

News briefly

Saracens suffer first defeat

GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP leaders Saracens crashed to their first defeat in the competition after losing 23-19 at rivals London Irish on Sunday. The Men in Black made a flying start to the clash with Justin Melck scoring inside the first ten minutes. But tries from Chris Hala'ufia and Elvis Seveali'i earned the Exiles the win which closes the gap on Sarries to just three points. Saracens return to Vicarage Road to face champions Leicester Tigers on Saturday.

England close in on victory

ENGLAND were on the brink of winning the second Test against South Africa as the paper went to press. The visitors, skippered by Middlesex batsman Andrew Strauss, declared on 575 for nine after centuries from Ian Bell and Alastair Cook. The hosts, who were all out for 343 in the first innings, faced defeat on 76 for six.

Harrow Boro look for revenge

HARROW BOROUGH will aim to bounce back from a disappointing Christmas period when they travel to rivals Hendon on Saturday afternoon. Boro lost 3-0 to their North London visitors with Rocky Baptiste missing a first-half penalty.

Gibson seals derby glory



Derby delight: Billy Gibson celebrates after Wealdstone extended their recent form over rivals Harrow Borough at Grosvenor Vale. Picture: STEVE FOSTER/WEALDSTONE FC

by **SIMON MAIL**
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WEALDSTONE maintained their promotion push with a 2-1 win over rivals Harrow Borough at Grosvenor Vale on Monday.

The Stones have enjoyed the better of recent derbies and their form continued after Watford youngster Billy Gibson scored twice to sink Boro.

The 19-year-old midfielder, on-loan from the Hornets, was brought down in the area after a dominant start to the game by Wealdstone. He picked himself up and slotted in the penalty but Boro equalised when Rocky Baptiste set up

Dean Fenton five minutes before the break.

Wealdstone regained the lead seven minutes into the second half when Gibson cut inside and managed to squeeze the ball into the net.

Boro had a header from Dewayne Clarke disallowed but their pressure went unrewarded as they lost their second match of the festive weekend.

Stones boss Gordon Bartlett said: "I felt we dominated them for the first 35 minutes. We hit the woodwork and had three or four great chances.

"They should have been dead and buried but when they scored the game changed. It gave them a good

opportunity and sowed the seeds of doubt in our heads."

Bartlett has been impressed with the immediate impact made by Gibson with the Ryman Premier club and may consider extending his loan spell at the club beyond the middle of next month.

He added: "Billy showed his confidence to pick the ball up and score the penalty and also showed great feet for the second goal.

"He is technically very talented and I hope that we can help him on his learning curve to becoming a professional footballer."

Boro boss David Howell said: "We have played them three times this

season and there has been nothing between the sides. It could have gone either way.

"Wealdstone have managed to get the major decisions go in their way. They've been a bit more fortunate than us but it hopefully it will even out over the season.

"If we had gone on to equalise then it would have been deserved and no-one would have complained."

The Stones conceded a late equaliser in their 3-3 draw at Ashford Town (Middlesex) last weekend. Wealdstone will try to get the better of them this Saturday when they play their first match in the New Year.

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