

News briefly

Strauss retires from cricket

ENGLAND captain Andrew Strauss has announced his retirement from professional cricket. The Middlesex batsman made the shock announcement at a press conference on Wednesday. The 35-year-old led England to two Ashes wins and to the top of the world rankings. He scored 21 Test centuries over 11 years.

Finn strikes in loss to South Africa

STEVE FINN picked up a wicket in England's 80-run one-day defeat to South Africa in Southampton on Tuesday. The Middlesex bowler finished with figures of one for 59 as the tourists closed on 287 for five. But England were dismissed for 207 as South Africa surpassed them at the top of the rankings. The next match is tomorrow at The Oval.

Saracens set for opening match

SARACENS will start their Premiership campaign at Twickenham this weekend against London Irish. The Men in Black won the title two seasons ago and will be looking to regain the trophy after a semi-final defeat last year. England international winger Chris Ashton is in line to make his league debut for Sarries.

Stones are beaten for first time this season

WEALDSTONE's unbeaten start to the season came to an end after losing 1-0 at Lewes in the Ryman Premier on Monday.

The Stones were without star midfielder Alex Dyer through injury and his creative and probing abilities were missed as Gordon Bartlett's side produced a disappointing performance.

Wealdstone had plenty of possession but offered very little in the final third.

It looked as if the Stones were going to come away with a point but they were sunk by an 81st-minute winner for the hosts.

Lee Chappell brought down Nathan Crabb in the area and Karl Beckford fired in the crucial goal.

Wealdstone were much more impressive at the weekend as they eased to a 2-0 home win over Leiston.

Lee Chappell's cross was knocked on by Tom Pett and Scott Fitzgerald gave the hosts a deserved lead at Grosvenor Vale.

The home side killed off the contest midway through the second period when Pett took one touch and smashed the ball in for the second goal.

Meanwhile, Bartlett has offered striker Shabazz Baidoo the chance to relaunch his career with the Stones.

The 26-year-old was a youngster at Arsenal and he burst onto the scene at Queens Park Rangers as a teenager.

Baidoo left Loftus Road in 2008 and immediately joined Dagenham & Redbridge.

He moved to Lewes and then joined Croydon Athletic.

Baidoo made his debut for the Stones as a substitute in last week's draw with East Thurrock United but is currently sidelined as he recovers from a hamstring injury.

The Stones entertain big spending Whitehawk this weekend in their latest league match.



Scott Fitzgerald battles for the ball during the Stones' defeat to Lewes. Picture: STEVE FOSTER/WEALDSTONE FC

Harrow Borough sunk by Hastings

HARROW BOROUGH suffered their third consecutive defeat after losing 1-0 at home to Hastings United on Monday.

After an opening Ryman Premier win, Dave Anderson's side have been brought back down to earth with a dose of reality.

Alwayne Jones had an early shot charged down, but it was the visitors who settled into the contest the quicker.

A poor header by Michael Peacock saw Bradley Goldberg charge through but Jamie Jackson came to the rescue with a fine save.

Josh Jirabandey then headed over from a right-wing corner, and Jon Munday made a diving header to clear a left-wing cross.

It took just three minutes of the second half for Hastings to net the decisive goal.

Peacock missed a through ball and Goldberg raced clear to beat the goalkeeper.

The closest Boro came to getting an equaliser was when Jones poked the ball past the keeper but it was cleared off the line by a United defender.

The Reds were also beaten 2-1 at Cray Wanderers at the weekend.

Gareth Williams fired the home side in front when his strike deflected into the net.

Leigh Bremner doubled the lead in the second half when he headed past Jackson.

Boro refused to give up and they were rewarded with a late consolation when Joakim Ehui beat two defenders and tucked the ball into the net.

Anderson's side will try to end their losing run on Saturday when they travel to Lowestoft Town.

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