

# SPORT

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**STONES** miss penalty in loss to 10-man St Albans

## Fine margins prove fatal for Wealdstone

By Ron Walker

"THE width of a post" was the clearest thing in Wealdstone manager Gordon Bartlett's mind after his side threw away the chance to lead at St Albans on Tuesday night.

The Stones began their season perfectly, with a 2-1 win over Concord Rangers on Saturday thanks to Elliot Benyon and Dan Fitchett, although even then profligacy in front of goal had nearly cost them the game when Jordan Cox levelled up for the Essex club.

But despite a dominant display against St Albans in midweek, they could not follow-up their opening-day win with another - despite playing more than half an hour with a man advantage after Tom Bender's red card.

That decision would prove pivotal as the Saints defender was dismissed for a deliberate handball on the goalline, but when Benyon stepped up to take the resulting penalty, he could only fire it against the post and away to safety.

They had taken an early lead thanks to Josh Hill's close-range finish from a free-kick, but St Albans levelled against the run of play just before the break through Sam Merson.

And despite being a man down, the Clarence Park side completed the turnaround when Zane Banton danced through the visiting defence before dispatching what would prove the winner.

"I've been involved in football for a long time and I know you don't always get what you deserve," said a frustrated Bartlett.

"Those defensive mistakes have got to stop as soon as possible, and we have to be better at both ends of the pitch.

"But the performances have generally been good in the first two games, and I'd be a lot more worried if we weren't creating chances.

"Had the penalty gone in, I've got no doubt we would have scored a couple more goals and won comfortably. We need to bounce back on Saturday [at Gloucester City]."



Dan Fitchett scored the winner for Wealdstone against Concord Rangers on Saturday.  
Picture: ALAN PALMER

## Harrow end pre-season with victory

**BORO WARM UP FOR LEAGUE OPENER WITH 2-0 WIN OVER HANWELL TOWN**

HARROW Borough stepped up their preparations for Saturday's Isthmian League Premier Division opener with a 2-0 victory at Hanwell Town on Tuesday in their final pre-season friendly.

Goals from Will Turl and former Watford winger Michael Bryan ensured Steve Baker's side warmed up for the curtain raiser at the weekend in ideal fashion at Reynolds Field, seeing off the challenge of Hanwell Town - a side who play one equivalent tier lower than Borough in the Evo-Stik League South East.

The win also means Borough have gone the entirety of pre-season unbeaten, with Baker re-tooling his side following the departures of some key faces in an attempt to avoid a repetition of last season's poor league performance.

New look Harrow, who have lost long serving captain Marc Charles-Smith to Wingate and Finchley and defender Michael Peacock after five years at Earlsmead among others, will be desperate to make a better fist of this campaign having only avoided relegation last term thanks to a reprieve, and face Harlow Town at Earlsmead on Saturday.

Elsewhere, the draw for the first round of the 2017/18 Middlesex Senior Cup has taken place.

Harrow, three times winners of the competition having last won the Senior Cup in 2015, have been drawn away to Bedfont Sports, with the ties scheduled to be played on the week beginning 16 October.

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