

Rewind: On this day

By Tim Parks Cuttings by Martin Allen

Unstoppable Stones on course to a Southern League 'triple'!

FEBRUARY 16th

Wednesday, February 16, 1982, Southern League Cup semi-final 1st leg: Dorchester 1 Wealdstone 3

THE STONES' fixture secretary must have been in absolute agonies 31 years ago. This season's postponements mean we still have 18 league games, plus maybe a couple of county cup matches to squeeze into the last few months of the season... well, back on February 16 1982 Wealdstone still had to shoehorn in **THIRTY-TWO** games!

The weather then had been similar to this winter: heavy snow had wiped out the entire month of December, and January was littered with late call-offs due to ice and rain. The overworked secretary (Peter Braxton?) just fitted in games when and where he could, and the weeks surrounding this Southern League Cup semi-final were typical.

The league decreed that the semi-final would be two-legged, as would be the final should we make it. And the Middlesex County insisted that their Senior Cup ties had to be played on a Saturday, thus forcing us into long midweek league trips to places like Dorchester, Gosport,

Fareham and Thanet United.

Manager Allen Batsford was of the old school. If games are there to be won, let's win them was his mantra – and to be honest his squad was so small that rotating players to save their legs was not an option. He seriously had just 14 players (and it was only 13 before Roy Davies was snapped up from Hayes just before the Dorchester trip) and his only concession to 'rotating' players was an admission that he had left the teenage Paul Waites out of the side because 'he is not the strongest, and we are playing some very physical sides on heavy pitches'.

Batsford's squad comprised goalkeeper Ray Goddard, defenders Steve Perkins, Colin Hardman, Stuart Pearce, Paul Bowgett and Dennis Byatt; midfielders Paul Waites, Fred Barwick, Robin Wainwright, Roy Davies and Neil Cordice; and strikers Alan Cordice, Ray Knowles, and Nigel Johnson.

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THE FACTS AND FIGURES

▲ **RETRO-STYLE** The programme that night was typical of the functional style of 1980s programmes. We're particularly impressed by the Dorchester President's Hitler moustache

A tiny squad, but what great names! All, apart from maybe Colin Hardman and Ray 'Knowles The Goals' are part of Stones folklore for their part in those glorious years of the 80s, and Batsford (and his then-deputy Brian Hall) certainly know how to get the best out of their personnel.

But back to Dorchester. After the bad weather, the Stones were

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Cup hot shots

WEALDSTONE emerged as clear favourites for the Southern League Cup after a masterly display at league leaders **Dorchester** on Tuesday night.

'Stones, three points behind Dorchester in the south section title race but with four games in hand, won 3-1 after completely straight-jacketing the Dorset side. 'Stones combined defensive discipline with some devastating finishing for a performance summed up by manager Allen Batsford as: "A mature professional performance. We played to a pattern that was absolutely right".

Now 'Stones look odds on to advance to the cup final and a meeting with either Aylesbury or Gloucester after next Wednesday's second leg at Lower Mead. Alan Cordice looked to have put Wealdstone in front in the first half but the score was called offside by a decision branded as 'unbelievable' by manager Batsford.

But a glorious Robin Wainwright volley set 'Stones along the path to victory after 29 minutes, before Paul Bowgett

rifled home 'Stones second, crashing home the rebound when the Dorchester keeper had saved his initial penalty kick after clean-through Alan Cordice had been crudely fouled in the 75th minute.

Three minutes later Bowgett made the most of a simple chance at the far post after Dorchester substitute Terry Hinton had back headed across the face of his own goal.

Dorchester's token reply came through Trevor Towns end's 20-yard shot six minutes from the end.

Hinted

On Saturday 'Stones hit the cup trail again with the visit to Hillingdon Boro in the Middlesex Senior Cup. Batsford, who joined 'Stones from Hillingdon in November 1980, hinted this week at a return to first team action on Saturday for Neil Cordice, who has been relegated to the subs bench in the last two matches. Wealdstone will be without midfielder Steve Perkins, suspended for two matches after his sending off against Dagenham.

Perkins will also miss the return Southern League Cup leg with Dorchester on Wednesday.

DORCHESTER v WEALDSTONE TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16th KICK-OFF 7.30 p.m. SOUTHERN LEAGUE CUP SEMI-FINAL 1st LEG

DORCHESTER TOWN (01)

(Black & White)

- 1 Steve Hobson
- 2 Trevor Townsend
- 3 Andy McManus
- 4 Steve Dyer
- 5 Tony Chutter
- 6 Ray Ames
- 7 Steve Crabb
- 8 Hedley Steele
- 9 Trevor Ames
- 10 Keith Miller
- 11 Paul Thorne
- 12 Terry Hinton

**DORSET EVENING
ECHO**

WEALDSTONE (13)

(Royal Blue & White)

- 1 R. Goddard
- 2 C. Hardman
- 3 S. Pearce
- 4 D. Byatt
- 5 P. Bowgett (1 pen)
- 6 F. Barwick
- 7 R. Knowles S Perkins
- 8 N. Cordice R. Wainwright
- 9 A. Cordice
- 10 R. Waites R. Davies
- 11 R. Davis R. Knowles
- 12 S. Perkins N. Cordice

Referee:

just settling into a solid, creative pattern of play that was a joy to watch. As fans, we knew that the opposition would have to be quite brilliant to score against Messrs Goddard, Byatt, Bowgett, Pearce and Perkins, while the power and guile of the Cordices, Wainwright and Johnson made us a huge threat at the other end.

This Wednesday night in Dorset - against the table-toppers - saw the game plan come together and we were worthy winners. We just needed a performance in the second leg to make it to

the final....though the Middlesex FA put in place the obstacle of a County Cup 3rd round game at Hillingdon Borough on the intervening Saturday, which finished 0-0, necessitating a replay just two days later! We got that one out of the way (2-1) and then prepared to face Dorchester again at Lower Mead a further 48 hours later, on the Wednesday night.

Happily, a place in the final was effectively booked after just ELEVEN seconds. That's how long it took for Alan Cordice to scoot away and shoot us 4-1 ahead

on aggregate, and another goal from 'Throbbin' Robin Wainwright saw us to a 2-0 win on the night, 5-1 on aggregate.

The fixture headaches were just beginning, but what an end to the season there was in sight...

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

Well, Mr Braxton must have been having palpitations with a two-legged cup final here, a Middlesex County Cup final there, a possible two-legged Championship play-off if we won the league, plus the small matter of 24 league games.

And don't forget the squad was

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Magpies face tough test

DORCHESTER face their toughest test at the Avenue since Bournemouth visited them in the F.A. Cup when they clash with their main championship rivals Wealdstone tonight in the first leg of their Southern League Cup semi-final.

Wealdstone, relegated from the Alliance Premier League last season, but looking as though they will make a quick return, field one of the highest paid sides in non-League soccer.

And while the Magpies have been struggling to find their best form in recent weeks, Wealdstone have closed the gap at the top of the South Division to three points, and they still have four games in hand.

But Dorchester boss Stuart Bell, whose men already have an away league win over Wealdstone

to their credit, feels the occasion will help the Magpies lift their game again tonight.

"Both clubs have their sights on a league and cup double, and the tie has the makings of a real cracker," said Bell today, adding: "We both prefer to attack, and that is why we are the highest scorers in the league."

Wealdstone have scored nine goals in their last two matches away to Hounslow and Salisbury, but Bell is encouraged by the fact that they have also conceded five goals in those games against moderate attacks, while Dorchester have kept a clean sheet on three of their last four outings.

"On that evidence they cannot be too secure in defence, and we shall be hoping to get a lead of goal or two to take to Wealdstone next Wednesday," added Bell.

Following Dorchester's disappointing performance against Gosport on Saturday, Bell has considered making changes, and was still pondering over his options today — although he has definitely decided to stand by the same squad of players.

Dorchester (from): Hobson, Townsend, Dye Chatter, McManus, Steele, Miller, Ray Ames, Hibson, Crabb, Trevor Ames, Thorne.

still only 14-strong. Not much room for manoeuvre there if the side got a few knocks. And we had a poor run in early March with just one point from three games.

Yet amazingly the Stones lost just one of their last 18 league games — and that on the final day when the title was clinched — to clinch the Southern Division title and won the Southern League Cup (3-0 on aggregate v Gloucester City) and the Southern League Championship Shield on penalties from Northern Division winners Nuneaton Borough (2-2 on aggregate).

And those final 32 games were squeezed into 83 days before the final ball was kicked in anger on Monday, May 10th, when Alan Cordice's penalty won the titanic shoot-out with Nuneaton at Lower Mead). One game every 2.6 days! Non-stop! With a 14-man squad!

TODAY'S TABLE

	SOUTHERN LEAGUE			Southern Division		
	P	W	D	L	F	A
Dorchester Town	23	15	11	2	53	22
Wealdstone	24	17	4	3	61	21
Waterlooville	30	16	5	9	50	27
Gosport Borough	27	14	6	7	43	25
Fareham Town	26	14	5	7	34	24
Pool Town	23	11	10	8	54	38
Aylesbury United	27	12	6	9	50	37
Welling United	27	12	6	9	44	31
Addlestone	25	10	8	7	45	33
Ashford Town	25	10	7	8	35	37
Dunstable	23	11	4	8	31	26
Dunstable Borough	27	9	8	10	31	32
Hillingdon Borough	25	11	3	11	44	44
Basingstoke Town	25	10	5	10	36	36
Chelmsford City	27	3	7	12	36	53
Salisbury	24	8	6	7	20	22
Dover	24	9	4	11	33	44
Tonbridge A.F.C.	27	6	9	12	28	47
Hounslow	28	6	6	15	32	55
Crawley Town	25	5	4	16	29	49
Falkstone	25	5	4	16	22	54
Andover	26	3	7	16	22	54