

TODAY'S LINE-UPS

THE MIGHTY, MIGHTY stones

PRE-SEASON
PROGRAMME
2024-25 £2

WEALDSTONE

ROYAL BLUE/WHITE/BLUE

- G Archie MATTHEWS 1
- Jack COOK 2
- Anthony GEORGIU 3
- Deon WOODMAN 4
- Alex DYER 5
- Mason BARRETT 6
- Enzio BOLDEWIJN 7
- Craig EASTMOND 8
- Sean ADARKWA 9
- Max KRETZSCHMAR 10
- Todd MILLER 11
- G Jacob ADAMS 13
- Micah OBIERO 14
- Elliot SIMMONS 15
- Luke DREHER 16
- Dom HUTCHINSON 17
- Christian SCOTT 18
- Adrian MARIAPPA 19
- Sam ASHFORD 20
- Kallum TRACEY CESAY 21
- Trae COOK-APPIAH 29
- Brandon MASON 32
- Declan PHILLIPS
- London BROOKSHAW



HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

RED/RED/RED

- Craig KING G
- George WILLIAMS
- Brandon BARZEY
- Alfie CERULLI
- Joe IACIOFANO
- Eoin McKEOWN
- Teddy HOWE
- Ben TOMPKINS
- Kyran WILTSHIRE
- Kyle O'CONNOR-AJAYI
- Dan WISHART
- Jack DAVIES
- Max STATHAM
- Chris SMITH
- Bayley BROWN
- Connor KIERAN-BROWNE
- Sydney IBIE
- Kombe KAWIMBE
- Harry SEADEN

Officials Referee: Sam Mulhal

Assistants: Maros Valko and Fadi Mansour

TODAY'S RESULT: WEALDSTONE HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

NEXT AT THE VALE WEALDSTONE v OLDHAM ATHLETIC 
VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE, SATURDAY AUGUST 17, KO 3PM

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DREHER SLAYER
Luke Dreher celebrates his spectacular strike at Kings Langley on Tuesday.. his first Wealdstone goal
PICTURE: JON TAFEL

v Hemel Hempstead Town
Friendly: Saturday August 3 2024, kick-off 3pm



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walking in a wealdstone wonderland

BY TIM PARKS



Sam Ashford knocks in the Stones' third on Tuesday

A very warm welcome to Hemel Hempstead Town this afternoon for our final friendly... and of course our ex-boss Bobby Wilkinson who led the Stones to a both an FA Trophy semi-final and a National League South semi-final in his 20 months at the helm.

He is putting together pretty much a brand new squad at Vauxhall Road, signing on a dozen new faces and there will be some recognisable ones in the Hemel line-up today. Jordy Mongoy and Michael Phillips both signed in May (though not in the squad list supplied for this programme) while Dan Wisheart played much of our first NL season. Striker Eoin McKeown was only briefly at the Vale but the mobile striker scored some vital goals.

The Stones have hardly been comatose in the transfer market, also with 12 new signings - including the latest captures, former Spurs and Orient wing-back (and Cypriot international) Anthony Georgiou and also midfielder Christian Scott (19) who was playing for Farense and Leoes de Faro in the Portuguese Premier League last season. So real quality... and a big welcome to the Stones, Anthony and Christian!

You'd imagine that the Gaffer Matty Taylor would be aiming at fielding his starting XI today but key midfield signing Craig Eastmond is likely to miss out with a groin strain. With strong cover in every position (and maybe a couple of last-minute loans coming onboard) who on earth could predict the line-up next Saturday? What we can be confident of is that the Stones will once again be the bookies' favourites for the drop, with some online 'experts' even predicting a finishing position of 24th! We'll just have to prove

them all horribly wrong, won't we? Barnet's tag as seemingly odds-on favourites for promotion can only act as a further incentive...

Our pre-season continues to be impressive in parts with work needed in others, with Matty Taylor admitting that 'nailing down the starting XI for Dagenham is the toughest part of my job - we are still trying to achieve our goals, tactically and technically and we are still light on strikers; the market seems really slow in that area of the pitch'.

Last Tuesday at Kings Langley was a case in point. Despite dominating possession almost exclusively it needed a Luke Dreher wonder-strike - on the volley from 12 yards - to get us going and the midfielder's sublime pass then sent Sam Ashford scurrying away to lob a smart second over the stranded keeper.

When the impressive Dom Hutchinson picked out Ashford's head for 3-0, shortly after the restart, it seemed Langley were plummeting to a heavy defeat. But a neat near-post finish, and then a breakaway goal, gave the final 3-2 scoreline a far closer look than the reality of the evening.

Now, let's all get mobilised for Dagenham & Redbridge next Saturday!

It's not a difficult journey, down the District Line to Dagenham East and we need hundreds of you there at Victoria Road to get the season off to a flying start. Remember last season and the two late goals from Sean Adarkwa and Tarryn Allarakhia that secured a deserved 2-0 win? Remember the bouncing Stones fans in the away end?

I'm sure we will recreate that atmosphere to mark the first game in charge for the new management team.

Now, a reminder: Pete Worby and John Young have taken on the mantle of Ball Donor and Kit Sponsorship supremos this season.

Contd overpage >>



The falling Luke Dreher put us 1-0 up at Langley

To donate a ball costs £180 (or £225+vat for businesses) while Kit Sponsorship (£165) now has the option of paying £250 and receive your player's signed shirt at the end of the season. Matchball donation again includes corporate hospitality in the Captains Lounge for four people.

Please contact Pete on 07967 698370 or John on 07874 846785.

Stones in pre-season so far:

Sat July 7 Walton & Hersh (a) **D3-3**
Goals: O.G, Adarkwa, Hutchinson

Sat July 13 Chesham Utd (a) **L0-1**
Goal: N/A

Tues July 16 Notts Co (h) **L1-2**
Goal: Ashford

Sat July 20 Millwall U21 (h) **W3-2**
Goals: Obiera, Miller, Cook-Appiah

Tues July 23 Crawley T (h) **W1-0**
Goal: Hutchinson

Sat July 27 MK Dons (h) **L1-3**
Goal: Baldewijn

Tues July 30 Kings Lang (a) **W3-2**
Goals: Ashford (2), Dreher

Wealdstone Vanarama National League fixtures (home games in bold type)

- Sat Aug 10 Dagenham & Redbridge
- Sat Aug 17 Oldham Athletic**
- Tue Aug 20 Sutton United**
- Sat Aug 24 Hartlepool United
- Mon Aug 26 AFC Fylde, 3pm**
- Sat Aug 31 Solihull Moors
- Sat Sep 7 York City**
- Tue Sep 10 Woking
- Sat Sep 14 Forest Green Rovers
- Sat Sep 21 Barnet**
- Tue Sep 24 Southend United**
- Sat Sep 28 FC Halifax Town
- Sat Oct 5 Gateshead
- Sat Oct 12 Emirates FA Cup 4Q**
- Sat Oct 19 Yeovil Town
- Tue Oct 22 Braintree Town**
- Sat Oct 26 Ebbsfleet United
- Sat Nov 2 FA Cup 1st round**
- Sat Nov 9 Aldershot Town
- Sat Nov 16 Rochdale**
- Sat Nov 23 Eastleigh
- Tue Nov 26 Tamworth**
- Sat Nov 30 Altrincham**
- Sat Dec 7 Isuzu FA Trophy Rd 3**
- Sat Dec 14 Oldham Athletic
- Sat Dec 21 Dagenham & R**
- Thu Dec 26 Maidenhead U, 3pm
- Wed Jan 1 Boston Utd, 3pm**
- Sat Jan 4 Isuzu FA Trophy Rd 4**
- Sat Jan 11 Altrincham
- Tue Jan 14 Sutton United
- Sat Jan 18 Hartlepool United**
- Sat Jan 25 AFC Fylde
- Sat Feb 1 Solihull Moors**
- Sat Feb 8 Gateshead**
- Sat Feb 15 Yeovil Town
- Tue Feb 18 Braintree Town
- Sat Feb 22 Ebbsfleet United**
- Sat Mar 1 Aldershot Town**
- Tue Mar 4 Tamworth
- Sat Mar 8 Rochdale
- Sat Mar 15 Eastleigh**
- Sat Mar 22 Woking**
- Sat Mar 29 York City
- Sat Apr 5 Forest Green Rovers**
- Sat Apr 12 Barnet
- Fri Apr 18 Boston United, 3pm
- Mon Apr 21 Maidenhead U, 3pm**
- Sat Apr 26 Southend United
- Mon May 5 FC Halifax T, 3pm**

Come on Wealdstone!

SUPPORTERS CLUB NOTES by NICK DUGARD

May I welcome all connected with Hemel Hempstead Town for this final pre-season friendly match before National League hostilities begin in one week's time!



It will be great to meet up with Bobby Wilkinson and Mike Percival who have remained very good friends of mine since their spell as the management duo here five seasons ago. Bobby has continued to strive for success, most notably a superb promotion at Bracknell and a miraculous saving of Weymouth from relegation a couple of seasons ago, when it seemed an impossibility. I will observe his and Mike's progress at Hemel in this first full season with great interest.

Back to WFCSC matters, and as recently announced on club social media channels we have been delighted to be able to commit to another significant donation to the main club, this time specifically for the new dugouts. This is a testament to the hard work of your committee but also our many helpers (particularly for our very successful Fanzone events) but mainly to you our 'customers' - the loyal members and fans - for supporting our fundraising activities. Thank you everyone!

We continue to need more volunteer helpers on match days and it would be great to see some of our younger next generation fans step forward! Why not join in our journey if you think you can contribute!

See any committee member on a match day for a chat.

Our fundraising activities will of course continue this season and watch this space for updates and announcements.

Events will be staged where numbers make things financially viable and more are in the planning stages. Our summer Supporters Club Newsletter will be hitting inboxes fairly soon and your feedback is welcome.

Please do enter our ever popular PREDICT-A-SCORE competition this season. Hard copies should be available today from the Captain's Lounge or enter on-line via the WFCSC website before kick off next Saturday so time is short to get your entry in!

Finally, a special birthday message to committee member Tony 'in the booth' Burgin who is celebrating another year younger today!

UTS! Nick

Defeat to Hemel, year on year until a brilliant Benyon hat-trick one afternoon in 2016

BY TIM PARKS

2016:
HEMEL...1
STONES...3



Delighted Danny Green levels in the 1-1 draw at the Vale seven years ago

I hadn't quite realised how our historical record against Hemel veered so suddenly from the lamentable to the enviable.

And it all happened in the summer of 2012 when the Stones (of the Ryman Premier Division) faced Hemel (of the Southern Prem) at the Vale in a pre-season workout similar to this afternoon's pairing. We'd had a decent end to the 2011-12 season - FA Trophy semi-final and defeat in the League play-offs - but when we stuck four goals past our arch rivals it was the portent of something special. Just the names of our goalscorers in the 4-1 win (Richard Jolly 2, Alex Dyer and Tom Pett) was a guarantee of that.

And, jubilant, I remember going home and looking up the last time we'd beaten Hemel... and finding out that we had played them 11 times since the club changed names (to Hemel Hempstead Town) in the late 1960s, and had drawn just twice. Hemel had won nine.

But the jinx was broken that sunlit afternoon at the Vale a dozen years ago - even if it was only a friendly. We have since faced 'The Tudors' 12 times, winning five, drawing six and losing just the once - so yes, the games have been very, very tight but we have not wilted, as so often happened in the previous 42 years. Even when we were trailing 3-0 in a National League South clash on an ice-rink of a pitch in February 2015 (the game postponed at half time) we pulled off a gritty 1-1 draw in the rematch thanks to Johnny Wright's late header.

But we still hadn't beaten



Benyon's on fire! He goes round keeper Jamie Butler for 2-1



Hemel in a competitive game until November of the following year. And joy was unconfined on the packed, segregated away terrace as Elliot Benyon scored an astonishing hat-trick at Vauxhall Road to gift the Stones a 3-1 win!

It was all the more unexpected as Stones were out-of-sorts and Hemel riding high in the table. After a goalless first half, Jordan Parkes (so often our tormentor) shot the home side ahead but within seven minutes Elliot Benyon acrobatically hooked in an equaliser. Midway though then half he rounded home keeper Jamie Butler (pictured below left) for 2-1, and topped it all off in injury time when Ricky Wellard's pass left him one on one with Butler again. How our segregated fans celebrated! (below left).

And we even avoided defeat in the home game when Danny Green cracked in a late leveller to force a 1-1 draw as the match ended with 10 v 10.

The Hemel bogey was well and truly laid to rest, and despite that solitary 1-0 defeat at Vauxhall Road at Easter 2018 we followed up with three successive victories.

The last one - our last meeting - was almost a farewell to the National League South as we showed our credentials as eventual champions with a commanding 3-0 win in August 2019. Who remembers the ease with which Dean Brennan (on his return to Hemel alongside Stuart Maynard) masterminded victory?

Michael Phillips, Dennon Lewis and Jacob Mendy Mendy took the goalscoring plaudits.

The surreal quality of the final ten minutes of the 2018-19 season should be distilled into a Ted Lasso-style movie.

The charming but eccentric, rene-gade manager; the overpaid, low scoring, run-through-brick-walls striker; the giant Ghanaian midfielder; the twinkle-toed, hugely talented but under-achieving No.10; and the under-rated substitute who suddenly took centre-stage in the biggest two matches of the season.

2019:
STONES...2
HEMEL...1

And then the drama of April 2019 as Stones sneak into the play-offs through back door



Jake Sheppard takes the congratulations for his outlandish goal and the Bulla crowd (right) begin to realise that the dominoes are falling in our favour...



4th-placed Chelmsford... but when the final game with Hemel kicked off we were rooted in tenth place (see table below) while needing to grab three points and hope that Dartford, St Albans and Billericay all lost.

Quite a tall order! Wilkinson gambled on using Sheppard

(not even on bench for the 3-0 win at Chelmsford) in midfield instead of Simon Mensah, and it looked to have backfired on 36 minutes when Jason Williams lifted the ball over Jonathan North for a classy finish. 0-1. In the packed Bulla, hearts were sinking.

We hadn't been in the top seven since November, and were now down to 11th. It needed salvation, and soon... and it arrived in the unlikely form of energetic left-back Freddie Grant who followed up a rebound to blast past Hemel's Laurie Walker to level the scores. The Bulla was now bouncing and, astonishingly, Sheppard chipped a sublime winner from 25 yards while our phones all registered the miracle of Dartford, Billericay and St Albans all losing to allow us to sneak seventh place. Shepp scored again in the play-off eliminator 3-1 at Bath City, of course, and it ended in agony at Woking. But what a Saturday that was!



Joy and delirium: shirtless Freddie Grant is hugged by delighted fans at Collins Corner and (right) the league table pre-match

Vanarama National League South at 24th April 2019

Opposition	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	Pts
1 Woking	41	22	8	11	41	21	62	74
2 Welling United	40	22	7	11	41	21	62	74
3 Chelmsford City	40	20	9	11	40	20	60	72
4 Bath City	41	19	9	13	41	20	59	69
5 Concord Rangers	41	18	10	13	42	20	58	68
6 Billericay Town	40	18	10	12	41	20	58	68
7 Altrincham	40	18	10	12	41	20	58	68
8 St Albans City	40	18	10	12	41	20	58	68
9 Hemel Hempstead	40	18	10	12	41	20	58	68
10 Havant & Waterlooville	40	18	10	12	41	20	58	68
11 Slough Town	40	17	10	13	40	19	57	66
12 Chippenham Town	40	16	7	17	39	18	54	63
13 Bedford City	40	16	7	17	39	18	54	63
14 Hampton & Richmond	40	15	10	15	40	18	54	63
15 Havant & Waterlooville	40	15	10	15	40	18	54	63
16 Dover Athletic	40	15	10	15	40	18	54	63
17 Stoneham City	40	15	10	15	40	18	54	63
18 Eastleigh Borough	40	15	10	15	40	18	54	63
19 Hemel Hempstead	40	15	10	15	40	18	54	63
20 Havant & Waterlooville	40	15	10	15	40	18	54	63
21 East Thurrock United	40	15	10	15	40	18	54	63
22 Nelson Super-Mare	40	15	10	15	40	18	54	63

Living in Hemel ...but **LOVING** Wealdstone

BY 'DEADLY' DOUG ROBINSON



Stones fan Doug Robinson, who I can safely say is a septuagenarian, has answered our calls for a supporter with a foot in both camps today as he lives in Adeyfield (a suburb of Hemel Hempstead) while diligently attending ALL Wealdstone matches.

So let's hear 'Deadly' Doug's footballing story...
"My first Stones match was Wealdstone v St Albans City in the FA Cup First Round Proper, on Saturday 16 Nov 1968 - a 1-1 draw at Lower Mead (our iconic old ground). The attendance was 3,505 but I was there as a neutral having moved to Adeyfield when I was three, after my family had moved down from Glasgow. I was actually born near Partick Thistle's ground and have never lived in Harrow.

"I have watched quite a few Hemel games at their old ground in Crabtree Lane, from the early 60's, but cannot recall the first one - and then watched them many times when they moved to Vauxhall Road of course.

"I followed Watford (and ground-hopped a bit) as lots of my fellow pupils at Adeyfield School did from 1967 right up until the Stones moved to Vicarage Road... then I switched. That was after I realised that 'family club' Watford were shafting the Stones. Before then I used to meet up with fellow Watford fans from the Harrow area, who occasionally would watch Wealdstone games over the years: I saw Stuart Pearce play three times for the Stones, for instance.

"But Wealdstone has been my footie drug of choice for many years now... when I started watching them regularly at Vicarage Road and then at Yeading I thought at the time that I had best see them as much as possible, as I was convinced they were going to fold in those dark days... but somehow we kept going...

"Any time that the Stones are not playing I will try to take in a

local game: last season, mainly because of our many postponements I got into double figures for watching matches involving my local Hemel side Leverstock Green. They have ex-Stones Fergus Moore, Scott McGleish and Darren 'Bomber' Bonfield in charge there and it was great to see them get promoted to step four. I even saw that 'young-

ster' Scott score a great goal at Oxhey Jet's ground. But I managed to see Hemel quite a few times as well. Hopefully not so many postponements this coming season. We shall see.

"As for travelling, nowadays I go to most matches by car with nearby fellow Stones fan Peter Jeffries (Billy Byrne fan on the Forum)... he is referred to as my carer by some! For longer journeys via train, but with train prices so high, we have started looking at flight prices as there is not much in it.

"For instance a couple of seasons ago a trip to Wrexham would have worked out at £65 day return from Hemel by rail (including using an old git's rail card). But we could have instead gone for a day trip from Luton Airport to Berlin for £15 less. In the end we went by car and stayed at a hotel on the Welsh border and took in a Welsh league game as well as a bonus. But we will keep looking for flights up north via Poland or Ireland...

"For this coming season I think the squad is shaping up quite well. I have no great expectations, but any position higher than the bottom four is fine by me. But I would not be surprised if we are in the top third for much of the season. A good run in the FA Cup and or Trophy would be wonderful of course. No pressure boys :)

"Living just a Stones throw from Hemel's ground, many Hemel fans are mates and I previously worked with a lot over the years so I would love Bobby to do well there. I said to Dave Boggins the Hemel Chairman, at a pre-season, game that Bobby was the boy to get them promoted... he's a bit of a Barry Fry type wheeler-dealer with players and I think his selections will come good. Overall, I thought his spell at Wealdstone was good for us. And he rescued Weymouth when they looked doomed. And yes, I would love the Tudors to get promoted... just so I can walk to an away game :)



'We are now just seven days out from the NL rollercoaster starting all over again...and I just cannot wait!'

Hello all and welcome back to the Vale! We welcome a local neighbour today in the shape of Hemel Hempstead and wish them all the best for the oncoming season next week.

Indeed, we are just seven days out from the rollercoaster ride beginning all over again. I'm sure we will experience all those emotions from agony to ecstasy. I think it will be important to remain process-driven in the long run and try to remain calm and humble throughout the ups and downs.

Since I wrote my last column, we fell 3-1 to League Two promotion favorites MK Dons at home and then ran out 3-2 winners to Kings Langley, both very different exercises. As a player, when you face higher opposition you're aware that it may be a more defensive exercise than an attacking one.

This was the case with MK Dons and both Crawley and Nott County prior to that.

However, I thought we showed attacking prowess in all these games and posed plenty of problems. There's still plenty of sharpening up to do in the final third I feel, but I expect it to be a little easier when playing against National League opposition.

Of course, the Kings Langley game allowed us to work on these attacking patterns. With the nature of the two teams and where we stand in the footballing

pyramid, we were able to dominate the ball for large spells and create numerous chances on a sweltering evening... including a fantastic goal from Luke Dreher. To win by only a one-goal margin flattered the opposition I feel, but it was a gentle reminder that we can't switch off in games even if the goals came after several substitutions. The message from the manager and coaching staff coming away from that fixture was one about the importance of keeping high standards on and off the pitch at all times.

We want to take this club to heights which it hasn't seen in its recent history, so whatever standards we have had in seasons gone by will not suffice.

I think something we have discovered in pre season this summer is that we can be flexible with the formations we can play.

We can play with a three or a four in defence. This will come as no surprise to Stones fans who have watched us over the past few years, but it is a little different with the new manager though as he wants slightly different things from certain positions.

For example, in my position (No. 10/attacking midfield) I am encouraged to run in behind, past the striker more which is perhaps something I didn't have to do too much of last season with a slower, more structured build up.

Today v Hemel I feel the result is important to a certain degree. A win and a strong performance would be a nice round-off to pre season and put us in good stead for Dagenham away next week.

I can't wait for it to start for real next week and hear you all in great voice on the terraces! UTS!



**Don't miss Max's revealing vlog...
[youtube.com/@maxtalksfootball](https://www.youtube.com/@maxtalksfootball)**

Thanks again to **Hillingdon Greenprint**, based here in Ruislip, for stepping in to print our pre-season programmes. They use plant-based ink and fully recycled paper - we've never been so eco-friendly! They can be found at www.hillingdongreenprint.co.uk or on 0208 8868 7852. We'll be back with the usual glossy 60-page programme for the first National League home game with Oldham Athletic on August 17 :)