

PRE VIEWMAG



ISSUE #23
23 - 25 JANUARY 2026

YOUR FRIDAY GUIDE TO ALL
OF THE WEEKEND ACTION

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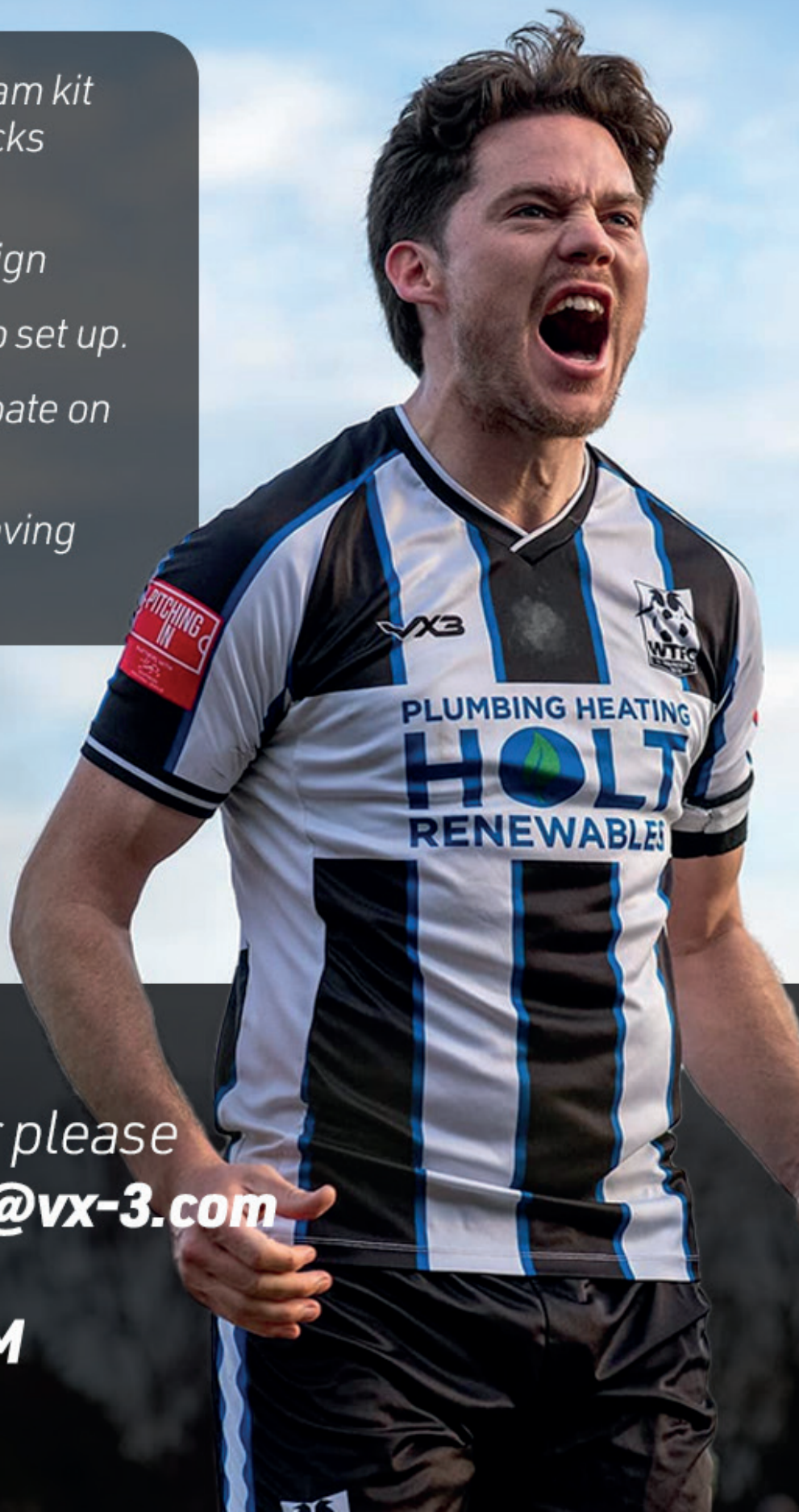
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VISUAL IMPAIRMENT & FOOTBALL WEBINAR NEXT WEEK

This Wednesday, January 28th, the FA Community of Practice are hosting a webinar that this month is focused on visual impairment and football.

It is aimed at clubs that may be considering or already have a football offering for visually impaired players.

The webinar offers an opportunity to listen to a panel of people that work in this area and learn from real experiences, as well as asking any questions or discussing any concerns with implementing a programme of football opportunity.

The first "Your Game Your Way" session of 2026 has a fantastic panel discussing visual impairment in football, including Elodie Draperi, Jon Attenborough, Darren Harris and Alan March.

These sessions aim to continue the conversation around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in football, providing a great opportunity to network, ask questions and learn about opportunities, challenges and best practice from across the country through an ever-growing network.

If you would like to join the webinar, please email: edicop@thefa.com ahead of Wednesday.

YOUR GAME YOUR WAY

PRESENTED BY THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

online

ANOTHER GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT WITH PEOPLE OPERATING WITHIN FOOTBALL AND EDI. THIS MONTH WE WILL HAVE A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON **VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN FOOTBALL** AND MUCH MORE WITH OUR ESTEEMED GUESTS

ELODIE DRAPERI
GIVE VISION

JON ATTENBOROUGH
FOOTBALL ACCESSIBILITY
ADVOCATE

DARREN HARRIS
158 ENGLAND CAPS
BLIND FOOTBALL

TIMINGS
6:00PM - 7:30PM

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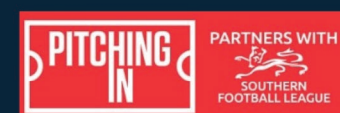
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LEAGUE STANDINGS

2025-26



Premier Division South

#	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Walton & Hersham	24	11	1	0	34	6	8	2	2	25	15	38	60
2	Poole Town	26	7	5	2	33	15	7	2	3	23	16	25	49
3	Gloucester City	24	10	2	1	34	16	4	3	4	20	18	20	47
4	Farnham Town	24	6	4	2	28	13	7	3	2	33	21	27	46
5	Gosport Borough	26	9	1	3	32	24	5	3	5	19	20	7	46
6	Sholing	26	7	3	2	29	18	4	6	4	16	17	10	42
7	Chertsey Town	26	6	3	4	23	15	6	3	4	13	12	9	42
8	Berkhamsted	25	6	3	4	18	17	5	3	4	15	14	2	39
9	Havant & Waterlooville	25	7	2	4	29	22	4	2	6	20	22	5	37
10	Wimborne Town	24	6	6	1	26	15	2	4	5	10	14	7	34
11	Basingstoke Town	26	7	1	5	20	22	3	3	7	17	19	-4	34
12	Bracknell Town	25	7	3	4	31	25	2	3	6	10	21	-5	33
13	Uxbridge	27	5	2	7	22	26	3	7	3	19	21	-6	33
14	Evesham United	27	6	3	4	21	11	2	5	7	16	26	0	32
15	Yate Town	24	4	4	3	13	10	3	2	8	16	28	-9	27
16	Taunton Town	26	3	4	5	16	19	4	1	9	22	29	-10	26
17	Hungerford Town	26	3	5	5	15	25	3	3	7	18	27	-19	26
18	Weymouth	27	3	5	6	16	19	3	2	8	13	30	-20	25
19	Hanwell Town	24	3	4	4	12	15	3	2	8	16	23	-10	24
20	Plymouth Parkway	24	4	2	5	12	16	2	4	7	16	32	-20	24
21	Dorchester Town	24	3	4	6	16	24	1	4	6	11	20	-17	20
22	Tiverton Town	22	2	1	6	8	13	2	1	10	18	43	-30	14

Premier Division Central

#	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Spalding United	27	9	3	1	37	13	9	3	2	37	20	41	60
2	Harborough Town	24	8	4	0	21	6	8	2	2	23	12	26	54
3	Real Bedford	23	6	2	3	18	13	7	3	2	24	13	16	44
4	Halesowen Town	25	8	3	3	26	19	3	6	2	21	17	11	42
5	Needham Market	25	8	1	4	24	17	4	5	3	13	16	4	42
6	Quorn	26	5	2	6	24	23	7	3	3	30	22	9	41
7	Redditch United	27	8	2	4	23	21	4	2	7	15	19	-2	40
8	Leiston	26	5	6	3	26	18	5	3	4	17	18	7	39
9	Stratford Town	24	7	3	2	24	15	4	2	6	13	19	3	38
10	Worcester City	27	4	4	6	16	16	6	3	4	28	14	14	37
11	Bishop's Stortford	24	6	1	6	22	21	4	4	3	17	13	5	35
12	Kettering Town	24	5	3	3	22	12	4	2	7	16	26	0	32
13	Banbury United	24	5	3	3	18	16	4	2	7	17	19	0	32
14	St Ives Town	25	5	6	2	18	15	3	2	7	18	23	-3	32
15	Bury Town	25	6	2	5	16	13	2	4	6	17	22	-2	30
16	Barwell	26	4	3	5	16	17	3	5	6	18	25	-8	29
17	Bromsgrove Sporting	26	5	2	6	19	23	2	3	8	13	26	-17	26
18	Alvechurch	22	4	1	5	13	13	3	3	6	10	13	-3	25
19	Stourbridge	26	3	5	4	20	18	2	5	7	15	29	-12	25
20	AFC Sudbury	26	3	4	7	18	35	2	2	8	15	31	-33	21
21	Stamford AFC	24	3	3	6	11	22	2	1	9	6	22	-27	19
22	Royston Town	26	2	5	5	17	24	1	3	10	9	31	-29	17

Weekend Action

Basingstoke Town
v Weymouth

Dorchester Town
v Havant & Waterlooville Evesham United

Gloucester City
v Tiverton Town

Hanwell Town
v Gosport Borough

Hungerford Town
v Bracknell Town

Plymouth Parkway
v Farnham Town

Sholing
v Berkhamsted

Taunton Town
v Wimborne Town

Walton & Hersham
v Poole Town

Yate Town
v Uxbridge

Weekend Action

Alvechurch
v Bury Town

Bishop's Stortford
v Kettering Town

Bromsgrove Sporting
v Barwell

Harborough Town
v Leiston

Real Bedford
v Worcester City

Royston Town
v Quorn

Spalding United
v Banbury United

St Ives Town
v Halesowen Town

Stamford
v Needham Market

Stourbridge
v Redditch United

Division One South

#	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Frome Town	27	11	2	1	28	10	10	2	1	33	9	42	67
2	Portishead Town	26	10	2	2	40	11	8	1	3	26	16	39	57
3	Winchester City	27	10	3	1	32	13	7	3	3	24	15	28	57
4	Malvern Town	26	11	0	3	39	23	7	2	3	23	17	22	56
5	Shaftesbury	25	11	1	1	32	14	6	2	4	30	21	27	54
6	Bishops Cleeve	25	11	2	1	33	11	5	2	4	19	23	18	52
7	Larkhall Athletic	26	8	3	2	34	25	5	0	8	19	22	6	42
8	Exmouth Town	27	8	2	3	31	21	4	3	7	17	29	-2	41
9	Hartpury	25	7	3	2	39	15	4	2	7	18	21	21	38
10	Westbury United	25	7	0	5	16	13	4	3	6	10	16	-3	36
11	Sporting Club Inkberrow	23	6	2	3	16	11	3	3	6	15	26	-6	32
12	Mousehole	26	4	3	6	17	19	4	4	5	22	21	-1	31
13	Bideford	27	5	3	6	18	21	3	2	8	13	28	-18	29
14	Bristol Manor Farm	24	5	4	4	16	19	2	1	8	17	29	-15	26
15	Didcot Town	26	3	4	6	19	29	4	1	8	13	24	-21	26
16	Falmouth Town	22	4	3	2	18	9	2	4	7	17	29	-3	25
17	Melksham Town	26	3	5	6	20	24	2	3	7	10	23	-17	23
18	Swindon Supermarine	23	4	0	6	18	19	2	4	7	12	17	-6	22
19	Willand Rovers	25	3	3	5	10	13	2	4	8	15	33	-21	22
20	Brixham	24	4	2	7	18	28	1	2	8	10	30	-30	19
21	Bashley	26	1	3	8	7	19	3	1	10	17	27	-22	16
22	Tavistock AFC	23	2	0	9	9	22	1	1	10	9	34	-38	10

Division One Central

#	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Hitchin Town	26	9	3	2	31	13	8	4	0	31	8	41	58
2	Leighton Town	26	10	2	0	36	9	7	5	2	28	19	36	58
3	Hertford Town	25	9	0	4	34	20	6	3	3	27	16	25	48
4	Biggleswade Town	26	5	6	3	27	22	8	2	2	32	13	24	47
5	Biggleswade	26	4	6	3	21	19	9	2	2	28	15	15	47
6	Barton Rovers	26	8	2	3	25	16	5	5	3	24	22	11	46
7	Ware	26	6	3	4	28	18	7	1	5	25	24	11	43
8	Thame United	24	7	1	4	27	22	6	1	4	23	18	10	41
9	Hadley	24	5	2	4	26	25	6	5	2	23	16	8	40
10	Beaconsfield Town	26	5	5	4	29	21	5	3	4	21	19	10	38
11	Stotfold	27	8	1	5	27	17	4	1	8	24	33	1	38
12	Flackwell Heath	25	5	3	5	23	16	5	3	4	21	15	13	36
13	Welwyn Garden City	24	4	4	4	15	15	5	4	3	24	16	8	35
14	London Lions	26	7	1	4	27	27	4	1	9	19	26	-7	35
15	Milton Keynes Irish	27	5	2	7	26	39	5	2	6	18	22	-17	34
16	Aylesbury United	26	4	4	4	20	16	4	1	9	18	29	-7	29
17	Marlow	27	6	1	6	27	27	3	1	10	14	34	-20	29
18	Northwood	26	2	3	8	15	31	2	7	4	19	25	-22	22
19	Leverstock Green	25	2	6	3	17	18	1	6	7	19	32	-14	21
20	Enfield	27	2	2	10	17	35	3	1	9	16	38	-40	18
21	Rayners Lane	26	1	1	12	8	31	2	2	8	14	38	-47	12
22	AFC Dunstable	24	1	3	7	9	24	1	1	11	12	36	-39	10

Weekend Action

Bishops Cleeve
v Malvern Town

Bristol Manor Farm
v Frome Town

Brixham AFC
v Exmouth Town

Didcot Town
v Melksham Town

Falmouth Town
v Bideford AFC

Hartpury
v Larkhall Athletic

Sporting Club Inkberrow
v Portishead Town

Tavistock AFC
v Mousehole

Westbury United
v Bashley

Willand Rovers
v Shaftesbury

Winchester City
v Swindon Supermarine

Weekend Action

AFC Dunstable
v Thame United

Barton Rovers
v Milton Keynes Irish

Biggleswade FC
v Stotfold

Flackwell Heath
v Rayners Lane

Hadley
v Leverstock Green

Hertford Town
v Hitchin Town

Leighton Town
v Aylesbury United

London Lions
v Beaconsfield Town

Marlow
v Northwood

Ware
v Enfield

Welwyn Garden City
v Biggleswade Town

Featured Match

DORCHESTER TOWN v HAVANT & WATERLOOVILLE

There's no stopping Havant & Waterlooville right now. An eight-game unbeaten run in the Premier South has included seven wins and 26 goals, including a particularly prolific spell for Ryan Seager, who hit a hat-trick in last weekend's commanding 3-0 victory over high-flying Gloucester City.

That win has left them just inside the top ten, nine points off the play-off places, not bad at all considering the position they were in when Aaron Martin took over at the helm.

"Everyone is buzzing," said Martin. "The boys are playing some fantastic football and it really is a pleasure to watch from the sidelines.

"The togetherness is amazing; everyone is chipping in and those

that are not involved in the team because of how well we are doing, know that their time will come such is the busy schedule that lies ahead.

"It was a big performance in our last game against Gloucester City. We had a game plan and knew that there would be times where we had to be patient, but the lads carried it out superbly to beat a good side.

"This was our best display of the run that we have been on and it sets the standard now. The important thing is for everyone to stay focussed and not get too carried away. There is a lot of football to be played, but we're on the right path and we need to ensure that we stay on it.



These are heady days for Havant & Waterlooville and hot-shot Ryan Seager

"We're in a very good place at the moment. If we can keep doing what we're doing and maintain the standards that we have set, then we can get to where we want to be.

"As good as we were in our last game, I still feel that there is even more to come from us. There's a real buzz around the whole club and with the continued backing from the fans, it can only push us on even further.

"We're looking forward to the next game coming around and hopefully we can pick up where we left off last weekend and continue adding to our points tally."

The next challenge comes in the shape of a trip to Dorchester Town.

The Dorset club have struggled so far this season, going in to the game one place off the bottom of the table and with just 20 points to their name from 24 League games.

Ironically their last outing saw them take on Havant & Waterlooville in the reverse of Saturday's fixture as they went down to a 3-1 defeat, their fourth loss in a row.

They are searching for their first victory since the beginning of December as they look to topple opponents who sit top of the current form table.

THE REST OF THE ACTION



Weymouth finally had plenty of reason to smile last weekend

Last weekend wasn't a good one for the high-flying teams. Leaders, Walton & Hersham, suffered a 3-1 loss at Weymouth for only their second set-back in 24 League games. They will be looking for the right response on Saturday as they face a mouth-watering home encounter with second-placed Poole Town, who left it late to take a share of the spoils from their home game with Yate Town as they drew 2-2 last Saturday.

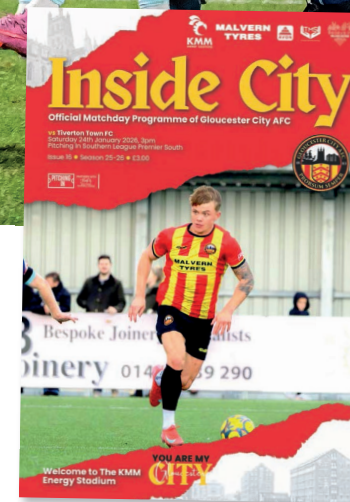
Third-placed Gloucester City are looking to get things back on track as they return to home action with the visit of bottom of the table, Tiverton Town. Meanwhile a 7-2 away win for Farnham Town at Hungerford Town in torrential rain on Tuesday has left them a point behind in fourth-place. Farnham are back on the road as they head to Plymouth Park, who need the points to get them out of the bottom four.

Making up the rest of the top five, Gosport Borough, the only team to win last weekend, go to Hanwell Town where the hosts are also looking to free themselves from the grip of the bottom four.

Having enjoyed such a morale-boosting victory last weekend,

Weymouth go to Basingstoke Town looking to build on it against their mid-table hosts. On the other side of the coin, after conceding seven on Tuesday, Hungerford Town will be seeking an upturn in fortunes as they host another mid-table opponent in Bracknell Town.

Elsewhere, Chertsey Town continue their quest to make the top five as they go to Evesham United, there is sure to be a hard-fought encounter at Sholing as they host a Berkhamsted outfit who are just three points behind them in the top half of the table. Taunton Town are in transition right now following the appointment of Gary Johnson and they welcome Wimborne Town, whilst Yate Town will be looking to make home advantage count as they take on Uxbridge.



Featured Match

STAMFORD AFC v NEEDHAM MARKET

Stamford AFC and Jack Duffy are looking to make 2026 a year to remember for all of the right reasons.

After finishing seventh and sixth at the end of the last two seasons, the Premier Central club have had a disappointing first half of the current campaign, which left them rooted to the bottom of the table.

However, a number of new arrivals, combined with the return of popular striker Duffy from suspension, has given plenty of cause for optimism going into the New Year.

It's been a particularly successful week for them where they have managed to secure successive victories to take their number of wins for the season to five and in doing so finally move off the foot of the table.

A hard-earned 1-0 triumph came at Worcester City last weekend as Duffy grabbed the all-important goal before he was amongst the scorers on Tuesday as AFC Sudbury were beaten 3-2 in a game which swung one way and then the other.

"We've had to dig really deep as a group over these past two games this week," Duffy told us. "It wasn't always pretty at times on either occasion, but we stuck together and showed real character to secure six points.

"Every single player has put in a shift and I'd say everyone has

been at least an eight out of ten, which is what we need if we are going to be able to climb out of the bottom four.

"Personally, it was great to contribute with a couple of goals, but the most important thing was getting back into winning ways and hopefully we can push-on from here.

"We said before the game at Worcester City last weekend that we needed something to give us a lift. There have been a few changes in the dressing room and getting a couple of victories like this can hopefully give us some real confidence moving forward. It's something we can build on now.

"To be honest, I just want to play football. I haven't really been thinking too much about how it feels being back — my focus is just on getting minutes, helping the team and enjoying my football again.

"It's a really tough League with some very good teams in it. Every game is competitive and I'm sure there will be plenty of battles at both ends of the table right up until the end of the season.

"Personally, it's about getting back to enjoying football again and contributing as much as I can. As a team, the main aim is to keep the club up and make sure we finish the season strongly.

"It's another home game at the weekend and we have to take



It's been a week to remember for Jack Duffy and the club

advantage of that fact. However, we're under no illusions about the task in hand against a Needham Market side who are just inside the top five.

"This will be another challenge for us, but we go into it with plenty of belief and determination."

Needham Market go into the game in the last play-off place. Things are tight amongst the leading pack with just six points separating third to ninth.

The Marketmen have successive hard-earned 1-0 victories to their name in their last two games. Having won 1-0 at Leiston at the end of December, their return to action saw them overcome the challenge of Stratford Town by the same scoreline last weekend.

THE REST OF THE ACTION



It's been a positive week so far for Real Bedford. Can it continue on Saturday?

Spalding United now have 60 points to their name at the top of the table and they are in home action with the visit of Banbury United. Just behind them, Harborough Town had a 3-1 away win at AFC Sudbury last weekend and return to home action against Leiston, who left it late to draw 3-3 with Alvechurch on Tuesday evening but are still in the play-off race.

In third place, Real Bedford have enjoyed two solid 2-0 triumphs this week, as they followed up their win at Barwell last weekend with a home victory over Bromsgrove Sporting. On Saturday they host Worcester City. Meanwhile Halesowen Town go to St. Ives Town on the back of their 2-1 home victory over Royston Town last weekend where Tyrone Barnett hit the winner deep into stoppage time.

At the foot of the table, the aforementioned Royston Town now

sit bottom and they face a home clash with Quorn on Saturday. Also currently in amongst the bottom four is Stourbridge, but their fortunes appear to be on an upward trend, as demonstrated when they played out a goalless draw at Leiston last Saturday, with ten men for over half of the game. The Glassboys have a mouth-watering home local derby with Redditch United to look forward to.

Elsewhere, there are vital points on offer as Alvechurch and Bury Town, two teams just above the relegation zone, battle it out. Just one place separates Bishop's Cleeve and Kettering Town as they go head-to-head and it's the same for Bromsgrove Sporting as they welcome Barwell.



Featured Match

FALMOUTH TOWN v BIDEFORD AFC

The Northern Lights provided a spectacular backdrop at The Sports Ground, home of Bideford AFC, earlier this week.

The Division One South club have their own northern light in the dug-out with long-serving Yorkshireman, Sean Joyce, continuing to battle hard to deliver a competitive team and get the best out of his players.

One such is front-man, Jordan Ewing, who made the step up in November 2023 and hasn't looked back since as he recently celebrated his 100th appearance for the club.

"To reach 100 appearances is a great achievement for me personally," he told us. "But it means even more because of the faith that the Gaffer put in me.

"He brought me in from a lower level and gave me a chance to show what I can do in the Southern League. He's always had belief in me and alongside his coaching staff, they have worked hard to improve me as a player.

"I've enjoyed some memorable moments here and I am determined to make plenty more.

"It's out there for all to see that we got off to a slow start this season; there are a number of factors why this was the case in terms of injury and unavailability, but we've pulled together as a group and started to pick up some results.

"The Gaffer has been around the block a few times; he knows more than anyone how it goes and what is required to get us to where we want and need to be.

"From a personal perspective, I have been working hard to get myself back into the team on a more consistent basis.

"It's a tough season, as they all are at this level. No game is easy and you have to work extremely hard for every single point that you are able to get.

"Throughout the season we've seen teams in the lower reaches of the table take points off those challenging at the top end; that's the way it goes.

"You never know what version of a team you are going to get and that has been the reason why we currently sit just below half-way.



A spectacular backdrop at The Sports Ground this week and (inset) Jordan Ewing who has recently passed the 100-appearance milestone

"It's all about consistency and that's what we are working on. The second half of last season went well for us and we are looking to emulate that again this time around.

"We need to turn up every week and the more we do, the higher we can climb. We have shown glimpses of what we are capable and we have to be able to do that on a more regular basis.

"It's the same story for myself where I have to be able to solidify my place with a consistent level of performance. If I can do that then I will be able to add to my 100 appearances and help the team get to where we want to be.

"We deserved our victory over Didcot Town last weekend and now we need to be able to build on it as we go to Falmouth Town on Saturday. They sit just below us in the table but have

games in hand, so it would be nice if we can increase to gap between us."

Falmouth Town have played the fewest of all Division One South clubs so far, with 22 League games. They sit three points off the bottom four having seen their last two home games fall victim of the winter weather.

Their last outing saw them fall to a 4-2 defeat at Didcot Town, whilst home games have been few and far between; only two since early November, so they will be relishing the opportunity to get back on home soil and cut the gap between themselves and those clubs in and around the middle of the table, of which Saturday's visitors, Bideford AFC, are part of.

THE REST OF THE ACTION

Leaders, Frome Town, showed their mettle last weekend as they came from behind to nick all three points against in-form Malvern Town courtesy of a 2-1 win. This weekend they head to Bristol Manor Farm in what is sure to be another hard-fought affair.

In second place, Portishead Town were held to a goalless home draw by Swindon Supermarine in their last outing. They face a trip to Sporting Club Inkberrow who are fresh from victory over Mousehole AFC last weekend as they continue to make their mark at this level.

Having been held at Brixham AFC in their last game, third-place Winchester City will be looking to make home advantage count this time around as they welcome Swindon Supermarine. There is a mouth-watering local derby as Bishops Cleeve, who sit just outside the play-off places, entertain fourth-placed Malvern Town. The visitors will be keen to get straight back into winning ways have suffered an undeserved loss at Frome Town last weekend.

Making up the rest of the top five is Shaftesbury FC and they go to Willand Rovers. Whether the game will be as entertaining as their 5-4 victory at Melksham Town last Saturday remains to be seen, but vital points are up for grabs at both ends of the table.

At the bottom of the table, Tavistock AFC are at home to Mousehole AFC, whilst just above them, Bashley go to Westbury United.

Elsewhere, there's a Devon derby at Brixham AFC as they host Exmouth Town, who saw joint-manager, Dave Pearce, depart this week. Just three points separate Didcot Town and

Melksham Town in the bottom half of the table as they lock horns, whilst Hartpury entertain Larkhall Athletic with both teams part of a cluster of clubs sitting on the fringes of the top five.



Leaders, Frome Town, were made to work hard for their three points last weekend

Featured Match

WARE v ENFIELD

When goalkeeping coach, James Gibbs, agreed to join the backroom team at Division One Central club, Enfield, earlier this month, it had a deeper meaning.

For the experienced Gibbs has some very fond memories of supporting the club as a child, attending matches with his beloved grandad.

"Yes, joining Enfield definitely has a much deeper meaning than most other clubs - even ones I've coached higher up the pyramid," he told us. "The club badge meant a lot to me as kid and to my grandad, who sadly isn't alive anymore to see me work for a club we both watched many times.

"There are so many great memories from my time supporting the club. The two that stand out most of all were probably beating Yeovil Town 3-0 at home when we just had the new stand installed. My dad and brother, who are both not football fans, also came along that day and there was a real buzz at Southbury Road.

"We thought we were going to win the League, but it didn't quite happen in the end!

"The other memory was the last-ever game at Southbury Road. Everyone went onto the pitch at the end... I was barely old enough to get over the fence!"

Gibbs' grandad also had a big influence on his playing career and interest in goalkeeping.

"My grandad was my coach and someone who I really looked up to," he added. "Every time he took me to an Enfield game, I was fascinated by Andy Pape in goal. I love the way he would shout and swear at the defenders in front of him and dive around in all conditions in attempt to keep the ball out of the net.

"I always wanted a pair of his gloves, but it never happened! I did get a pair of gloves of my own, though, and started playing junior football. I played for Enfield Rangers and Norseman. Grandad would fire balls at me endlessly. It wasn't an orthodox method, but it worked and I enjoyed it!

"As I grew up I remember watching the likes of Gianluca Pagliuca and Mark Bosnich on TV and trying to be like them. Sadly, my playing career only reached Steps 6 and 7, but from an early age getting into coaching was something that I wanted to do.

"My first proper role was with St. Margeretsbury at Step 5. I then moved to Ware and worked with Paul Halsey who I still love and can't wait to catch up with at Saturday's game!

"Since then I've been at a number of clubs at Steps 2-4, including Hanwell Town, Hendon, Bracknell Town, Aylesbury United, Berkhamsted, Tonbridge Angels and Cheshunt.

"During this time I have worked with some great 'keepers, the likes of Shane Gore, Rob Tolfey, Hugo Sobte, Andrew McCorkell Michael Eacott as well as current pros Seb Stacey, Matteo Saloman and Max Merrick at Chelsea

"I also run a private goalkeeping coaching business doing group sessions and one-to-ones. I am always happy to work with goalkeepers who have the desire and commitment to work hard and develop their careers to the highest levels."



A clean sheet is the name of the game this weekend for James Gibbs

We asked Gibbs how important he feels the role of Goalkeeper Coach is at clubs at all levels of the game.

"I feel a dedicated goalkeeping coach is a must have at all levels," he replied. "Goalkeepers can make a save that keeps the game at 1-0 and earn you three points or keep the game at 1-1 and earn you a point.

"So much can be decided by fine margins in football and a goalkeeper who isn't working or improving won't make those big saves that can make all of the difference.

"The role of goalkeeper is a specialised and crucial position, which relies massively on mind set, psychology and feelings - all traits massively under-coached in non-League, in my opinion.

"I do think that the standard of goalkeepers is improving generally. They are becoming better all-round footballers as the game has evolved.

"I do think that non-League is becoming a tougher place to cement yourself as number one, though, as pro clubs are sending their academy players to clubs as low as Step 6 in order to get regular game time. That does make it harder for the lads who haven't come through academies to break into teams."

Last weekend saw George Edgeworth keep a clean sheet in a much-needed 1-0 victory over Northwood.

"I was delighted with the clean sheet," added Gibbs. "The Gaffer set up with that as our primary purpose and I was really proud of how George was throughout the game as whilst there wasn't too much for him to do, he did what he had to really well in regards to claiming crosses, starting position and pressing.

"This in turn can help to push on the rest of the team and it's always nice to come off the pitch with a clean sheet in the bag!

"Sadly, we succumbed at home to London Lions during the week, but the main aim this season is clear; keep the club in Step 4 and then go from there.

"As for myself, I want to ensure that our 'keeper goes into every game at optimum level and ultimately we want as many clean sheets and one-goal games as possible."

Going into Saturday's game inside the bottom four, they face a Ware side who are on the edge of the play-offs places but have lost their last two games, with a 1-0 home defeat at the hands of Biggleswade FC followed by last weekend's 3-2 home reverse against Hadley.

As such they will be looking for their first success of 2026.

THE REST OF THE ACTION



Image | Linda Babaie

Biggleswade Town will be looking to strengthen their position in the top three on Saturday

Sitting at the top of the table on goal difference going into the weekend action is Hitchin Town. They face a tricky trip to fourth-place Hertford Town, who are eager to bounce back from a 3-2 set-back at MK Irish in their last outing.

Second-placed Leighton Town have home advantage for the visit of Aylesbury United, who had a big win in their last game as they look to pull away from the bottom four. Up into third place following Tuesday's goalless draw with MK Irish are Biggleswade Town, who this weekend head to mid-table Welwyn Garden City.

Making up the rest of the top five is Biggleswade FC. They host Stotfold as they aim to respond to last weekend's defeat at inform Thame United in the right way.

At the bottom of the table, AFC Dunstable's new-look team

welcome the aforementioned Thame United with vital points at stake at both ends of the table. Rayners Lane hit the road as they take on a Flackwell Heath outfit whose climb up the table continued with two good away wins over the past week as they followed up their 4-2 success at Stotfold with Tuesday's 4-0 triumph at Marlow.

Leverstock Green's hopes of getting out of the bottom four were hit by an equaliser deep into stoppage time by opponents, Stotfold, on Tuesday evening. They head to Hadley on Saturday, whilst Northwood, who are just two points above them, head to Marlow who are one place and seven points above them.

Elsewhere, Barton Rovers host an MK Irish side who are starting to adapt well to life at this level. The same can also be said for London Lions as they host Beaconsfield Town.

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