

SPORT

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News briefly

Saracens fall to home defeat

SARACENS suffered their first home defeat of the season as they lost 22-15 to Guinness Premiership champions Leicester Tigers on Saturday. The Men in Black led 9-3 during the second half but a try from Dan Hipkiss sparked the visitors' fightback. England captain Steve Borthwick was sin-binned for blocking the ball in an offside position as the league leaders lost their second consecutive match.

Panthers close in on Ntini

MIDDLESEX CCC are hoping to lure South Africa bowler Makhaya Ntini to Lord's. The 32-year-old fast bowler could retire from international cricket after losing his spot in the latest Test against England. Middlesex Panthers want to bring him in as a Kolpak signing having recruited New Zealand's Iain O'Brien as their overseas player.

Harrow retain unbeaten record

HARROW RFC began the year with a 12-10 win at nearest rivals Chess Valley in Herts Middlesex Four. Four penalties from Hywel Gosling fired the visitors to the points. The victory sends them two points clear of Chess Valley at the top of the table.

Boro lose top scorer Clarke

by SIMON MAIL
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HARROW BOROUGH are set to release top goalscorer Dewayne Clarke because of his "negative influence" on the team.

Clarke, who has scored eight league goals this season, has been troubled by a series of personal issues and was involved in an argument with team-mates after their 3-1 defeat at Hendon on Saturday.

Boro manager David Howell has tried to help his talented forward but the latest blow to team morale has led him to act and he will not tolerate him any longer.

Howell said: "When he is on his game, of course he will be missed. He is our leading scorer and on his day he is unplayable. But when he is not then he is a negative influence. Ultimately this decision is the best one for the team."

"We tried to support him but it's time to draw a line under it. His personal issues were starting to affect him and other players and it's something I had to address."

On the post-match argument, Howell added: "It was just a bit of frustration and he apologised. But it has been getting worse rather than better and he's been finding it increasingly difficult."

Hendon's victory was their second over Boro in a week. But again Howell was left to reflect on a host of missed chances. Dean Fenton scored a late consolation but Boro were beaten for the third consecutive match.

Howell, whose side will host Kingstonian on Saturday should the weather hold up, said: "It was even more extreme than the first match between us. They weren't even in the game for the first half hour. But it was our fault because we failed to take our chances."

Beckford in demand after United winner



Cup king: Former Wealdstone striker Jermaine Beckford stunned Old Trafford by hitting the winner for Leeds against Manchester United.
Picture: ACTION IMAGES

WEALDSTONE manager Gordon Bartlett says it would be a "massive boost" if Jermaine Beckford was sold in the transfer window this month.

The former Stones striker dominated the national headlines after netting the winner in Leeds United's shock 1-0 win at Manchester United in the FA Cup on Sunday.

The 26-year-old marksman could be sold for £3million to Newcastle United with only six months left on his contract. Wealdstone could receive a major cash injection because, having sold him in 2006 for £70,000, they have a 20 per cent sell on clause on any profit.

Bartlett, who picked up Ryman Premier manager of the month for December, said: "It would be an enormous boost but we cannot rely on it. It would be crucial if he went, it would secure our future."

"We just have to sit back and watch the politics. It's frustrating but we have no influence over it. If he goes on a free transfer then he is probably in a great bargaining position."

The Stones face a huge fixture pileup after their games against Ashford Town (Middlesex) and Tonbridge Angels were called off due to the sub-zero weather.

Wealdstone are scheduled to visit Tooting and Mitcham United on Saturday but Bartlett does not expect the match to take place.

He said: "We're getting further and further behind in games and it is a worry. We are going to have fixture congestion and fatigue. In our next game, because of suspensions, we will lose Alan Massey, Chris O'Leary and Marvin McCoy and that could have a massive bearing on us."

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