

SPORT

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WILKINSON'S men hold on after Concord launch comeback Stones secure Biggleswade tie after nervous Rangers finale

By Nat Goodlad

WEALDSTONE advanced to the first round of the FA Trophy with a hard-fought 3-2 away victory at fellow National League South side Concord Rangers.

The tie was the Stones' first in the competition this season, coming in at the third qualifying round as a step six team and their reward is a trip to Biggleswade Town on Saturday, December 15.

Bobby Wilkinson made three changes to the side that lost 3-1 at Chippenham, with debutant Christian Smith, Bradley Hudson-Odoi and Fumnaya Shomotun coming in for Simon Mensah, Bradley Bubb and Joe Payne.

The hosts took a deserved lead after just 14 minutes when Hudson-Odoi's cross from the left was glanced in by Jerome Okimo.

Rangers responded well initially but found themselves further behind only nine minutes later. Shomotun drifted through the defence before curling into the top corner to extend Wealdstone's advantage.

The hosts tried to respond with a half-time change that saw Danny Green replaced by Sean Clohessy but their struggles continued into the second half and Wealdstone furthered their lead when

David Pratt nodded in Shomotun's 63rd minute cross.

The Stones should have been able to hold onto their advantage but complacency set in almost immediately after their third goal as, within six minutes of them taking a 3-0 lead, it was 3-2.

Firstly, Liam Nash's low ball in was poked home by captain Lee Minshull and then Alex Wall scored his 10th of the season with a wonderful effort that flew past Jonathan North.

Concord almost completed a remarkable comeback when substitute Clohessy's free-kick was hooked over the bar by Wall and there was end-to-end action in the final few minutes.

The excellent Shomotun saw his fierce effort saved by Frazer Shaw after he had gone all the way to the by-line and Pratt came to Wealdstone's rescue when he scrambled a header off the line in the dying seconds.

Evo-Stik South Premier Division Central side Biggleswade have battled their way through the competition from the first qualifying round in which they beat Harrow Borough 2-1.

They then went on to secure a 2-1 away victory at Hendon in the second qualifying round before causing a shock by beating National League South side Gloucester City 3-1 away to progress.



Stones celebrate one of their goals on Saturday.

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