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FOOTBALL: Gordon Bartlett stresses value of cup Stones boss hopes for FA Cup adventure

GORDON Bartlett has underlined the importance of an FA Cup run to Wealdstone ahead of Saturday's trip to Brockenhurst in the third qualifying round.

The Stones are now unbeaten in eight games after a welcome 2-1 win over Dartford in the National League South which saw them move out of the relegation zone on Saturday.

That run includes three cup fixtures – including two ties against Biggleswade Town in round two – but Bartlett wouldn't trade progress in the FA Cup for more points in the league.

He said: "It's important we have a good FA Cup or FA Trophy run. From a financial point of view the FA Cup is massively important to clubs at this level.

"If you're going to compete at this level you need a sugar daddy or to generate a few quid ourselves.

"If you can get to the first round proper or beyond that's when the money comes in because you're talking about gate money or even television money."

Saturday's victory over the Darts – who were relegated from the National League last term – was the

Stones' first since a 3-1 success over Bishop's Stortford at the end of August.

But while Wealdstone continue their unbeaten run, Bartlett won't be caught complaining.

"They are all competitive games," he said. "In the league we've got the tenth-best defensive record and against Sutton United we conceded five, so it could be an awful lot better than that very easily.

"Not conceding goals is a great place to start from if you can get it right at the back. "On Saturday there was no Wes Parker, Carl Martin, Tom Cadmore or Ryan Watts, but at the back has not been the major area of concern," added Bartlett.

The Stones boss also paid tribute to returning defender Oliver Duffy, who made his debut after going travelling earlier in the summer.

"I have to mention Oliver Duffy," said Bartlett. "He's been away for three months, not trained or played and we threw him straight into the deep end and although he blew out with 15 minutes to go, he was excellent."



Wealdstone celebrate Shaun Lucien's winner against Dartford. Picture: Steve Foster/Wealdstone FC

Welcome break for Harrow

BOROUGH BOSS STEVE BAKER HOPES WEEKEND OFF PROVES WORTHWHILE

HARROW Borough boss Steve Baker hopes an enforced pause in the season will prove beneficial as the club's injury list mounts.

The Reds were beaten 1-0 at Bognor Regis Town on Saturday – their first away Isthmian Premier Division loss and the first time this season they have suffered consecutive defeats.

With forward Will Turl (knee) joining goalkeeper Nick Jupp in missing the rest of the campaign and "five or six" others carrying knocks, Baker believes the fact Harrow don't have a fixture this weekend could prove a blessing in disguise.

He said: "When you win you want another game but when you've lost you want it even more.

"But we've got a lot of injuries so it might not be the end of the world.

"The players will train extremely hard on Thursday and Saturday and we will spend as much time as we can on the things that haven't gone right in the last couple of games.

"Which, to be fair, isn't too many things."

Bognor Regis' winner came from a set piece, Sami El-Abd the scorer, and it was the manner of the goal which frustrated Baker most.

He said: "I wasn't very happy – not necessarily with the performance – set pieces were my main problem. On Saturday the players did things differently to what I asked."

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