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STONES start pre-season with Bracknell draw Stevens signs after injury forces O'Brien to retire

FORMER Watford Under-23 defender Connor Stevens has joined Wealdstone.

The 20-year-old spent much of last season on loan at National League South side Oxford City where he impressed to earn a move to Grosvenor Vale.

Boss Bobby Wilkinson has seen plenty to please him while Stevens has been with the training with the Stones and believes he can have an impact on the squad.

He said: "Connor has done exceptionally well in pre-season in a key area for us and the opportunity arose to sign him as we look to finalise the squad."

The defender's arrival comes after Alan O'Brien was forced to call time on his playing career at the end of last week.

Following an injury-hit campaign, the experienced winger resumed pre-season training last week, only to suffer another setback.

Wilkinson said: "Alan has had a fantastic career in the game and did really well for the team when he came in last season and worked tremendously hard to get fit."

"Unfortunately the injury situation has caught up with him and

we spoke after the training sessions this week. On behalf of the whole club we thank Alan for his work at Wealdstone and wish him all the very best."

Wilkinson's men began their pre-season campaign with a 3-3 draw against Bracknell Town at Larges Lane on Saturday.

Bradley Bubb opened the scoring and Jeffrey Monakana's second-half goals put the Stones in the lead and rescued a draw near the end for the visitors.

With a large overhaul of players in the summer, Stones fans saw Rhys Tyler, Freddie Grant, Sam Hatton, James Clark, Godfrey Poku and Matt Lench all make their first appearances for the club, although the latter was replaced by another new arrival, Montel Agyemang, after picking up a knock on 14 minutes.

Bubb opened the scoring on 29 minutes after a precise long ball from Clark fell perfectly for the Grenada international, and he lobbed the stranded keeper from the edge of the area.

The hosts equalised after the break through a well-struck free kick that went in off the post, leaving Jonathan North with no chance.



Jeffrey Monakana scored twice for Stones in their friendly draw.

Picture: AQUEOUS SUN PHOTOGRAPHY

Wealdstone regained the lead with a counter-attacking move. A set piece was cleared to Monakana, who had come on at the interval, and he ran 70 yards with the ball before tucking it past the keeper.

Bracknell levelled immediately after their forward headed in from a cross, with the same player giv-

ing them the lead for the first time by finishing off their own counter attack.

But Monakana restored parity on 86 minutes. Youth team player Shaquille Ishmael saw his cross intercepted by a defender before Monakana robbed him of the ball in the area and poked it past the keeper.

Home start to the new campaign

WEALDSTONE BOSS TO FACE EARLY ENCOUNTER WITH FORMER CLUB

WEALDSTONE will kick off the 2018/19 National League South season with a home match against Weston-super-Mare at Grosvenor Vale on Saturday, August 4.

The Seagulls finished in 12th place in the table last season, one place below the Stones, and are managed by Marc McGregor.

A trip to Bobby Wilkinson's former side Hungerford Town is next up on Tuesday, August 7, before the Stones travel to Glenn Tamplin's newly-promoted Billericay Town on Saturday, August 11 after they won the Bostik Premier League last season.

A busy festive schedule will take Wilkinson's men to Truro City in their last league game before Christmas, before the Stones enjoy back-to-back home matches against Slough Town on Boxing Day and Oxford City on Saturday, December 29.

The Stones will then take on Slough Town once again just days later, with Wealdstone set to travel to Berkshire on New Year's Day.

Four days later and Wilkinson's men will then face Dartford in their first home game of 2019.

Wealdstone's last away game of the season will take place on Monday, April 22 which will see the team make the journey to Essex to take on Chelmsford City.

The Ruislip-based side will then round-off their campaign with a home encounter against Hemel Hempstead Town on Saturday, April 27.

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