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STONES up to 11th after latest win at St Albans Saints win helps preserve unbeaten Wealdstone run

BACK-TO-BACK victories have changed the atmosphere around Grosvenor Vale and propelled Wealdstone back into the top half of the National League table, with a 3-0 win over St Albans City on Tuesday night the latest triumph for Gordon Bartlett's side.

The Stones have enjoyed a sharp upturn in form from what was one win in seven to a run of five games unbeaten - with the Saints victory adding to a 1-0 win at Welling on Saturday.

Manager Gordon Bartlett recently said his side had sacrificed creativity for organisation as they looked to stem the tide of a barrage of goals conceded, and even following Tuesday night's crushing local derby victory he denied they were anywhere near their free-flowing best.

But the veteran boss could not hide his pleasure with the club's performance at Clarence Park, which brought three points back to North London courtesy of a first-half goal from Dagenham loanee Joe Wright, followed by late additions from Tom Hamblin and Danny Green.

"We looked very comfortable defensively and that's four clean sheets from five games. We've kept

By Ron Walker

it a lot tighter and looked more solid, and showed a grit and steel - and if you put that effort in to the defence, it gives you a base to work from. Those qualities were lacking at the start of the season.

"Jon North in goal didn't have a save of note to make all night. We weren't free-flowing, but it was a dogged, hard-working performance with some good finishes.

"We put them under pressure throughout; by their own admission, they have been conceding goals, but they've also been scoring and we kept them quiet. We knew if we could get around their box, we would be able to score."

Replacing injured top-scorer Elliot Benyon, who has been missing since mid-January, has proven tough for Bartlett - and a number of different options have been tried and cast aside.

White has been the man with the shirt since mid-February and opened his account for the Stones with the opener at Clarence Park.

"We've been delighted with Joe," said Bartlett. "He has worked really hard and has a great work ethic. El-



Gordon Bartlett is aiming for a top-eight finish for his side after a third straight win on Tuesday night.
Picture: ALAN PALMER

liot is a very difficult player to replace, and hopefully he will be back within the next week to 10 days.

"We tried to get the balance and blend right and needed someone with the same willingness to work - and Joe has that."

Tuesday's victory moved Wealdstone into the top half, six points off eighth-placed St Albans, and Bart-

lett is targeting a bright end to the season for his men.

"We've underperformed this year but my target was always eighth or above, and that hasn't changed. Four weeks ago that looked hard, but it's realistic now."

On Saturday, the Stones host Gosport before travelling to Weston-super-Mare on Tuesday night.

Losses drag Boro back into scrap

HOME HUMBLING BY ROCK-BOTTOM
GRAYS LEAVES HARROW IN TROUBLE

HARROW were condemned to back-to-back defeats by sides at either end of the Isthmian League table to leave them back within five points above the relegation zone.

On Tuesday night, local rivals and bogey side Wingate and Finchley ran out 3-1 winners at the Harry Abrahams Stadium, despite falling behind to Michael Bryan's strike on the half-hour mark.

Bryan advanced forward after Josh Webb had played a free-kick short to him and fired beyond Shane Gore from 25 yards with a fine finish.

But a rare Borough win against their hosts was on the cards for only three minutes when Ahmet Rifat poked home Sean Cronin's knock-down, before he added a second from close range moments after half-time.

Steve Baker's triple substitution breathed new life into Harrow but the game was settled when substitute Ben Pattie capped a sweeping counter attack with a third.

Defeat to Wingate, who have won 10 of their last 13, was no disgrace, but a 3-1 defeat to Grays at Earlsmead on Saturday undoubtedly was.

Matt Baxter fired the visitors ahead after only four minutes before Kurtis Cumberbatch levelled up from the spot after Mark Charles-Smith was felled.

But Grays deservedly retook the lead after an hour when Kieran Bishop fired home, and he added another soon after.

Harrow face another London derby on Saturday when they travel to Kingstonian, who sit four points above them.

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