

SPORT

Read the latest sports news at
harrowtimes.co.uk/sport

FOOTBALL: Ex-Arsenal man joins Taylor's squad



Craig Eastmond celebrates scoring for Sutton United in the Papa John's Trophy final at Wembley Stadium

Image: PA

Stones sign former Premier League star

WEALDSTONE announced a new addition this week - securing the signature of a former Premier League star.

Matt Taylor's side confirmed the signing of Arsenal academy graduate Craig Eastmond from Sutton United.

The 33-year-old has signed a one-year deal at Grosvenor Vale and brings a wealth of experience alongside a winning mentality having spent many years at Hale End.

Making his senior debut for the Gunners in 2009, he featured in the Premier League and Champions League under former Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger before moving on in pursuit of more regular first-team football with loan spells at Millwall, Wycombe Wanderers and Colchester United.

Eastmond then made the permanent

By TOM NORTON
londoncommunity@newsquest.co.uk

switch to the Essex-based side until the expiration of his contract in February 2015.

He then joined Yeovil Town on a short-term deal before joining Sutton in the following months.

Having been appointed captain midway through the 2019-20 campaign, he led them to the National League title the following year, securing promotion to the Football League for the first time in their 123-year history.

"I am delighted to join Wealdstone and take on this new challenge", Eastmond the club website.

"The club has a clear vision and am-

bitation, and I am excited to be a part of it. I look forward to working with my new teammates and contributing to the club's success."

Boss Taylor expressed his excitement at the arrival, citing his experience and attitude as key factors of the signing.

"We are absolutely delighted to sign Craig, he is a natural leader both on the pitch with his performances and off of it with his behaviours," he said.

"He is fully immersed into the football club and will bring undoubted quality to the squad with his experience and technical ability."

National League rivals Barnet, meanwhile, announced midfielder Patrick Matejko had signed professional terms.

After just turning 17, the promising youngster has put pen to paper for the

first time having impressed in cameos last season against York City and Kidderminster Harriers.

Offering further depth in the mid-field ranks, Bees head coach Dean Brennan was delighted to see Matejko commit his future to the club.

"We are delighted Pat has earned himself a first-team contract with us. We seriously believe in young players; it's a department we want to progress in," said Brennan.

"Pat has all tools to become a proper footballer. He has the right attitude, high fitness levels and also the ability to play higher up the pyramid."

"His first priority is to get into our squad week in week out. The serious work starts for Pat and all our players this coming Monday."

England get ready for All Blacks

HEAD COACH BORTHWICK MAKES TWO CHANGES TO FRONT ROW



England's Jamie George

Image: PA

ENGLAND have revamped their front row for Saturday's first Test against New Zealand by giving starts to props Joe Marler and Will Stuart. Marler replaces Bevan Rodd at loosehead while Stuart is preferred ahead of Dan Cole in the number three jersey as head coach Steve Borthwick makes only two changes for the clash in Dunedin. Rodd played 44 minutes in the 52-17 victory over Japan that opened the tour on June 22 but is left out of the 23 altogether against the All Blacks with uncapped Fin Baxter preferred as bench cover.

While the starting XV remains largely intact, the bench has undergone significant change with only hooker Theo Dan, flanker Tom Curry and fly-half Fin Smith still present following the eight-try rout of Japan.

England's starting XV - particularly the backline - has a settled look, including Saracens' Jamie George, Maro Itoje and Ben Earl, and attack coach Richard Wigglesworth has revealed it is part of a long-term policy to prioritise familiarity in selection.

"We know the only way of getting experience is getting out there and playing," Wigglesworth told Sky Sport NZ.

"Hopefully the core of this team can stay together for a long time. You don't want to be chopping and changing the whole time otherwise the shared experiences we get in places like New Zealand aren't going to be worth much."

"We want to get these guys to grow over the next few years and hopefully they'll become really good Test match players."