

# SPORT

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## FOOTBALL: Wealdstone denied win by late Gosport equaliser Bartlett remains confident Stones will avoid the drop

By Tom Bodell

WEALDSTONE manager Gordon Bartlett insists the Stones are still heading in the right direction and he is looking up the National League South table rather than down.

A late headed equaliser from Gosport Borough's Dan Wooden denied Bartlett's side all three points at home to the Hampshire side on Monday evening.

Bradley Hudson-Odoi had given the hosts a lead they richly deserved when he fired beyond Nathan Ashmore with the aid of a deflection seconds after the restart.

The draw leaves Wealdstone in 16th place, four points above the relegation zone ahead of Saturday's trip to Eastbourne Borough.

But Bartlett isn't concerned. The Stones boss is adamant his side are better off this season than last, even though they're two places lower than after the same number of matches last term.

He said: "If you look at the side now and at this stage last year we're in a much stronger position but that doesn't win you football matches.

"We were excellent the other night

but didn't win. We've got to turn those performances into points.

"We would still like to add one or two more but we're going in the right direction.

"I'm still looking up the table rather than down."

The draw was hard on Wealdstone who had more than held their own against the fifth-placed side at the Vale.

Jefferson Louis fizzed wide early on whilst Hudson-Odoi missed the target with a couple of first-half chances.

Hudson-Odoi got his range right immediately after the break before Louis forced a good save out of Ashmore with a header.

Elliott Godfrey almost doubled the lead but poked wide when well placed before Jack Smith brought a good stop out of Ashmore.

But Bartlett felt the game turned on the double loss of Hudson-Odoi and Johnny Wright. The latter was replaced after being struck by Gosport keeper Ashmore, though the stopper was only yellow carded for the incident.

"We never looked like conceding," said Bartlett. "We got into the 88th minute but Bradley and Johnny had



Matty Harriott, Jefferson Louis, Scott Davies and Bradley Hudson-Odoi celebrate. Picture: ALAN PALMER

to come off.

"Bradley threatened on the left every time and Johnny did a great job stopping their left-back getting forward. Losing both those players within a minute of one another

didn't help."

Asked about the altercation with Ashmore which saw Wright injured and subsequently ruled out for four to six weeks, Bartlett said: "I didn't actually see it.

"I saw it after and it looks like he's barged into him but I won't whinge and moan about it.

"It's happened and my disappointment is Johnny will miss the next five or six games needlessly."

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