

# SPORT

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## CITY youngsters beaten ahead of league opener Stones end pre-season with Bluebirds triumph

CIARON Brown didn't enjoy such good fortunes on his return to the Vale as Wealdstone comfortably beat Cardiff City's Under-23s 3-0 in their final pre-season friendly.

Goals from Wadah Ahmidi, trialist Reece Harris and Bradley Bubb secured the win for Bobby Wilkinson's men, who kick off their National League South campaign against Weston-super-Mare on Saturday.

Wilkinson had a near full-strength side to choose from at the Vale but was without the services of first choice goalkeeper Jonathan North, alongside Luke Williams and Stefan Brown. Trialists Harris and Guri Demuria were named on the substitutes bench.

Former Stones centre-back Brown lined up for the Cardiff side which also included Omar Bogle and ex-Crystal Palace midfielder Stuart O'Keefe.

Both teams traded blows early on with Cardiff's Jacob Evans forcing a fingertip save from Wealdstone goalkeeper Callum Thomas from distance, before Bubb almost put the Stones in front through a close-range header.

The National League South side

By Bradley Hayden

would take the lead just before the half-hour mark thanks to an excellent strike from Ahmidi, who left Cardiff's Matt Hall with no chance when he sent a dipping effort into the bottom corner after being found in space by Bradley Hudson-Odoi.

Wilkinson made nine changes to the side at half-time and two of them almost combined just minutes after the restart, when Glenn Wilson met Danny Green's corner, only for his header to be cleared off the line.

But the Stones wouldn't have to wait long to double their advantage as good work from David Pratt saw him shrug off his marker before squaring for trialist Harris, who calmly turned the ball into the bottom corner from just inside the area.

After Evans' effort hit the crossbar, the Stones would make the game safe with six minutes remaining as Bubb got on the scoresheet when he drilled a low effort past Cardiff substitute Warren Burwood, after Harris' through ball had split open the Cardiff defence.

The result proved to be a perfect way for the Stones to round off pre-



Aerial action from Stones' victory over Cardiff on Tuesday.  
Picture: GEOFF SMITH/TOP-PICTURE PHOTOGRAPHY

season, which has seen them lose just one of their eight games, picking up four wins in the process.

Their only defeat came last weekend, as National League side Bromley ran out 2-1 winners at the Vale thanks to second-half strikes from Jack Holland and George Porter.

Holland put the visitors ahead barely a minute into the second

half, when he headed home from a corner after being left unmarked and the Ravens made it two with 18 minutes remaining when Porter slotted past North.

The Stones did pull one back late on to set up a nervy finish when Bubb planted his header past David Gregory, but it proved to be too little, too late.

## Osterley setback for St Marys

OSTERLEY'S Gagandeep Khurana's century helped bring Harrow St Marys' winning run to an end in Division Two of the Middlesex County Cricket League.

St Marys looked like they had the match in the palm of their hand when Kaleb Antony Auld (3-41) and Chris Brown (2-57) took a series of early wickets to leave Osterley teetering at 32-5.

But Khurana, along with Raminder Singh, formed an imperious 191-run partnership to seize back control.

Singh went on to rack up 92, while Khurana hit the 100-run mark before he was bowled by Ajay Soni.

The duo's partnership proved to be decisive for Osterley in the end as they reached 231-7, with Harrow's pursuit starting in the worst possible fashion as both Aaman Soni and Pritesh Vaghela were dismissed early on.

Syed Khawar Ali Kazmi's half-century (63) got Harrow back on track and he was supported by Ajay Soni (31) as well as Tom Pettet (23).

But Harrow's pursuit of the target was quickly brought to an abrupt end, with just one of their last five remaining batsmen able to reach double figures as a late batting collapse meant they could only reach 169.

Harrow Town remain in mid-table in Division Three after they were convincingly beaten by Acton Town by seven wickets.

Despite a bright start, in which Charith Gunasekara hit 44 and captain Muhammad Arshad 40, Harrow were bowled out for 182.

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