

SPORT

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SIGNINGS expected by beginning of pre-season

Bartlett seeks foundations for Wealdstone

By Ron Walker

THREE or four players are expected to add to Wealdstone's ranks before the start of pre-season, according to manager Gordon Bartlett, who believes evolution rather than revolution is the order of the day at Grosvenor Vale.

A run of some 32 points from their last 17 games of the season, including just a solitary defeat from February to April, has given the Stones renewed hope going into next season, with Bartlett agreeing in principle to stay on as manager for another year - his 23rd with the club.

Bartlett revealed this week he is looking to shed the pounds around the belly of his squad and operate with a positively trim 16 or 17 first-team players next season.

He said: "Going on a run like that at the end of the season, and getting to two cup finals, finishing three points off the play-offs, there's a lot to look forward to next season."

"We're looking to cut the squad down in terms of numbers and operate with a smaller group. It might mean what we do have can cost a bit more."

Bartlett added a caveat that he had been puzzled about suggestions the Stones were willing to pay over the odds for players, and made it clear the club would continue to pay what he considered a fair wage next season.

He said: "We have already been knocked back by a few players, but that doesn't come down solely to money."

"There were a couple who the move didn't suit geographically and other reasons."

Wealdstone are yet to announce who will be staying at Grosvenor Vale next season, with discussions with a number of players still ongoing, but Josh Urquhart's spell with the club is over, after receiving what Bartlett called a "fantastic" offer from elsewhere.

It is expected full details regarding the first-team squad will be revealed in the coming weeks.



Gordon Bartlett hopes to have 'three of four' new faces through the Grosvenor Road door by the start of pre-season.
Picture: ALAN PALMER

Borough saved from relegation

HARROW HANDED REPRIEVE TO STAY IN RYMAN PREMIER FOR NEXT SEASON

HARROW have been given a shock relegation reprieve and will retain their place in the Ryman Premier League for next season.

The Boro were relegated on the final day of the season after a nine-game winless streak ended with defeat at Lowestoft Town.

But following National League North side Worcester City's decision to resign from their league, and having been demoted down to step five, Steve Baker's side have been brought back from the brink thanks to a decision from the Football Association.

Harrow finished the season on 53 points - the most for a relegated side from the Ryman Premier for more than three decades - and it was their points-per-game ratio which proved their saviour in the eyes of the FA.

Following on from the news, the club has confirmed Steve Baker will stay on as first-team manager for next season, although he has yet to sign a contract ahead of the 2017/18 preparations.

Assistant manager Jesse Smith and coach Darron Wilkinson are also expected to remain at Earlsmead, alongside new appointment Byron Walton, a former Wycombe Wanderers player, who has been added to the backroom team.

On the pitch, striker Lewis Driver was released on Monday following three years at Harrow, despite scoring 12 goals over the course of the season and starting in 33 games.

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