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FOOTBALL: Cox hails closing-day win at Oldham



Wealdstone's Mason Barrett celebrates his winner against Oldham at Boundary Park.

Image: Jon Taffel

Interim boss elated to ensure Stones survival

INTERIM Wealdstone boss Sam Cox reflected on a whirlwind season with elation as the Stones secured their National League status for another season with a brilliant 3-2 comeback win at Oldham on Saturday.

As the curtain came down on another season, Cox's men needed a result to guarantee their safety and hope those around them faltered, ultimately ending up four points clear of the drop.

"Absolutely elated to say the least. It's been a long old season for these boys," Cox told the club's media channel.

"Two changes of management is never easy at any level. The character they've shown, especially over these last five games where everyone pretty much counted us out, especially after that loss that we took to Boreham Wood

By Tom Norton
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at their place.

"Not many people banked on us to stay in this division and since being given this opportunity to manage this club these boys have been outstanding. I'm so proud of each and every one of them.

"I just said I can look each and every one of them in their eyes whether they've started, been on the bench, been in the squad or been out injured, everyone has given nothing but positive vibes and given their absolute everything to ensure we have National League status next year."

On the game itself, Cox was looking

for a reaction from his team in the second half after going a goal down early and touched on what was said at the break.

"I was honest with them and said that it was the best football we've played in possession I've seen since being back at the club," he added.

"Regardless of the result, much like the Dorking game – stay calm. Keep doing what you're doing, stick to the structure.

"We have a way that we want the boys to play. We're not going to change and I'm not going to change the way I do things. I've got to be almost a vessel of what they do on the pitch. I've got stay clam and I've got to tell the boys to be brave to still get on the ball, engage their press, which we did fantastically

"I thought they were so brave to get on the ball and ensuring we keep our style above all. If we're going to go down, we're going to go down doing to the right way and they did exactly that. They carried on playing, they trusted the process, and, in the end, you get your results.

"We maybe could've been more clinical but that's been a theme of the season. We know that, but if you keep pounding the rock eventually it'll give way, so the boys thoroughly deserve the result."

Jack Young, Sam Bowen and Mason Barrett were on target as Stones secured their safety, while Boreham Wood were relegated alongside Kidderminster Harriers, Dorking Wanderers and Oxford City.

Harrow see hopes hit as rivals win

RELEGATION CONFIRMED BEFORE FINAL HOME GAME OF SEASON

HARROW Borough's everlasting stay in the Southern League Premier South came to an end at the weekend as Jordan Berry's side lost 2-1 at home to Tiverton Town on Saturday, writes Tom Norton.

Relegation from English football's seventh tier had been confirmed just two days prior after both Tiverton and Hanwell had won to seal their fate. And Berry named an unchanged starting line-up from their win at third-placed Salisbury a week earlier.

Despite a nervy start and relentless Tiverton pressure, Borough found themselves in front just before the half-hour mark through striker Excellence Muhemba.

The former Egham forward walked the ball into an empty net after a defensive mishap between keeper Zak Baker and skipper Jamie Richards left him with a gaping goal to tap home, giving Berry's side a deserved lead before the break. Despite some good chances and territory for Berry's side, Tiverton drew level just nine minutes after the restart, as Javan Wright slotted home with a good finish from a cutback after the ball had found its way to the feet of the visiting forward. Harrow were then awarded a penalty after Baker kicked out at Borough skipper Yorke.

But no action was taken against the Tiverton stopper and, to rub salt into the wounds, he proceeded to save Muhemba's tame effort from 12 yards to keep the scored level.

The away side were then given a spot-kick of their own when Niall Thompson was brought down in the box by Harrow's Reece Yorke after a marauding run from the halfway line.

Jack Rice stepped up to take the penalty, but Harrow keeper Tyler Tobin pulled off a brilliant save to deny the Tiverton winger.

Borough then stepped up a gear and could have taken the lead after several good chances were spurned late on, before they were dealt a knockout blow with virtually the final kick of the game. As the home side had pushed up in search of a winner, their efforts were in vain as a lightning-quick Tiverton counter attack found forward Dylan Jones who finished well with a good strike from just inside the Harrow penalty area.

Harrow will bring the curtain down on a disheartening campaign with a long trip to Merthyr Town this weekend.

The Martyrs can claim the last play-off place with victory, if Bracknell lose at home to Hayes & Yeading.

Meanwhile, Harrow, after relegation to the eighth tier of the football pyramid for the very first time, will be looking to go out on a high note and bounce back at the first time of asking in 2024-25.