

PRE VIEW MAG

ISSUE #02 | 15-17 AUGUST 2025



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SOUTHERN
FOOTBALL LEAGUE

YOUR FRIDAY GUIDE
TO ALL OF THE
WEEKEND ACTION



FEELING ROMANTIC?

4-PAGE EMIRATES FA CUP PREVIEW INSIDE



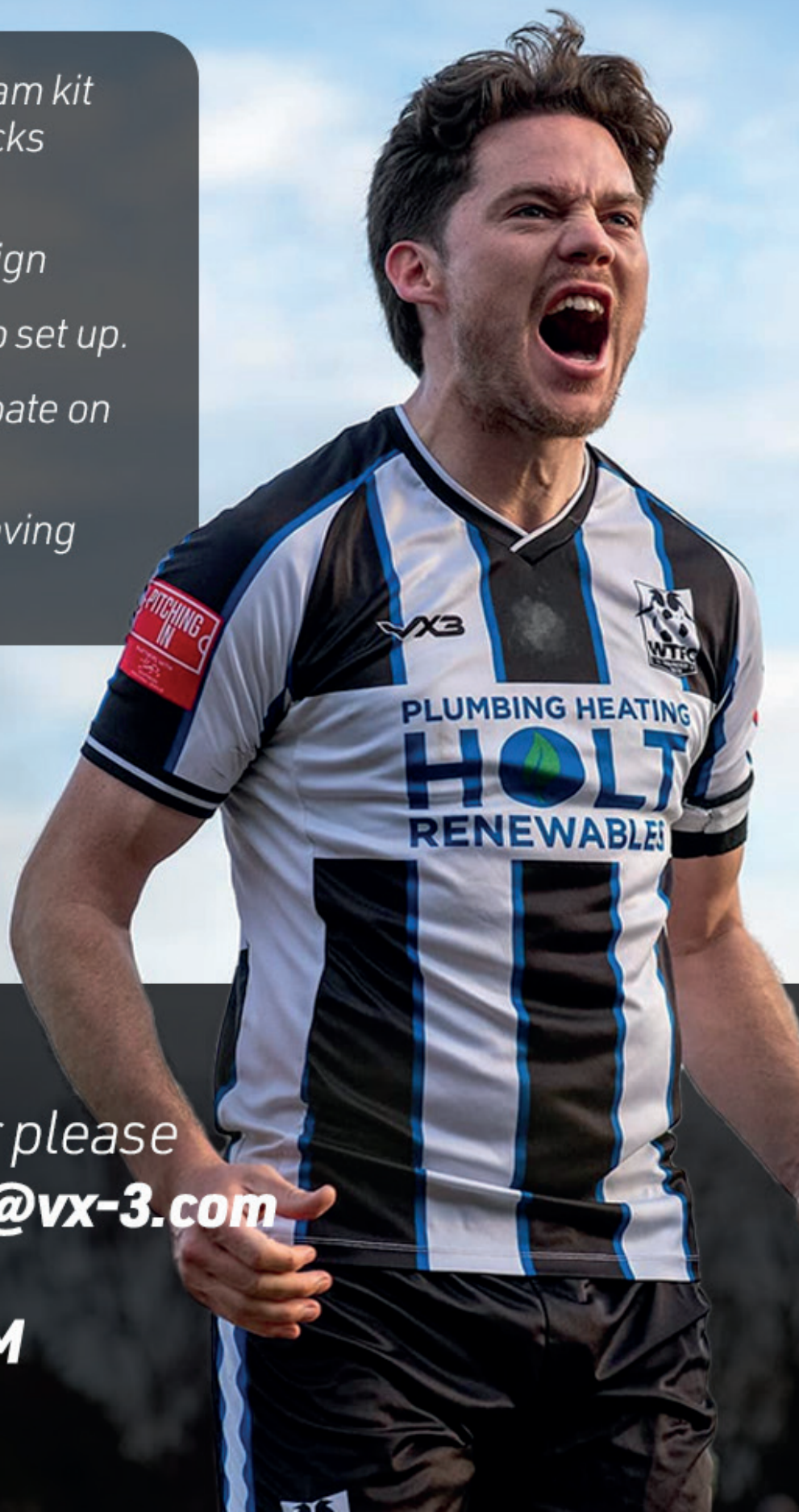
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DYNO-ROD BECOMES FIRST TRIDENT-WIDE SPONSOR

Amidst rising attendances and public affirmation that non-League football provides a safe environment at affordable prices compared to professional football, Dyno-Rod is to become the first official partner titled – “Plumbing and Drainage partner” for the Isthmian, Northern Premier, Isthmian and Southern leagues, known collectively as the Trident Leagues.

The UK's largest plumbing and drainage service provider, employing over 1,500 local engineers and support staff from their communities nationally, Dyno-Rod operates throughout the UK visiting approximately one million customers, as a franchise business offering 24/7 emergency services for both domestic and commercial customers. Specializing in plumbing and drainage repairs, from blocked and burst pipes to full commercial solutions at the heart of our communities, they keep the UK flowing.

This Partnership becomes the first deal to be concluded by the Trident Leagues - tridentleagues.com - and is also the first to be brokered by leading global sports marketing agency SPORTFIVE on their behalf.

Under the terms of the new partnership, which is subject to contract, the Dyno-Rod logo will appear on the back of official bench wear or training bibs worn by the 264 clubs at Steps 3-4

of non-League football (tiers 7-8 of the English football pyramid) and will also appear on the electronic sub boards used at over 3,000 matches per season including FA Cup and FA Trophy ties.

Dyno-Rod will also be working at a local level with clubs to strengthen community links to mutual benefit, through club activations, matchday sponsorships, and educational initiatives focused on water safety and sustainability.

Explaining their decision to invest in this level of football, Dyno-Rod's Lee Parry, Network Performance and Strategy Manager, said: “We're thrilled to team up with the Trident Leagues. Football is a cornerstone of communities, and we're proud to play a part in supporting the infrastructure that keeps these clubs running smoothly.”

For more information about Dyno-Rod and its services, visit: dyno.com



SCORE PREDICTOR

Throughout the 2025/26 season we are going to pit the players against the media and supporters in our score prediction competition.

The rules are simple; each week we select a game at random from each of our four divisions and then invite representatives to make their predictions. It's three points for getting the score correct, one point for getting the right result and nothing an incorrect score/result.

To take part, email:
news@southern-football-league.co.uk

Last week, Jon and Rich from Peacocks Radio triumphed for the Media as they secured four points, with Stamford AFC's Elliott Durrell running them close on three points. Sadly, for Chris Blake, there were no points for the Fans.

This week we are joined by Royston Town's long-serving Adam Murray, who represents the Players, and he does battle with Southern League Media Manager, Andy Poole, and Bideford AFC Fan, David Mounce.

WEEK TWO	Adam Murray	Andy Poole	David Mounce
Hanwell Town v Yate Town	2-0	2-1	1-1
Banbury United V Leiston	2-1	3-1	2-0
Falmouth Town v Bideford AFC (FA Cup)	3-1	0-1	1-2
Winchester City V Bashley (FA Cup)	1-1	4-2	2-1

LEADER BOARD	Score Correct	Result Correct	Points
Media	1	1	4
Player	1	0	3
Supporters	0	0	0

LEAGUE STANDINGS 2025-26



Premier Division South

#	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Gloucester City	2	1	0	0	4	2	1	0	0	2	1	3	6
2	Taunton Town	2	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	3	2	2	6
3	Berkhamsted Town	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	6
4	Sholing	2	1	0	0	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	4
5	Evesham United	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	2	4
6	Basingstoke Town	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	4
7	Farnham Town	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	3	1	4
8	Walton & Hersham	2	1	0	0	6	3	0	0	1	0	1	2	3
9	Chertsey Town	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	3
10	Tiverton Town	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	3	1	0	3
11	Weymouth	2	0	0	1	1	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	3
12	Wimborne Town	2	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	3
13	Hanwell Town	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3
14	Poole Town	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	4	-2	3
15	Uxbridge	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	2
16	Bracknell Town	2	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	1
17	Yate Town	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	-1	1
18	Gosport Borough	2	0	1	0	3	3	0	0	1	2	4	-2	1
19	Dorchester Town	2	0	0	1	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	-2	1
20	Hungerford Town	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	-2	0
21	Havant and Waterlooville	2	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	1	3	-3	0
22	Plymouth Parkway	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	3	6	-5	0

Premier Division Central

#	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Bishop's Stortford	2	1	0	0	6	1	1	0	0	2	0	7	6
2	Kettering Town	2	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	4	3	4	6
3	Harborough Town	2	1	1	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
4	Banbury United	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	3	4
5	Halesowen Town	2	1	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	2	2	2	4
6	Stourbridge	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	4
7	Quorn	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	4
8	Real Bedford	2	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	4
9	St Ives Town	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	3
10	Barwell	2	1	0	0	3	2	0	0	1	1	3	-1	3
11	Bromsgrove Sporting	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	2	1	-1	3
12	Bury Town	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	-1	3
13	Redditch United	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	-1	3
14	AFC Sudbury	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	6	-3	3
15	Spalding United	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	-1	1
16	Alvechurch	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	-1	1
17	Worcester City	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	-1	1
18	Stamford AFC	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	-1	1
19	Leiston	2	0	1	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	3	-3	1
20	Needham Market	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	-4	1
21	Royston Town	2	0	0	1	3	4	0	0	1	0	1	-2	0
22	Stratford Town	2	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	-4	0

Weekend Action

Bracknell Town v Poole Town
Chertsey Town v Farnham Town
Dorchester Town v Walton & Hersham
Evesham United v Havant & Waterlooville
Gosport Borough v Berkhamsted
Hanwell Town v Yate Town
Hungerford Town v Tiverton Town
Plymouth Parkway v Gloucester City
Sholing v Weymouth
Taunton Town v Basingstoke Town
Wimborne Town v Uxbridge

Weekend Action

Alvechurch v AFC Sudbury
Banbury United v Leiston
Bishop's Stortford v Stamford
Bromsgrove Sporting v Spalding United
Bury Town v Harborough Town
Halesowen Town v Real Bedford
Kettering Town v Barwell
Needham Market v Worcester City
Quorn v Stratford Town
Redditch United v Royston Town
St Ives Town v Stourbridge

Division One South

#	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Shaftesbury	2	1	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	5	1	8	6
2	Portishead Town	2	1	0	0	6	0	1	0	0	3	2	7	6
3	Bishop's Cleeve	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	7	3	5	6
4	Frome Town	2	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	3	1	5	6
5	Malvern Town	2	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	2	0	5	6
6	Westbury United	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	6
7	Melksham Town	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	4
8	Hartpury	2	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	1	2	1	3
9	Swindon Supermarine	2	1	0	0	4	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	3
10	Bristol Manor Farm	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	3	0	3
11	Mousehole	2	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	3
12	Winchester City	2	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	3
13	Sporting Club Inkberrow	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	-1	3
14	Tavistock	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	-2	3
15	Falmouth Town	2	0	1	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	1	-1	1
16	Bashley	2	0	0	1	1	3	0	1	0	2	2	-2	1
17	Willand Rovers	2	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	-2	1
18	Exmouth Town	2	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	4	-3	0
19	Larkhall Athletic	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	-3	0
20	Bideford	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	4	-5	0
21	Brixham	2	0	0	1	1	5	0	0	1	0	3	-7	0
22	Didcot Town	2	0	0	1	3	7	0	0	1	0	6	-10	0

Division One Central

#	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Leighton Town	2	1	0	0	4	1	1	0	0	4	1	6	6
2	Biggleswade FC	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	5	2	3	6
3	Barton Rovers	2	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	2	1	3	6
4	Biggleswade Town	2	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	6
5	Flackwell Heath	2	1	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	1	1	4	4
6	Beaconsfield Town	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	3	4
7	AFC Dunstable	2	0	1	0	2	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	4
8	Hertford Town	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
9	Welwyn Garden City	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	4	2	1	3
10	Marlow	2	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	3
11	Hitchin Town	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	3
12	London Lions	2	1	0	0	5	1	0	0	1	0	4	0	3
13	Hadley	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	3
14	Ware	2	1	0	0	5	4	0	0	1	1	4	-2	3
15	Leverstock Green	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	-1	1
16	Northwood	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	2	2	-2	1
17	Aylesbury United	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	-3	1
18	Enfield	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	-1	0
19	Stotfold	2	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	4	5	-4	0
20	Milton Keynes Irish	2	0	0	2	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	-4	0
21	Rayners Lane	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	5	-5	0
22	Thame United	2	0	0	1	1	4	0	0	1	0	2	-5	0

Weekend Action

Emirates FA Cup Preliminary Round fixtures take place this weekend...



Image | Henry Nunn

Weekend Action

Emirates FA Cup Preliminary Round fixtures take place this weekend...



Featured Match

TAUNTON TOWN v BASINGSTOKE TOWN

This encounter pits two unbeaten sides up against each other.

Taunton Town have successive hard-earned victories to their name so far having won 3-2 at Havant & Waterlooville on the opening day before following it up with a 2-1 triumph over newly-promoted Yate Town on Wednesday evening.

They take on a Basingstoke Town outfit who were boosted by the eve-of-season capture of Charlie Austin, who made a goalscoring debut in the 2-0 opening day victory over Wimborne Town and then made a 20-minute appearance in Tuesday's 1-1 draw at Evesham United.

"We've been given a tough run of opening fixtures, but they're all tough in this League," said Taunton Town manager, Richard Luffman. "We looked a bit leggy on Tuesday but that's a result of how hard we've worked over the past week; the main thing is we've got six points to our name from what has been a positive start in a difficult League.

"It's becoming stronger and more resourced every season. I feel sorry for the clubs in the south-east because some of the money being spent must make recruitment for them even more challenging.

"We've been able to add some top players for this level over the summer; we've added pace and power to an already-talented group. We've implemented a new style in our pre-season games, which we've taken into our League games and we're proud of the unbeaten run that we're currently on across these games.



Taunton Town Manager, Richard Luffman

"Things are going well but there's still a long way to go and anything can happen. I think Farnham Town, Bracknell Town and Gloucester City will expect top five. Tom has got a good side together at Dorchester Town and they have stated they are confident of winning it, despite their slow start, so I think these four teams will be right up there.

"There's another ten clubs, of which we are included in that, who will feel that they can also challenge amongst the leading pack, so it's going to be a highly competitive season.

"Our aims are to improve on last season and have something to play for come April, while continuing to build on the positivity with our amazing supporters."

The Peacocks' latest test comes in the shape of a Basingstoke Town outfit who have the generosity of their fans to thank for allowing them to add FA Premier League quality to their attacking options in the shape of Charlie Austin, who is fresh from helping AFC Totton secure promotion from this level at the end of last term.

"Securing the services of Charlie is huge news for this football club," stated manager, Dan Brownlie. "It's made even bigger by the way in which it happened.

"I first spoke to him about two months ago; it was a rather tongue-in-cheek exchange at first, but it quickly became apparent that the deal could be do-able.

"It was obvious that we needed help to make it happen, so we emailed a few people and the responses that we got back allowed us to get the deal done.

"We were nervous about contacting our members about this, but there was a real appetite amongst them to do what they could to make it happen. It's probably not how things are usually done, but it shows the power of this football club.

"So many people have played their part and we're extremely grateful. Charlie's patience as well as his openness, honesty and good nature made the whole thing work and we've already started to reap the benefits of his presence on the pitch.

"He's a brilliant goalscorer, leader, organiser and just someone who makes those around him better.

"The willingness to win that he has is infectious. He just loves scoring goals and winning football matches regardless of the level he's playing at."



Basingstoke Town's Charlie Austin
Image | Basingstoke Town FC

The Rest of the Action

Having picked up a point from their opening two games, Bracknell Town, will have their sights set on a first win of the campaign as they host a Poole Town outfit who will be reeling from a 4-1 reverse at Sholing on Tuesday evening.

For the second home game in quick succession, Chertsey Town welcome newly-promoted opposition as they take on Farnham Town whose introduction to life at this level has seen them beat Hungerford Town 1-0 on the opening day of the campaign before sharing the spoils in a dramatic 3-3 draw at Gosport Borough on Wednesday evening.

It's been a stuttering start for Dorchester Town, who lost at home to Tiverton Town in midweek, and they face a Walton & Hersham side who slipped to defeat at Hanwell Town in their last outing. Another of the fancied sides who are yet to get into gear are Havant & Waterlooville, who have lost both of their games so far, and they won't be relishing a tip to an Evesham United outfit with a win and a draw to their name having secured a return to this level following a lengthy absence at the end of last season.

Gosport Borough will be seeking their first win as they host a Berkhamsted side who have built on the momentum of last season's play-off final success by winning their opening two games. Also eyeing a first win is Yate Town who go to Hanwell Town and Hungerford Town, two defeats in a row so far, who welcome a Tiverton Town outfit buoyed by Tuesday's first triumph.

There's contrasting fortunes as Plymouth Parkway host Gloucester City with the home team bottom of the early table and the visitors riding high as the very early leaders. The Tigers will have nightmares of their mauling at this venue last term.

A confident Sholing welcome a Weymouth side who were able



Sholing celebrate

Image | Sholing FC

to get their first success on the board this season with victory at the aforementioned Plymouth Parkway on Tuesday evening, whilst Wimborne Town, who have a win and defeat to their name so far, entertain new-boys, Uxbridge, who have drawn both of their games so far.

Featured Match

ALVECHURCH v AFC SUDBURY

Two sides who will be looking to bounce back from disappointing defeats on Tuesday evening are Alvechurch and AFC Sudbury.

For Alvechurch, they went down to a 2-1 home derby day reverse at the hands of Bromsgrove Sporting, whilst AFC Sudbury had a night to forget at Bishop's Stortford as they succumbed by six goals to one.

But, as they say, it's a marathon not a sprint and long-standing Alvechurch chairman, Richard Thorndike, still has the passion burning bright and is still chasing dreams despite entering his 16th season in the role.

"I'm immensely proud of how far we have come," he told us. "I think it's fair to say we've established ourselves as a regular Step 3 club now despite being little more than a village team with a small fan base.

"Personally, I'm still chasing the dream of moving the ground to our 20-acre site at The Hayes and I'm in constant dialogue with the council regarding this.

"It's been dragging on for years now, but I'm confident we'll have a decision this year and then my short-term vision is to move the club to a new stadium next season when I'd like to think that we'll be at the very least a Step 3 club.

"Longer term, we want to get into The National League. It's a realistic and achievable target, but in order to get there it will take a tremendous amount of hard work by everyone involved here.



AFC Sudbury's Manager, Danny Laws

Images | AFC Sudbury

"I'm really looking forward to another season in the Pitching In Southern League Premier Central. In truth, I dislike the off-season for a number of reasons like dealing with the turnover of players and all of the off-field stuff.

"This year it's been slightly different for us in that we have retained the core of our squad and added to it rather than having to start all over again with a completely new squad, as has been the case in the past.

"The make-up of our League is really interesting. You've got the big-spenders such as Harborough Town and Spalding United as well as the likes of Real Bedford and Worcester who have come up and will add an extra dynamic to things.

"Then there's the regulars who will all make it really competitive division this season.

"Like most seasons, we go into it looking to have a decent run in the FA competitions whilst also challenging for the play-off places."

Meanwhile, AFC Sudbury, have already drawn a line under their trip to Bishop's Stortford, which started badly before a ball was even kicked when goalkeeper, Marcus Garnham, suffered an injury in the warm-up and had to be replaced between the posts by front-man, Kyran Clements.

"It was a difficult evening," said Head Coach, Danny Laws. "We were up against it from the start, but we took a gamble, got back into it at 2-1 and gave it a real go in the opening 20 minutes or so of the second half.



Alvechurch Chairman, Richard Thorndike

Images | Alvechurch FC

"But when it's not your day rolling the dice, things like this can happen and it certainly wasn't our day on this occasion.

"We'll learn from it; I can't fault the effort of the players, they kept going until the end. We came up against a good side who did what they had to do and were ruthless.

"It's gone now and we have to ensure that we respond in the right way at Alvechurch on Saturday, that's all we can do. We've not made any excuses; circumstances didn't help our situation, but we have to be better than that."

All smiles at Bromsgrove Sporting



Images | Bromsgrove Sporting FC

The Rest of the Action

With a win and a draw from their opening two games, Banbury United will be looking to add to their points tally as they host a Leiston outfit who are hunting their first victory after a draw and a loss from their first two games.

Hot on the heels of a 6-1 win on Tuesday, Bishop's Stortford play host to a Stamford AFC side who are yet to taste victory or even score a goal in their opening two outings following a goalless draw at Alvechurch on the opening day and 1-0 reverse at St. Ives on Monday.

Another side eager to get that first triumph under their belt are Spalding United who go to Bromsgrove Sporting, whilst Bury Town are buoyant having beaten Royston Town 1-0 on Tuesday and now host Harborough Town.

There's an interesting battle in prospect at Halesowen Town

as they host Real Bedford. Both teams go into the game on four points. Looking to maintain their 100% record so far are Kettering Town as they welcome a Barwell outfit who have a win and a draw to their name to date.

A first win of the season is the prize on offer as Worcester City make the trip to Needham Market, as Stratford Town look to kick-start their season in the wake of two defeats in which they have failed to trouble the scoring. The Bards go to new-boys, Quorn.

One place off the bottom of the embryonic League table are Royston Town who lock horns with Redditch United and finally, St. Ives Town, who beat Stamford AFC in their last game, entertain a Stourbridge outfit who battled out a 1-1 draw at Quorn on Tuesday evening.

Featured Match

SHAFTESBURY v THATCHAM TOWN



Shaftesbury have come out of the blocks full of purpose this season. A 5-1 away win at new-boys, Brixham AFC, on the opening day was followed by a 4-0 victory over Bideford AFC on Tuesday evening.

It leaves them sitting pretty at the top of the embryonic Pitching In Southern League Division One South table and looking forward to Saturday's Emirates FA Cup Preliminary Round encounter with Thatcham Town.

Amongst the early goals has been summer signing, Jack Lovell. He knows a thing or two about cracking the code in this League having been part of the Wimborne Town team that claimed the title in 2023/24 and now he's looking to create similar memories during the campaign ahead.

"I don't think that I could have asked for a better start to my time here, both personally and for the team," he told us. "Two wins out of two in the League, where we've scored nine goals and conceded just one, and progress in the FA Cup.

"It was nice to get that long trip to Brixham out of the way early and to win so comfortably was a massive positive.

"To have a couple of goals to my name and four assists already is very pleasing. I'm playing with confidence again and with a smile on my face, which is so important.

"I think the reason we've started so well is that we're such a close-

knit group that get on extremely well both on and off-the-pitch. The togetherness and team spirit that exists here was evident to me quite quickly after signing.

"A lot of us have played together previously so we know each other well and how we play. That has certainly helped the new lads like myself hit the ground running.

"This is a hard League with some tricky opponents, plenty of travelling and difficult pitches. Everyone is capable of beating each other, but the key thing is for us to focus on ourselves and what we do; we have to work together and not get on each other's backs when things aren't going as well as we would like them to.

"We want to be able to play without pressure or fear. My target is to get 15-20 goals, I would be happy with that and hopefully that will help the team be amongst the play-off challengers. There's no reason why that can't be the case; we've already shown what we are capable of.

"That said, it's a long, hard season and consistency is so important. By sticking together, anything is possible and we're ready to face the challenges that come our way, particularly having started so well, you're there to be shot at.

"Attention turns to the FA Cup on Saturday and it would be nice to have a run in this competition. It can bring a lot of attention, positivity – and finance – to the club. Anything is possible. We have a home draw and we'll be looking to make that count at the weekend.

Lovell has reunited with Danny Holmes at Shaftesbury this season. The pair have previously worked together.

"Getting Jack here shows the backing and where we want to be as a club," added Holmes. "He is a top player that will cause defenders sleepless nights and I back him to score plenty at this level.

"He is a different type of player to what we have and really puts himself about, but with plenty of quality.

"To be able to bring him in from the level above is fantastic. He's a winner with a wealth of experience who has a big role to play in the journey that we want to take this club on."

Saturday's opponents, Thatcham Town, were in the Pitching In Southern League Division One South with Shaftesbury last season, but having finished two places off the bottom, they were relegated into the Combined Counties League Premier Division South where they have started with a draw and a defeat from their opening two League games.

They beat Petersfield Town 2-0 in the Extra Preliminary Round to reach this stage of the competition, whilst it needed a replay for Shaftesbury to overcome the challenge of Baffins Milton Rovers.



THE REST OF THE EMIRATES FA CUP ACTION FOR PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE SOUTH CLUBS

After losing for the first time this season at SC Inkberrow during the week, Swindon Supermarine will be hoping that there is no hangover as they go to Alton. Another of our teams on the road is Tavistock AFC who head to Barnstaple Town, who have started brightly in the Western League Premier Division.

There's an all-Division One South clash as Brixham AFC and Mousehole do battle for the second game in a row, with the Cornish outfit holding the upper hand. Exmouth Town have home advantage against Buckland Athletic, whilst Falmouth Town against Bideford AFC is another tie that brings together two of our teams.

After their seven-goal haul away on Tuesday evening, Bishops Cleeve will be eying more goals as they travel to Hallen AFC, there's a local derby at Malvern Town as the in-form hosts lock horns with in-form Hellenic League Premier Division neighbours, Worcester Raiders.

A superb start to the season for Portishead Town sees them go into their home clash with Slimbridge in upbeat mood, whilst on the flip-side, Didcot Town go to Reading City looking to kick-start their sluggish start to the campaign.

Buoyed by their first-ever Southern League success, Sporting Club Inkberrow, go to fellow Step 4 club, Sporting Khalsa and finally there's another all Division One South clash at Winchester City as they take on Bashley, whilst on Sunday, Larkhall Athletic go to Wokingham & Emmbrook.

There is plenty of exciting action to get our teeth into on the Road to Wembley.



FA CUP MEMORIES

RICKY HULBERT
WESTBURY UNITED MANAGER

AS A PLAYER

I was part of the Bath City team that reached the second round proper in 2004, beating Barnet away in the first round before losing 2-0 at Peterborough United in round two.

AS A MANAGER

It has to be last season's 3-1 victory over AFC Totton. What a win that was against opponents who went on to secure promotion into Step 2.

AS A FAN

Got to be Ryan Giggs' semi-final goal against Arsenal in 1999 – pure magic!

VERDICT ON SATURDAY'S TIE

We head to Bradford Town and we know that it will be a tough test in front of a good crowd. They are a level below us, but we will need to stay focussed on the task in hand if we are to progress. Our opponents have started well, so it will be a good battle between two confident teams.



Shaftesbury's Jack Lovell

Featured Match

ENFIELD v BIGGLESWADE TOWN



There's an all-Division One Central tie taking place on Sunday as Enfield play host to Biggleswade Town, just a week after the two sides went head-to-head in League action.

For the visitors it has been a positive start to life back at this level following relegation at the end of last term as they followed up their 2-1 home victory over Enfield with a hard-earned 1-0 triumph at the much-fancied Hitchin Town on Tuesday evening, a result which sent out a clear message of their intentions.

"I think that Tuesday's game is best described as a smash-and-grab," smiled Seb Simpson. "We'll definitely take the three points, not many teams will go to Hitchin this season and win.

"We've won our opening two games without performing anywhere near where we know we can. The performances will come; at this early stage of the season it's all about winning and gaining momentum and we're doing just that.

"There have been signs of promise already considering that we are basically a whole new team. We'll take this early positivity and look to carry on the momentum, continuing on Sunday as we face Enfield for the second time already this season.

"Personally I feel that I have done okay. There's always room for improvement and it will come with game time.

"It's a very competitive division that we face this season and every week will bring a different type of test. Consistency and mentality are key and if we have these each week, we have a great chance

to get to where we want to be.

"Of course a run in this competition would be nice. As I say, we have already edged past Enfield this season and we'll need to be right at it again at the weekend if we are to progress into the next round.

"Being involved in the FA Cup is always special and I am looking forward to the game."

So what are Simpson's aims and targets as he looks ahead to 2025/26?

"I want to be the best version of myself," he replied. "I want to keep contributing to the team, be that goals – even though I don't get many – clean sheets or just leading by example on and off the pitch.

"As a group we want to keep pushing as high up the table we can and hopefully have a cup run or two thrown in for good measure. If we can maintain high standards, then we won't be far off where we want to be this season."

The former Bedford Town youth team player first broke into Step 3 football at the age of just 16 and has built a strong career in the non-League game.

"In my early days, I had trials with a few academies but didn't quite make the cut," he added. "So I stayed in non-League and have built my career here.

"Playing at this level has taught me a lot about the game, and I've been able to develop both as a player and as a person."

For Enfield, they saw their game at Hertford Town abandoned on Wednesday evening due to a serious injury to a home player, so the opening day defeat at the hands of Biggleswade Town is their only League action to date, though they have already played twice in the Emirates FA Cup, requiring a replay to overcome Wormley Rovers in the Extra Preliminary Round.

"We have a good group here," said summer signing, Nathan Brathwaite. "There's lots of quality within the team, and also a good group of people off the pitch too, which will stand us in good stead.

"The FA Cup is a competition where anything can happen, it's all about who's better on the day and wants it more. A run in it for a club like ours can make a big difference.

"I made my first appearance in the FA Cup last season and it was actually against Enfield FC, believe it or not. It was a very special moment for me; I've always enjoyed watching the FA Cup, with Plymouth Argyle's victory over Liverpool last season being a moment I enjoyed as it shows the beauty of this competition in that anything can happen.

"This is an important time for me as I will be competing in this League for the first time too and I am sure it will be just as competitive as everyone is telling me!

IMAGE | Enfield FC



Enfield FC players celebrate scoring

"My focus will be on improving game to game and if both I and the team can be better than last season, then that will be progress and that's all you can ask for."

THE REST OF THE EMIRATES FA CUP ACTION FOR PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE CENTRAL CLUBS

Barton Rovers will be home to make home advantage count as they play host to Brantham Athletic. A tricky trip to Clevedon Town lies in wait for Thame United, whilst Flackwell Heath welcome Tuffley Rovers of the Hellenic League Premier Division.

There's a home tie for Hadley against Maldon & Tiptree and likewise, Hertford Town have been handed a home draw with Harpenden Town heading their way. It will be quite a battle between Hitchin Town and Grays Athletic as Leighton Town welcome ambitious Biggleswade United.

Another of our teams on home territory is Marlow as they entertain Binfield and MK Irish who tackle Arlesey Town, opponents who they are familiar with having been in the Spartan South Midlands League.

AFC Dunstable hit the road to Tilbury as Ware and Welwyn Garden City are at home to Ilford and Waltham Abbey respectively.



FA CUP MEMORIES

MARC WEATHERSTONE
WELWYN GARDEN CITY MANAGER

AS A PLAYER

I never really had many moments to write home about in the FA Cup, I did reach the quarter-final of the FA Trophy with Dulwich Hamlet.

AS A MANAGER

I am waiting for my moment as a manager in this competition. Could it be this year? Who knows but it won't be for the want of trying.

AS A FAN

As an Arsenal supporter, it has to be the 2002 FA Cup Final, winning 2-0 and Ray Parlour scoring a worldie. It was a hell of a game and, as a 14 year-old, I couldn't have been happier!

VERDICT ON SATURDAY'S TIE

Wilt's going to be a tough one against Waltham Abbey. They are a strong team with a great style of football. We have a plan to nullify their threats and, at the same time, showcase the threats that we have. It will be a great contest and may the best team win.

IMAGE | Biggleswade Town FC



Biggleswade Town's Seb Simpson

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