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FOOTBALL: Club's long-term project to continue



Wealdstone manager Stuart Maynard has agreed a two-year extension at Grosvenor Vale. Picture: TGS Photo

Wealdstone management sign new two-year deals

WEALDSTONE'S long-term project can look forward to another two years after the management duo extended their stay with the National League side.

Stuart Maynard had stepped up from assistant manager to the main job in March 2021, appointing Matt Saunders in his old role.

And after improving their final league position year on year since, with last year's 13th the highest the club have finished in 36 years, the pair have now agreed to new deals for the next two years.

Maynard told the club website: "We're both absolutely delighted especially after the season we've just had as a club. We said it was a long-term project when we started and we still both see it as that. We still want to keep pro-

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gressing.

"This year will be tougher than ever but we have a young, hungry squad who are dedicated and they put in the extra hours that are needed for success at this level.

"We're really excited and can't wait to get going for the new season."

Stones chairman Rory Fitzgerald was just as happy to see his management pairing extend their stay at The Vale.

He added: "Our working relationship is exceptional and together, we are driven by a shared vision of the team's success.

"Their dedication, passion and tacti-

cal acumen have been instrumental in propelling the team forward, and I have every confidence they will continue to lead us to greater heights."

Wealdstone's latest friendly was a narrow 1-0 loss at home to League One Wycombe Wanderers, the only goal of the game coming just before half-time from Garath McCleary.

There was a start for on loan keeper Jed Ward, brought in earlier that day from Bristol Rovers, while the squad also contained five trialists.

The winner was flicked in by McCleary, getting on the end of free-kick crossed into the box by Luke Leahy but it was one of only a few chances created by the Chairboys in the first half.

Ward had to make one save low down to deny Dale Taylor, while one of Weald-

stone's trialists was stopped by the legs of Max Stryjek as he got on the end of a Nathan Ferguson through ball.

Lots of changes in the second period disrupted the flow and Wealdstone's best opportunity to equalise came late on when a curling effort from Olufela Olomola drifted just wide.

Wycombe could have extended their advantage as well, but Ward made two good stops in the final moments, tipping a Jack Young strike over the bar before a save with his legs.

The Stones' final pre-season game of 2023 comes on Saturday when they host League Two side AFC Wimbledon at Grosvenor Vale. That starts at 1pm.

*Harrow Borough host Barton Rovers on Saturday, after a 3-3 draw with Northwood in midweek.

Sarries to stage Red Roses Test

ENGLAND V CANADA MATCH TO BE PLAYED AT STONEX STADIUM

ENGLAND Women's second match of their two-Test series with Canada Women in September will be played at Saracens' StoneX Stadium.

Taking place on Saturday, September 30 (3pm), the fixture will conclude the side's preparations for the inaugural WXV tournament to be held in New Zealand this autumn.

StoneX Stadium last hosted a Red Roses match in November 2018 with the world's most-capped women's player, Sarah Hunter, on the scoresheet in a 57-5 victory over USA.

Now serving as England Women transition coach, Hunter said: "StoneX Stadium has fantastic facilities and is a great venue to play rugby.

"The passion and appetite for women's rugby in this country has vastly grown since our last match at Saracens. We hope that growth will continue in front of a big north London crowd against strong opposition."

Lucy Wray, chief executive at Saracens, added: "Everyone at Saracens is incredibly excited to host a Red Roses international match at StoneX Stadium. "It will be amazing to see our own Red Roses representing their country against Canada, where Saracens are also represented by our recent signings Emma Taylor, McKinley Hunt and Sophie de Goede.

"This is such a fantastic opportunity for all the Sarries fans and our partner clubs and schools to come and watch such brilliantly talented players up close."

Priority Tickets for the fixture at StoneX Stadium are now available to O2 and Virgin Media customers before going on general sale on Friday (July 28).

And tickets for the Red Roses' first match of the two-Test series against Canada at Exeter Chiefs' Sandy Park (Saturday, September 23, 2.30pm) are currently on general sale on the England Rugby website.

*Saracens announced the signing of Argentina international Juan Martin Gonzalez Samso this week.

The 22-year-old back-row forward already has 22 caps for his country, scoring six tries, and will bring more depth to the scrum for the defending Premiership champions.

The flanker has been at London Irish since 2021 and will join the StoneX ranks after the Rugby World Cup.

"I am very excited to meet the players and the fans. I will give everything to make sure the team goes well!" he said. Director of rugby Mark McCall added: "Juan is a player who we are very excited about. He has shown his ability in the Premiership over the past couple of seasons and we believe he has his best rugby ahead of him."