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News briefly

Saracens secure home semi final

SARACENS ensured they will have home advantage in the Premiership semi-finals after beating rivals Gloucester 35-12 on Sunday. The Men in Black set a new club record of nine consecutive league wins. Tries from David Strettle, Matt Stevens, Schalk Brits and Ernst Joubert gave Sarries a bonus-point win.

Middlesex surge to top of the table

MIDDLESEX CCC moved to the top of County Championship Division Two after their second win in a row at the start of the season. Middlesex battled to a three-wicket win at Derbyshire. Gareth Berg was in top form as he hit 80 to steer the visitors to the target of 329 for seven. The all-rounder took six wickets during the match.

Treble dreams over for Harrow

HARROW RFC's hopes of completing the treble were shattered after losing 20-16 to Ruislip in the NW Middlesex Floodlit Cup final. Harrow led 13-0 at half time after a Stuart Read try but Ruislip turned the match around in the second half.

News immediately:
harrowtimes.co.uk

Harrow Borough in pole position for play-offs after Stones point

by SIMON MAIL

HARROW BOROUGH manager David Howell insists his players are not under pressure despite being on the verge of reaching the Ryman Premier play-offs.

Boro know that a win over Cray Wanderers on Saturday, in their final league game, will ensure they finish in the top-five. But Howell is adamant his side won't feel the pressure because nobody expected them to be challenging for promotion.

Howell said: "We have to win a match to get into the play-offs which of course we would have taken at the start of the season. Even if we lose or draw we could also get in but there are six teams fighting for four places.

"From our perspective, there hasn't been any pressure on us. I do not think the players are under pressure because we are a team that if we avoid relegation it is seen as a good season.

"But we are in fifth place,

it's in our own hands, and it's a position not many people would have predicted at the start of the season.

"We just want to go out and do our job. We are just focused on what we have got to do because as soon as we take our eye off the ball we will get beat.

"I hope the players have enough confidence to realise we are a good side and we are there on merit.

"The players are all ready and we have just got to see if it's good enough to get us into the play-offs."

The Reds started the Easter weekend with a fine 2-0 win over second-placed Tonbridge Angels. Goals from Rocky Baptiste and Danny Hart sealed their sixth consecutive win, all with clean sheets, at Earlsmead.

Boro followed this up with a 1-1 draw at rivals Wealdstone on Monday. Lee Chappell gave the Stones an early lead before Baptiste's penalty earned a point.

Howell said: "I was

delighted with our performance on Saturday. It was a good team effort and we were comfortably the better side.

"But I felt that we missed an opportunity to seal a play-off spot at Wealdstone. I felt we were easily the better side even when we went 1-0 down early on.

"We just couldn't convert our territory, possession and chances into goals."

Boro's heaviest defeat of the season came in a 5-1 hammering at Cray back in September but Howell is not worried about their previous meeting.

"We played two defenders who were below par and had Wayne Walters sent off," Howell said.

"We moved on from that a long time ago and it was a different time and a different team. It just served as a kick up the backside for us.

"They're a dangerous team and have the best form in the last six matches. They're a good side and were unfortunate to miss out on the play-offs."



Harrow Borough have destiny in their own hands after fighting back for a 1-1 draw at Wealdstone on Easter Monday. Picture: STEVE FOSTER/WEALDSTONE FC

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