able to read my mind. We visited the leisure parks which I used to co-own with my ex-wife. On a hot summer’s afternoon, we went to my lock-up in Torbay, like raiders of the lost ark, searching out old photos and souvenirs which could go into the limited first edition of the book.

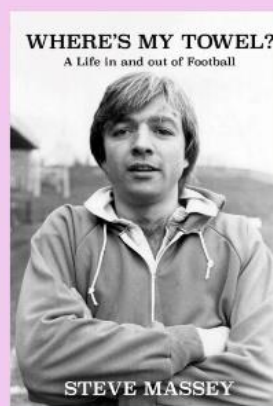
“Once the edited text was complete, we discussed how to publish and market the book. Having found an efficient printing press company, decided on numbers for both hardback and paperback, we contacted some of my ex-clubs to organise book signing events. We also put together a ‘main launch’ in Truro, with two hundred people invited to share a wonderful evening of nostalgia, amidst glasses of fizz and Roy Keane style prawn sandwiches. Signing copies of the book at the Hall of Cornwall that evening brought home to me how far we had come in half a year. From a vague notion in the virtual world to a physical book in the real one.

“It was a truly wonderful collaboration with someone who was always checking facts, verifying my memories, nagging me about future meetings, etc., keeping the project on the move. Which is what I needed. It would not have materialised without Rodney’s drive. That is why *Where’s My Towel?* is my story, but our book.”

‘Where’s My Towel? A Life in and out of Football’ by Steve Massey and Rodney Marshall is available via:

amazon.co.uk/Wheres-My-Towel-Life-Football/dp/B0BN277C35

Copies of Steve’s other books, ‘Life’s A Pitch: Musings on Football Past, Present and Future’ and ‘Trials, Tribulations... Triumphs? A Diary of Helston Athletic 2023/24’ are also available.



NEWS ROUND-UP

DORCHESTER TOWN | MAKING A STATEMENT

Dorchester Town showed their credentials last weekend as they came from behind to inflict AFC Totton's first defeat of the season.

The Dorset outfit have tasted defeat just once in seven Pitching In Southern League Premier South outings this term to sit in amongst the leading pack.

"It's always good to show people what we are capable of," said Wayne Robinson, who weighed in with the Magpies' third goal. "We went into the game as underdogs and trailing at half-time, we were confident that we could turn things around.

"A couple of quickfire goals from Olaf put us in front and then I was able to grab a third; it's always nice to get on the scoresheet and that goal gave us a bit of breathing space with a two-goal cushion and even though they pulled a goal back late on, we were able to hold on to what was a big three points.

"The morale of the squad is building all of the time as the new players gel into the group. It's been a good start to the season, though; there's a lot of talent here and one defeat from seven is a good record.

"I am looking forward to seeing what the season holds in store; this is a good club with a good fan base who are really supportive. It's early days still, but we're ready for the battles ahead and hopefully we can strengthen our place amongst the front-runners.

"There's no reason why we can't get into the play-offs and hopefully I can contribute with the goals to help us get there."

Robinson and his team-mates were back in home action earlier today as they took on Chertsey Town.



BISHOPS CLEEVE | BEST DAY EVER FOR CLAYTON

There was joy for Bishops Cleeve last weekend as they celebrated one of the greatest days in their history by comprehensively beating Torquay United 3-0 in the Emirates FA Cup second round qualifying in front of a crowd of almost 1,200.

Goalkeeper, Lewis Clayton, played his part with a clean sheet in what was a fantastic performance by everyone involved on and off the pitch.

"You can't really put into words how good the day was," Clayton told us. "I don't think I'll have a better day on a football pitch, that's for sure.

"The whole football club made it a day to remember, even before a ball was kicked, the preparations and build-up was fantastic, everyone came together to do their bit and the convincing win was the final piece of the jigsaw.

"We felt great going into the game. We were by far the underdogs, but we saw it as a free hit, the chance to just go out there, fear nothing, play with freedom and enjoy the occasion.

"We certainly did that! Every player made a contribution and as a squad we should be extremely proud of what we have achieved, something that will be remembered for years to come.

"I never even thought about being able to keep a clean sheet before the game; it was one of those things you dream about, but as a defensive unit we've been solid for the past few games, and we took that into Saturday.

"It's really created a buzz around the local area and hopefully it will inspire the locals to come along and support us more. Having their support was incredible and played a huge part in the win.

"That's seven clean sheets in all competitions for me now this season and it's a massive confidence boost. As a group we're hungry for more and we know beyond doubt now what we are capable of when things click into place.

"We're a good footballing side and we just need to find that extra level of consistency to take us that extra step further.

"This is sure to give us an extra boost in our quest to make the play-offs having come close in each of the last two seasons.

"We've also got another home draw to look forward to in the next round of the FA Cup against a Chesham United side who are in the same League of Torquay having gained promotion at the end of last season.

"Hopefully we can make home advantage count once more and create some more special memories."



INFLUENCER

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

SAM BENNETT (SPALDING UNITED) > HARRY KANE

The player that influenced me the most was Harry Kane. Just his all-round centre forward play is amazing and he is such a modern-day striker who can do it all!

STOTFOLD | WARRIOR GOOCH

Stotfold could have been forgiven for thinking that it was going to be another one of those days ahead of last weekend's game at Beaconsfield Town.

With defeats in each of their opening three Pitching In Southern League Division One Central games, their preparations were hit when goalkeeper, Liam Gooch, dislocated his thumb in the warm-up.

But the 26 year-old battled on and played through the pain barrier to help his team secure their first point of the season from a 2-2 draw... oh, and he also saved a penalty along the way!

"I took a ball in the warm-up and felt my thumb go," he told us. "It was very painful, but the pain-killers and adrenaline got me through as there was no way I was going to let the lads down.

"I managed to get through the 90 minutes, but I definitely knew about it the morning after!

"It was worth it to help us get our first point on the board and a good away draw. We created chances in both halves and took our goals well.

"The lads in front of me worked really hard all afternoon. I think Beaconsfield knew I'd picked up the injury because they bombarded us straight from kick-off and I was called into action within the opening 30 seconds!

"There were opportunities at both ends and it was also nice to save a penalty too on our way to securing a point.

"We can start to build on it now; it's been a tough start for us, we've played some fancied sides but that is no excuse, we know that we have to be better and things are starting to click into place through sheer hard work.

"Coming into the season we lost a few key players and it is difficult to fill those boots, particularly with so many teams in the local area all vying for the same players and having bigger budgets than ours to go and get them.

"But there's no reason why we can't push on now and build some momentum. It's still very early doors, we've only played four League games, so there is a long way to go.

"Things are shaping up to be similar to last season where everyone is capable of beating each other. There are also plenty of local games for us to look forward to, so we're looking forward to what lies in store during the weeks and months ahead.

"I just want to be playing as much as possible and continue to enjoy my football... that's the reason we do it, isn't it?

"As a team, we'll give it our all and look to be up there challenging at the right end of the table."

Gooch has a free weekend to recover before his team host Aylesbury United on September 28.

EXMOUTH TOWN | BIG TURNAROUND

What a difference 12 months makes. This time last year, Exmouth Town were struggling at the foot of the Pitching In Southern League Division One South table, now they are amongst the early leading pack having ended Yate Town's 100% start to their League campaign with a 2-0 victory last Saturday.

We asked both Ben Griffith, who scored their second goal, and Joe Belsten, whether they have been surprised by the start that their team has made to the season?

"Not at all," replied Griffith without hesitation. "We put in some good performances throughout pre-season and it's been clear since then that the team has knitted together really well.

"We've had some good results so far and long may it continue."

Belsten agreed: "There has been a real buzz around the club since pre-season. We recruited well over the summer and the target was to get off to a solid start and then take things from there, which has been the case so far."

Three wins and a draw sees the Devon outfit sit on ten points after five games, with last Saturday's success sending out a clear message to the rest of the division that they mean business.

"It was a great result for us at the weekend," added Griffith. "Everyone worked their socks off and stuck together; we were hard to break down and looked lively when we got the ball in their final third.

"We've started the season positively and we're playing well, so if we can keep doing this, then we're going to enjoy what's to come over the weeks and months ahead.

"It's always a tight League and it looks as though it's going to be the same again this time around. There are plenty of teams who will fancy their chances of being involved in the play-offs.

"We'll be fighting to finish as high as we can and I'll be looking to contribute with as many goals as possible to help in this. It was nice to get my name on the scoresheet at the weekend, particularly as the goal doubled our lead and gave us a bit of breathing space."

Belsten was particularly impressed with Yate Town.

"We've played them twice now already this season," he continued. "In my opinion, they are the best side that I've come up against since I have been at this level, so to beat them on Saturday was a great result for us and shows what we are capable of.

"We played a much more attacking style against them at the weekend, and that suits us. We're in a great place as a group, playing some neat football with real confidence.

"I'm really enjoying my football right now and the way the team plays is perfect for me. This level is so competitive and open, it's exciting to see what we can go on and achieve.

"We went into the season aiming for the play-offs and our performances since then has only added fuel to the fire in what we can achieve.

"Hopefully I can keep making a contribution with as many assists as possible and maybe even chip in with a goal or two along the way!"

It's a break from League action today as they host Horndean in the second round qualifying of the Isuzu FA Trophy Their opponents sit fourth in the Pitching In Isthmian League South Central table



FIXTURES | THE WEEK AHEAD

Pitching In Southern League Premier South

TUESDAY 24 SEP 24

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

WEDNESDAY 25 SEP 24

Havant & Waterlooville v Marlow

SATURDAY 28 SEP 24

Merthyr Town v Wimborne Town
Sholing v Havant & Waterlooville

Pitching In Southern League Premier Central

MONDAY 23 SEP 24

Barwell v AFC Telford United

TUESDAY 24 SEP 24

Bedford Town v Leiston
Bishop's Stortford v Biggleswade Town
Bromsgrove Sporting v Redditch United
Halesowen Town v Harborough Town
Kettering Town v Stamford
Royston Town v Hitchin Town
Spalding United v Lowestoft Town
Stratford Town v Banbury United

SATURDAY 28 SEP 24

Alvechurch v Stourbridge
Bedford Town v AFC Sudbury
Halesowen Town v Stratford 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

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

Pitching In Southern League Division One South

TUESDAY 24 SEP 24

Yate Town v Larkhall Athletic

SATURDAY 28 SEP 24

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

Pitching In Southern League Division One Central

TUESDAY 24 SEP 24

Berkhamsted v Northwood

FRIDAY 27 SEP 24

Kings Langley v Thame United

SATURDAY 28 SEP 24

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

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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