

News briefly

European title joy for Barker

DARREN BARKER won the European middleweight title after a points win over Affif Belghecham at Alexandra Palace on Friday night. The Barnet boxer dominated the first half of the fight before the hard working Frenchman came back into the bout. But the judges unanimously awarded the win to 'Dazzling' Darren with scores of 116-112, 118-110 and 116-114. The win extends his unbeaten run to 22 fights.

Finn brilliance ends in defeat

MIDDLESEX CCC lost to Worcestershire by 111 runs despite a remarkable performance from England newcomer Steve Finn. The 21-year-old produced career best figures of nine for 37 in the second innings which followed his opening effort of five for 69. Middlesex needed 281 to win but were bowled out for just 169.

Tennis ace plays with Pat Cash

HARROW teenager Rishi Shah enjoyed a tennis masterclass with former Wimbledon champion Pat Cash as the race to become a Barclays Ball Kid heats up. The 15-year-old Nower Hill High School pupil is hoping to be one of 30 youngsters selected to be ball kids at the ATP World Tour finals.

Stones step up pressure in race for play-offs

by SIMON MAIL
smail@london.newsquest.co.uk

WEALDSTONE manager Gordon Bartlett believes his side must beat Aveley tonight if they want to reach the play-offs.

The Stones have revived their promotion hopes, since the Easter defeat at Harrow Borough, by picking up seven points from their last three games.

Wealdstone drew 0-0 with rivals Boreham Wood on Saturday and a stunning 35-yard half-volley from Mark E'Beyer gave them a crucial 1-0 win over Ashford Town [Middlesex] on Tuesday night.

Aveley are two points in front of the Stones and Bartlett knows the importance of beating one of their main rivals for the top-five.

He said: "With them sitting in front of us with the same amount of games played if we are going to get in the play-offs a win is ultra important."

"I watched them on Monday and they are very efficient, big, strong and well organised. The next game is massively important for us and if we keep winning then this time next week we'll be in a wonderful position.

"We are seven points better off and considering how we felt after losing to Harrow Borough the response has been fantastic."

Bartlett has urged his side to rise to the occasion and enjoy

their chance to create their own history at the club.

The manager added: "We're going to go out and enjoy this because it's not often that you get many opportunities to be successful in your career."

"We have an opportunity to do something, when so many seasons just drift into mediocrity, to look back on at the end of careers. If we get outplayed fine, but if we don't perform then there isn't any excuse."

The Stones are four points off the play-offs with five games remaining and Bartlett thinks the battle will go to the wire.

"I think it's wide open," he said. "Fourth and fifth place is up for grabs. There are six sides that can make it and we are one of them. It will come down to those who can cope with the pressure and the number of games."

"Performances are secondary now. At this stage of the season it is about the points. It was a massive win [Ashford] and we're right in the mix."

Wealdstone have had a punishing run of fixtures and tiredness is likely to play a part during the run-in. The Stones face their last five games in ten days.

He said: "Fatigue is a major factor but you are more tired when you're losing. On the back of our last three results it just makes things a little bit easier."



Hands up: Sean Thomas applauds the fans after keeping a clean sheet on Saturday.

Picture: STEVE FOSTER/WEALDSTONE FC

Champions edge to win at Borough

RYMAN PREMIER champions Dartford earned a 1-0 win at Harrow Borough at Earlsmead on Tuesday night.

The runaway title winners were made to work hard for the result and the hosts were denied a point after an excellent save by Dartford's goalkeeper from Rocky Baptiste's strike.

Boro were denied victory at Carshalton after a late equaliser snatched a 2-2 draw on Saturday.

In-form striker Baptiste fired the visitors in front after 26 minutes following a goalmouth scramble. Baptiste had a chance to extend the lead when he raced through on goal but his effort was blocked.

Carshalton were handed a lifeline at the start of the second half when Richard Orlu was sent off for pushing an attacker in the area. Andray Baptiste brilliantly saved Byron Harrison's spot kick but the forward followed up to fire in the rebound.

But ten man Boro regained the lead three minutes later when Lewis Cook's cross was headed over the goalkeeper.

Boro refused to sit back and threatened to score the third with Cook's shot blocked and Baptiste heading the ball past the post.

Boro were on course to secure an excellent result until the 88th minute when Carshalton ruthlessly punished them. A cross from the right was flicked on and David Ray leapt through a crowd to head in their equaliser.

Boro travel to Tonbridge Angels this evening before hosting Sutton United on Saturday.

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