

Stones still keen to strengthen

Wealdstone manager Gordon Bartlett insists he is still looking to strengthen the squad despite his side starting the new year top of the Ryman Premier Division.

The Stones have a great chance of winning the title this season but Bartlett is refusing to get carried away and is still on the lookout for new players to bolster his squad.

Bartlett said: "We are always looking and we've made enquiries about players so we are trying to strengthen the squad."

"A couple of them have not come off yet but we don't have a divine right to sign players. It is not always easy to bring people in."

"But we are not going to sit back and say being top now is good enough. We have strengthened the squad gradually and we will continue to do so if the situation becomes possible."

Wealdstone have yet to play in 2014 but still have a one-point lead at the top of the league with a game in hand on most sides.

Despite their exceptional first half of the season, Bartlett remains focused on their initial target of reaching the play-offs.

The Stones boss said: "We are in the best position I can remember at this stage of the season. It is encouraging but there is no point leading the 100m half way down the track and not going on to win."

"It is a nice position to be in and we've actually improved despite not playing because second-placed Dulwich Hamlet dropped three points this week."

"It's all about what we do but if

other teams around us drop points then that can only benefit us."

Bartlett added: "Our target has always been to get into the play-offs but if we can win the title then that would be fantastic."

"But we're not getting carried away. It's a very open league and we've made an excellent start so long may it continue."

Recent postponements against Hendon and Wingate & Finchley due to the wet weather means Wealdstone have not been in action since the end of December.

Their last match was a surprise defeat after losing 3-1 at home to Hampton & Richmond Borough.

Bartlett said: "It's not a major concern. I think it's fantastic that we've had such a good run. We just need to react to this and bounce back whenever we next play."

The Stones are scheduled to travel to mid-table Canvey Island this Saturday before a trip to struggling East Thurrock United on Tuesday.

Scott McGleish is suspended for the first game while there are doubts over Jonny Wright [back], Luke Piggden [ankle] and Tom Hamblin [knee] this weekend.

Bartlett said: "If you look at Canvey Island on paper, then they have a very good team."

"Their outgoings must be quite high and they are probably a bit disappointed with how their season has gone so far. If you catch them on the wrong day then you could be in trouble."

The manager continued: "It is always quite difficult at East Thurrock because there is a lack of atmos-



The Stones have not been in action since losing at home to Hampton & Richmond Borough.

Picture: STEVE FOSTER/WEALDSTONE FC

phere there.

"It is important that we have that winning mentality and it's a test of how far we've come. It's away from home during midweek, probably going to be cold and miserable and we have to make sure we have the right mentality."

Wealdstone are hoping to have defender Wes Parker and striker Lewis Putman available by next month after injury layoffs.

Parker had a hernia operation last

month while Putman has been out since the start of the season with a serious knee injury.

Bartlett said: "They have both made a quicker recovery than we expected and it will be like having two new signings."

In other news, Wealdstone have announced Mick Williamson has joined their board.

He will already be known to supporters as he was responsible for the construction of the new 'Couch Cor-

ner' stand at the top end of the ground, a project that he delivered together with his father Trevor.

Williamson is a successful local businessman who began his connection with Wealdstone via the Ladies Club where he remains their President.

● Harrow Borough have not been in action since their 2-2 draw at Kingstonian on December 28.

Dave Anderson's side host Lowestoft Town this weekend.

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