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EISA on target in 4-2 victory over Hitchin Town

Wealdstone sign off from pre-season with victory

WEALDSTONE will be without regular defender Ryan Sellers for the start of the National League South season this weekend, in what manager Gordon Bartlett called a "blow" to his preparations.

The Stones begin their league campaign at home to Concord Rangers on Saturday, on the back of a strong pre-season campaign where they racked up five wins from eight games.

But prior to Saturday's 4-2 win at Hitchin Town, Sellers was ruled out for up to a month with ankle ligament damage, reducing their options at the back and limiting their choices of shape ahead of the curtain-raiser.

Abobaker Eisa continued his red-hot form with another goal for Saturday's opener, but when possession was cheaply squandered in midfield Liam Brooks levelled up before Mustafa Tiryaki restored the lead with a free-kick.

Another poor piece of defending, this time from Josh Hill, allowed Hitchin to again equalise but Danny Green and Dan Fitchett scored in the final 20 minutes to give the visitors the win.

Against a side who finished fourth

By Ron Walker

in the Southern League Premier Division last season, Bartlett was content with the final run-out of pre-season, with a number of first-team players beyond Sellers also missing.

He said: "Pre-season has been really good except for the last week where availability has cost us. We had five people missing against Hampton and Richmond [who beat Wealdstone 1-0 last week] and four on Saturday, either through being away, injured or ill.

"What we have done is had eight games, won five, drawn two and lost one. If we can have that in the first eight league games I'll be happy.

"The injuries from Saturday are ones where in a league game, some of them would've played. We've decided to go with a smaller squad this year, which we sat down with the board to decide over the summer."

That squad is still a little short of being at the level Bartlett would have wanted, the veteran manager admitted, with seven players arriving at Grosvenor Vale so far this summer - a number somewhat counterbalanced by the loss of influential defender Tom Hamblin.



Abobaker Eisa was on the scoresheet again as Wealdstone beat Hitchin Town 4-2 on Saturday.
Picture: ALAN PALMER

He said: "There's a couple of players we would have liked to have got over the line. The nucleus from last year is there though, and we've got a few additions too. But losing Ryan Sellers is a blow because he looks like he will be out for a month, and we could use a new formation with him.

"Even with those problems, we

have been nice and solid generally.

"The disappointment on Saturday was we gave both goals away cheaply. We've got to be better, but we've scored 10 goals on the last two Saturdays."

Kick-off for the clash against Concord Rangers, who finished 18th last season, is at 3pm on Saturday at Grosvenor Vale.

Boro's good pre-season continues

HARROW BEAT BEACONSFIELD AFTER DRAWING WITH CARDIFF UNDER-23S

HARROW Borough kept up their unbeaten run in pre-season with a 4-0 win against Beaconsfield on Tuesday night, on the back of an impressive 2-2 draw with an experienced Cardiff Under-23s side at Earlsmead on Saturday.

The Boro's season starts in nine days' time with a home game with Harlow, with friendlies against Egham and Hanwell to precede the league opener.

On Tuesday they forged a first-half lead thanks to a Beaconsfield own goal.

Two changes followed at the break, but if anything it inspired the hosts, as they added a second eight minutes after half-time through Charles Banyan.

Richard Paquette entered the fray soon after and would later find himself on the scoresheet, but not before another substitute, Ant O'Connor, made it three in the final 15 minutes.

Saturday's encounter with Cardiff City came on the back of Ibrahim Meite's January move to the Bluebirds, and almost saw Steve Baker's side pull off a coup but for a last-gasp equaliser from Declan John.

The Boro had led 2-0 in the first half when Will Turl ran onto a Curtis Ujah header for the opener, before Bajram Pashaj added a second with a well-struck free-kick.

Cardiff, including players with first-team Championship experience in their ranks, pulled a goal back through Mark Harris before Rudd to level in the final minute with another fine free-kick.

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