

News briefly

Wood draw blank at home

NORTHWOOD's Ryman One North promotion hopes suffered a setback after drawing 0-0 at home to Redbridge on Saturday. New striker Eugene Ofori went close for the home side but his late strike cleared the crossbar. Wood visit ninth-placed Tilbury this weekend.

Tigers keep up challenge

KINGSBURY LONDON TIGERS continued their fine form in the South Midlands Premiership with a 2-1 win over Holmer Green on Tuesday night. Edson Cata and Marco Tagbajumi were on target for the home side. It was a good response after they slipped up by losing 1-0 at league leaders Harefield United at the weekend. Tuesday's win sees the Tigers move up to third.

Frustration for England

England skipper Andrew Strauss was unable to guide the side to a series draw in the West Indies yesterday. The Middlesex batsman was in excellent form with the bat during the series but England's failure to bowl the Windies out meant they lost out 1-0. The final Test was drawn in Trinidad.

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Noel runs riot for Boro in Hendon win

by SIMON MAIL
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BIRTHDAY BOY Gary Noel kept up his remarkable scoring form by netting four goals in Harrow Borough's win over Hendon on Saturday.

Boro's 4-2 victory kept them out of the Ryman Premier relegation places and took hotshot Noel's tally to 12 goals in just nine starts. Noel marked his 19th birthday on Saturday with a man-of-the-match winning display.

Boro manager David Howell says the former Millwall youngster is good enough to get back into professional football if he works on his game. Noel was plucked from obscurity at Dulwich Hamlet in December after their manager, Craig Roberts, described him as a "lazy player".

Howell took a chance on Noel and was rewarded with four goals in as many games. But the striker was dropped after a dip in his performances and has only recently returned to form for Boro.

Howell said: "He has got all the right attributes for a striker. He is good in the air, has pace, can hold the ball up and knows where the goal is.

"If he applies himself and works hard then he can definitely get back into league football.

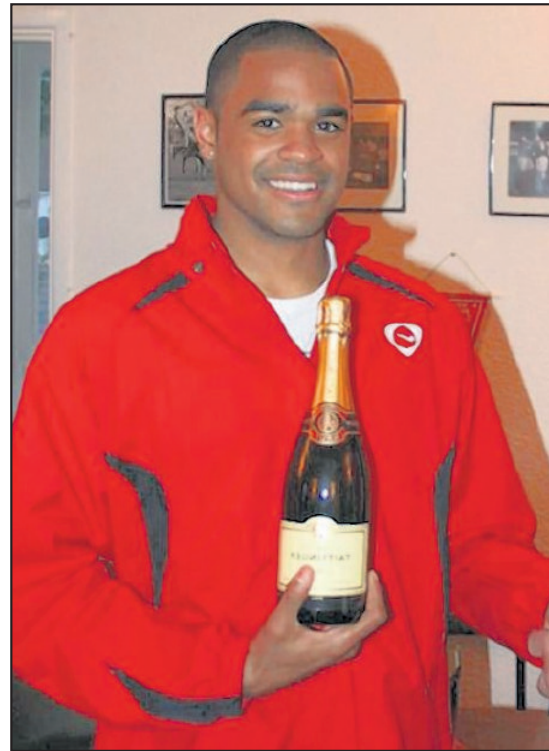
"I think it was a bit of a culture shock playing non-league football and he got ahead of himself and his work rate dropped around Christmas. I left him out the team and he's now come back in so hopefully he has learned his lesson."

Howell rates him as highly as he did for previous talents such as Birmingham's Robin Shroot and Barnet's Albert Adomah.

The Earlsmead boss said: "Where he is at now in March is where I want him to be. How he was at the end of last year is not what I want. It will be interesting to see if he has learnt from before Christmas."

Noel will look to keep his prolific form in front of goal going on Saturday when Boro travel to play-off contenders Dartford.

Howell said: "We need to get to 40 points [Boro have 36] as soon as possible so we can start climbing the league. If we play to anywhere near our best we should get a result."



Star player: Harrow Borough's Gary Noel is presented with champagne by Tony Venus from the Vice Presidents' Association. Picture: SIMON GRIGOR

Stones crash out of cup

A HAT-TRICK from Wealdstone's Greg Ngoyi was not enough as his side went out of the semi-final of the Middlesex Senior Cup 4-3 at Hendon on Tuesday night.

Manager Gordon Bartlett said afterwards his side had "an uncanny knack of shooting ourselves in the foot" after losing the tie at the end of the game with sloppy defending of a corner.

Bartlett said: "From a neutral's point of view it was a great game, but from a manager's it was a nightmare."

The mid-table Ryman Premier side were two down to second-from-bottom Hendon early on. They dragged themselves back into the match to go in 2-1 down at half time and then take the lead with two more goals from Ngoyi to be 3-2 up with minutes remaining. But conceding two late goals – the decisive one a free header in the dying minutes, was a severe blow to Bartlett's hopes for the season.

"Even now I keep shaking my head in disbelief," said Bartlett. "I don't know whether we took them too lightly or what."

"I was bitterly disappointed with the goals we conceded. A season that promised so much has ended with our last opportunity of silverware.

"I think we have blown it in the same way we have blown many opportunities this year."

He added: "My target was to be in the top half of the division and have a good cup run. But we have blown it in the league and now the cup.

"They passed up a great opportunity of getting to the final. We have just under achieved."

Wealdstone have the ideal opportunity to bounce back when they host bottom side Heybridge Swifts in the league on Saturday.

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