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## FOOTBALL: Wealdstone lose FA Trophy shootout



Wealdstone players look on during their penalty shootout. Image: Jon Taffel

# We've got to move on from heartache - Noble

WEALDSTONE boss David Noble looked at the positives after his side suffered penalty shootout heartbreak to bow out of the FA Trophy against Solihull Moors on Saturday.

After Callum Maycock had cancelled out Wealdstone midfielder Max Kretzschmar's early opener, the two sides couldn't be separated after 90 minutes of their quarter-final tie at Grosvenor Vale.

And it was penalties which ultimately ended the Stones' dream of taking another step towards a Wembley final.

"When we sit down and reflect on it, there's a lot of good things to take from it," said Noble, who was clearly devastated by the result.

"To lose the game on penalties is

By Tom Norton

not easy. It's a bit of a gutter, and there are some sad players in the dressing room.

"Everyone's a bit down, but you've got to put that behind you quickly. We've got games coming thick and fast, and we need some positive minds."

Noble was quick to point out how impressed he was with the overall performance of his players during the 90 minutes, suggesting they recovered well after a slow start to the match.

"I thought we did well. The start of the game wasn't too great. I

think we were a little bit laboured and slow," he added.

"After the first 25 minutes, we were good, and in the second half, you're thinking there's only going to be one team to come away with it.

"But it wasn't to be, and we couldn't get that second goal."

In spite of such a gutting loss, Noble remained clear and concise about his intention to keep his players laser-focused on what's to come as the Stones face what looks to be a season-defining period over the next couple of weeks.

"It was one of the main things I wanted to do when I went in there after the game - to get people positive," he said.

"I know it's difficult. You can

have a little bit of down time tonight and think of the result, but we've quickly got to get in the mindset and put today behind us.

"It's been a really great run for the club in this competition, and I think it's difficult because every footballer wants to play at Wembley.

"I understand the chins on chests, but we've got to get our minds focused and obviously the rest of the season as we've got massive games coming up. They're really, really important games, so we move on."

Stones saw their midweek meeting with Bromley postponed due to a waterlogged pitch but are due to visit AFC Fylde on Saturday.

## Borough's safety bid gains pace

HARROW Borough's great escape attempt continued to gather pace with little sign of a tunnel collapse - as they picked up another three points.

The 3-1 success at Sholing was a third win in the last seven but only one of those fixtures has ended in defeat. Sholing are now the team to catch, dropping below the victorious Dorchester Town and Swindon Supermarine to 18th, one place above the bottom four.

And they hold an eight-point advantage on a Borough side who have to face six of the current top eight in their last nine fixtures.

It was a deserved win for Harrow and they set their stall out in the first half. The hosts did get into some good positions but a challenging pitch made dribbling and passing with great accuracy difficult.

Harrow had their first opportunity in the seventh minute, Jack Tutton's free-kick flashing across the face of goal and away from incoming attackers.

Tyler Tobin did have to make one save from Dan Mason but the longer the half went on, the more solid Harrow's backline became, allowing the players in front a bit of freedom to attack.

Another Tutton free-kick brought a headed chance for Reece Yorke and while his attempt went over, two minutes later Harrow did go in front. Lonit Talla did exceptionally well with the ball at his feet on the right, finding Reece Deakin 12 yards from goal.

That shot was saved by Ryan Gosney but he could only parry the ball into the path of Excellence Muhemba who smashed the ball into the net from just inside the six-yard box.

It was 2-0 three minutes later when a clearance to halfway gave Muhemba the chance to go forward and with options either side, he went to Talla who in turn found Harlem Hale for a rising effort into the net.

Comfortable became less so before the break, with Sholing replying with an own goal from Barsa Mirtahmasebi.

But three minutes after the interval, the momentum swung definitively back to Harrow as Jake Flannigan scythed down Reece Mitchell to earn one of the easiest red cards of the season.

Harrow used their numerical advantage well and had a couple of good chances to kill the game off before the hour mark, Mitchell with a shot tipped over and Gosney then denying Hale one on one. There was still the pressing need to put the game to bed with a third and it came 10 minutes from time, Mitchell winning an 11th penalty this season before converting it himself.

The only disappointing thing was that Harrow did help their goal difference out further, but confidence will be high going to third-placed Gosport Borough on Saturday