

SPORT

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FOOTBALL: Bartlett boosted by summer changes Boss urges positivity ahead of new season

AN "air of negativity" may have disappeared from Grosvenor Vale with a regime change at Wealdstone this summer.

Former Accrington chairman Peter Marsden was appointed in this position at Wealdstone last month, on the back of what boss Gordon Bartlett called his "worst season in memory" of 31 years in management.

Now he is feeling reinvigorated ahead of his 22nd season with the club, and with the Stones adding eight players ahead of the start of the new campaign, which begins at Dartford on Saturday, he has hopes of a top-ten finish for his side.

But first, he wants them to ensure they can build on the positive vibe of the close-season changes on and off the field.

Bartlett said: "This year is the first time we can say we can compete with the big boys, and we should go and enjoy that fact."

"Last year was probably the one I remember the least fondly of all, but there's a freshness about this season which is exciting."

"We've got a bit of an air of negativity around the club, but since we've been at Grosvenor Vale

By Ron Walker

we've been in two play-off campaigns, won the league, got to the FA Cup first round twice and had an FA Trophy semi-final here.

"I want to get people positive about where we are and what we're doing, and I've told the players that."

The Stones finished a stable 13th after a poor start to the season saw them with a solitary point from their opening six games, something Bartlett is, unsurprisingly, hoping to better this time round.

He said: "We've got to set realistic targets, which is to finish in the top half. We've had some poor starts in the last two years and if we can have a half-decent first few weeks we should be OK. Ideally, I would like to flirt with the upper reaches of the table."

"If we can get six games in with ten points on the table, that gives us a good start. Anything more than that and I'll be delighted."

The Stones finished off their pre-season campaign with a 2-1 win at Wingate and Finchley on Tuesday night, with Elliot Benyon and Ricky Wellard on target.



The Stones begin their season at Dartford this Saturday. Picture: ALAN PALMER

A missed chance to move up

BESSBOROUGH TAKE HOME JUST ONE POINT IN AWAY MATCH AT BRENTHAM

BESSBOROUGH were forced to settle for a solitary point at Brentham, missing the chance to distance themselves from the bottom of Middlesex County League Division Three.

They were undone by Tom Brandreth's 120 in a match where neither side were bowled out, but when put in to bat first, Brentham took the impetus with some strong scores.

Saad Rehman added another 39, while Matt Lowen was dismissed one run short of his half-century, with Vivek Patel leading the bowling, taking 2-32.

Rohan Karkhanis also took two wickets, but endured an expensive innings, losing 89 runs in the process, as Brentham ended on 245-5 from 49 overs.

Bessborough faced a tough, but not impossible, task to win in response, and got off to a bright start, with openers Sherrick Chavda and Hemmen Jutla making 31 and 51 respectively.

But then two quick wickets saw Nirav Ghantiwala and Talha Junaid dispatched for a combined seven, and that, combined with a slow run-rate, put pay to any hope of victory.

Ian Barrie did make 38, and Vivek Patel an unbeaten 46 when they closed on 198-6, but they had struggled to ever look like reaching their target, and fell 47 runs short to settle for a losing draw.

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