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FOOTBALL: Manager frustrated after home loss Stones defeat 'sums up' pre-season woes

WEALDSTONE boss Gordon Bartlett felt his side's 2-1 home defeat by Concord Rangers in their second National League South fixture typified a pre-season which has been a long way from ideal.

Saturday's season-opener at Bath City also ended in a 2-1 defeat, with a makeshift Stones side kicking off late following traffic on the motorway. Despite better preparations on Monday evening, Wealdstone lost 2-1 at home to Rangers in their first home game of the campaign.

But Bartlett was not disheartened by the loss against the Beachboys, despite admitting his frustration at the two poor goals he saw his team concede.

Bartlett said: "I have got to say I think that is two games running where I don't think we have got what we deserved and that is very frustrating and possibly sums up our pre-season; if something is going to go wrong we seem to be able to find it at the moment.

"It is no good feeling sorry for yourself, you have to learn from these things. I thought they went in front against the run of play but we equalised at the perfect time. To concede a minute into the second

By Tom Bodell

half put us on right on the back foot when we should have been on the front foot."

The veteran boss added: "We hit the woodwork three times. But you can list what you like; the bottom line is we have lost the game."

Wealdstone levelled seconds before half-time when Elliot Godfrey applied the finishing touch to a well-worked team move which started out on the left-hand side following a good goalkeeping from Jonathan North.

The Stones had fallen behind when Max Cornhill crashed a header beyond North at the near post and re-took the lead within a minute of the second half getting underway when Ben Greenhalgh whipped in a fortuitous cross-cum-shot.

Asked if he could at least take solace in the performances of his side in contrast to those at the same stage last year, Bartlett replied: "I think there was naivety last year. We drew the first two games last year but we have lost the first two games this year.

"I think there were positives at the beginning of last year and we knew

there was a learning curve in front of us. Today we have gone in again with a lot of our senior players unavailable but it is the little things which make the difference.

"Before the second goal we had possession and our reaction when we lost position contributed to them scoring and those are the little things the lads have got to learn. We



Connor Calcutt strikes the post for Wealdstone on Monday evening.
Picture: Steve Foster/Wealdstone FC

Harrow start with a point

BOSS STEVE BAKER SAYS BORO MUST KICK ON THIS SEASON AFTER 1-1 DRAW

HARROW BOROUGH boss Steve Baker hopes the Reds can use the momentum of a strong finish to last season and finally enjoy a year without being dragged into the relegation mire.

Baker's arrival from Chipstead last term lifted the Isthmian Premier Division strugglers to 16th, as well as clinching the Middlesex Senior and Middlesex Charity Cups.

And Boro got the new campaign off on a good footing with a 1-1 draw against Hampton and Richmond Borough at Earlsmead on Saturday thanks to Marc Charles-Smith's equaliser.

"We are looking to kick on this season," said Baker. "One of the biggest problems for Harrow in recent years is they never seem to kick on and they end up flirting with relegation every year.

"We have kept most of the squad and have made four or five additions who have only made us stronger. If we can make a good start that takes the pressure off going into the next few games," he explained.

Goalkeeper Nick Jupp has been ruled out for the season with a cruciate ligament injury and Baker praised Uxbridge for allowing Ben Goode to join as his replacement.

"It is not a call I would have wanted to take just before the season," admitted Baker.

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