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FOOTBALL: Former boss set to return for friendly



Wealdstone celebrate Mason Barrett's goal at Oldham on the last day of the season

Image: Jon Taffel

Wealdstone book up big pre-season dates

WEALDSTONE have confirmed their pre-season plans ahead of their 125th anniversary campaign which will see several EFL clubs face Matt Taylor's side.

Stones will travel to Southern League Premier South side Walton & Hersham on July 6 and newly promoted National League South outfit Chesham United a week later.

They then welcome former boss Stuart Maynard back to Grosvenor Vale for the first time as they go up against Notts County on July 16 and entertain Championship outfit Millwall four days later.

There is another home fixture against League Two's MK Dons on July 27 and a trip to assistant manager Paul Hughes' former club Kings Lang-

By Tom Norton
londoncommunity@newsquest.co.uk

ley on July 30 is closely followed by a home game against Hemel Hempstead on August 3 before the National League campaign kicks off.

Meanwhile, north London rivals Barnet have confirmed that club captain Dale Gorman will leave the club this summer following the expiration of his contract.

Gorman, who made 86 appearances for the Bees across two seasons, played a crucial role in driving the club to back-to-back National League play-off campaigns as they bowed out to Boreham Wood and Solihull Moors, respectively.

Despite an injury-hit campaign, Gorman received countless backing from manager Dean Brennan who often spoke about his importance throughout his absence, but it now seems Gorman and the club have decided to go their separate ways.

A brief Barnet statement read: "Everyone at Barnet FC thanks Dale for all his efforts while at the club and wish him all the best for the future."

The Bees also announced three more signings to bolster Brennan's playing squad, as goalkeeper Nick Hayes and centre-backs Joe Kizzi and Joe Rye all join ahead of the resumption of pre-season training in just a few weeks.

Six-foot four-inch shotstopper Hayes spent the second half of last season on loan at Solihull Moors, who comfort-

ably beat the Bees in a 4-0 win at The Hive before losing to Bromley at Wembley in the play-off final.

He made 28 National League appearances last season, keeping nine clean sheets and conceding just 33 goals over that period.

"Nick has the right type of character that we have been searching for: His attributes suit our philosophy, and he has the correct mentality that we need to bring success to our football club," Brennan told the club website.

"Nick signs a long-term contract with us which is brilliant. I know his personality, he will be a very popular member of our squad and a player I know our supporters will be delighted to join me in welcoming him to our club."

Middlesex draw as bat dominates

SHARES SPOILED WITH PROMOTION RIVALS SUSSEX AT LORD'S

MIDDLESEX and Sussex maintained their status as Vitality County Championship Division Two promotion front-runners as their match at Lord's was drawn.

It looked inevitable the spoils would be shared once the hosts avoided the follow-on early on the final day and they went on to post 613 for nine declared in reply to Sussex's total of 554 for nine.

Nathan Fernandes missed out on a century by nine runs, while Jack Davies struck a career-best 68 and Henry Brookes registered his first half-century as a Middlesex player.

Captains Leus du Plooy and John Simpson shook hands at 4.50pm, with the draw enabling Sussex to increase their advantage at the top to eight points over Middlesex, who remain in second place. Any faint prospect of a positive outcome essentially disappeared as early as the third over of the morning, when Fernandes clipped Fynn Hudson-Prentice for two to steer Middlesex past the follow-on target of 405.

With their over rate in negative territory the previous evening, Sussex were soon utilising spin at both ends and the seventh-wicket pair continued to chip away at the deficit as they built a partnership of 119.

Having swept Jack Carson over the short boundary for six, Davies overtook his previous best of 65, but added just three more before he was out in the off-spinner's next over to a ball that turned away from him and took the edge. Fernandes looked assured against both seam and spin, cutting and sweeping confidently to usher his side's total beyond 500 and move within range of what would have been a second first-class century.

The left-hander gained a reprieve when he was put down at backward square leg, pulling a short ball from Tom Clark – but he failed to take advantage, repeating the stroke to the next delivery and this time James Coles dived to take a tumbling catch in the deep.

The remainder of the afternoon largely involved batting practice for the Middlesex tail, with Sussex deploying nine bowlers and at one stage setting a field with all nine men ranged in a semi-circle on the off side.

Luke Hollman shared a sedate ninth-wicket partnership of 65 with Brookes, which eventually came to an end when the left-hander was bowled around his legs by Ollie Robinson's slower ball. However, Brookes completed his half-century – the sixth of his career – after tea, swatting Coles' full toss into the grandstand and finishing 52 not out as he and Ethan Bamber steered Middlesex to the 12th highest total in their history. They begin their Vitality Blast campaign against Kent tomorrow (Friday, 7pm).