

SPORT

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News briefly

Stones scrape to Croydon win

WEALDSTONE battled to a 4-3 win over Croydon Athletic in the Ryman Premier on Tuesday night. Alex Dyer fired them into the lead before Croydon equalised. Scott Fitzgerald grabbed the second before Croydon levelled again. Fitzgerald netted another from the penalty spot before Peter Dean struck their fourth goal. The visitors replied before Fitzgerald saw red for raising his arms.

Strauss fires England to win

ENGLAND captain Andrew Strauss hit an unbeaten 120 as the team picked up a six-wicket warm-up win over Western Australia. The Middlesex batsman celebrated a two-year contract extension with his County side by firing England to the win in their first pre-Ashes match.

Sarries denied Saints victory

SARACENS conceded a late try which denied them victory as they drew 22-22 at home to Northampton Saints in the LV= Cup on Sunday. First-half tries from Regardt Dreyer and Paul Diggin put the cup holders in control before Justin Melck helped Sarries into the lead. But Shane Geraghty's try tied the score.

Saracens reveal plans to revive Copthall

by SIMON MAIL AND FRANK SMITH
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SARACENS have confirmed ambitious plan to leave Vicarage Road and move to Barnet Copthall Stadium from the start of next season.

The Watford-based rugby club held a press conference at Hendon Golf Club, which is directly next to Copthall, yesterday to present their detailed plans to the media.

Sarries stated they plan to spend up to £10m on the stadium which will be a 10,000-seater venue when Saracens play during the season and will have detachable stands which will be removed during the summer months.

The Men in Black will not own the

stadium despite the huge investment and the athletics track will remain.

Chairman Nigel Wray stated the rugby club will use the stadium for first team matches for up to 16 days of the year.

For the rest of the time it will be utilised by various different clubs and organisations, including the Saracens Foundation and Shaftesbury Barnet Harriers.

The venue will have artificial turf which is a first for English rugby and chief executive Edward Griffiths confirmed the use of the pitch is within IRB regulations and has been given the thumbs up by the RFU.

Wray said: "We need a home with the potential to ensure Saracens is

sustainable. Without a real home, I do not think major sports clubs will be sustainable.

"Barnet Copthall will provide that home and bring Premiership rugby back into North London which is really the heartland of the club."

Griffiths stated the club hope to submit a planning application early in the New Year but there remain serious doubts as to whether the plans will be passed in time for next season.

Both Saracens' chief executive and chairman refused to confirm what the club plan to do if they are unable to move into their new home next summer.

Wray added: "When you propose to a girl, you do not have a plan B."



A plan of Copthall Stadium during the rugby season if Saracens get the go-ahead to move to Barnet.

Brave Borough bow out of cup

HARROW BOROUGH manager David Howell was proud of his side after they were beaten 2-0 by League Two leaders Chesterfield in the FA Cup third round.

Howell said: "I'm proud of them but we're also disappointed because we felt we should have at least taken them to a replay. We lost a game that we could have won."

The Ryman Premier outfit were indebted to goalkeeper Nick Jupp after a string of saves kept the scoreline level at half time.

Boro had plenty of possession in the second half but they conceded the opener in the last 20 minutes when Scott Boden headed home from a corner. The visitors brought on top goalscorer Craig Davies and he sealed the win in injury time with a smart finish.

Howell's side bounced back superbly with a 2-0 win at Aveley in the league on Monday night. Goals from Troy Hewitt and Dewayne Clarke handed Boro the three points.



Rocky Baptiste attacks for Harrow Borough against Chesterfield.

Picture: PETER BEAL

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