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FOOTBALL: Defiant message after another defeat



Matt Taylor talks to Sam Ashford during Saturday's home match against York City

Image: Jon Taffel

Stones boss Taylor to stick to his principles

WEALDSTONE boss Matt Taylor vowed to stick with his principles as the Stones' poor start to the National League season continued with a 1-0 defeat at Woking on Tuesday.

An early goal from centre-half Cian Harries condemned Taylor to his fifth competitive defeat as boss, having emerged victorious just once so far.

"We've come away from home and Woking haven't had a shot in open play on our goal," said Taylor, defiantly.

"Archie (Matthews) has had nothing to do. It's an extremely dubious penalty – I don't think it is. Enzo's in the wrong position to start with but gets dragged out by their player.

"In saying that, the chances we spurned, it's acutely obvious we're not good enough at the moment, in front of

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goal. We've had three wonderful chances, two when the goal is gaping from three or four yards and at the end Callum made a great turn and a shot but the goalkeeper pulls off a world-class save.

"We're really disappointed. We've not got what we deserved in any way, shape or form. I thought we were the best team by far. We've been had over if you like.

"They (Woking) didn't deserve to win. I thought we had all the ball and fashioned the best chances, but if you don't value when you get in those areas then it's obviously going to be very difficult for you.

"I'll watch it back and no doubt, I will

be extremely frustrated, because the moments in the game we had were the best. I've said to the players the strongest part of our team is our defence, and where we need to be better is in front of the opposition's goal.

"We've created unbelievable chances. In fact, they're very good goalscoring opportunities, but we don't seem to have that little bit of quality we need to put the ball into the net."

Another defeat on the road will inevitably see questions asked about Taylor's playing style, but the former West Ham winger remained defiant in his approach.

"There's a lot of stats around football these days, and our xG (expected goals) is extremely high. So that tells me what we're doing is correct. So, no, we're

not coming away from who we are," he added.

"Trusting the process. The players need to accept a bit of responsibility, because they're the ones on the pitch.

"They're not trying to miss opportunities. Their effort and desire is second to none. They're the best group of men I've worked with in terms of their effort, desire, application and willingness to do exactly what's asked of them.

"But, at the moment we're being let down by not valuing the chances in front of goal. We should win the game. That's what good teams do. I think we are a very astute, good team from our goal to their penalty area and then when we get into their penalty area, we can't seem to find that real cutting edge. That's what's hurting us at the moment."

Paralympic squad in great haul

PARALYMPICSGB rounded off a glittering Games in Paris with two gold medals on the final day of competition to take their overall medal tally to 49 gold, 44 silver and 31 bronze.

And that cemented their second place finish in the medal table for the third consecutive Paralympic Games.

With eight more gold medals won than in Tokyo three years ago, the British team also equalled another record set then, winning medals across 18 of the 19 sports the team competed in – still the highest of any nation ever, with more than half of the 215 athletes in the team also reaching the podium.

Penny Briscoe OBE, ParalympicsGB Chef de Mission at Paris 2024, said:

"ParalympicsGB have achieved so many milestones at these Games, I could not be more proud of every single team member for their fantastic performances across 11 thrilling days of competition here in Paris.

"To finish these Games with 49 gold medals and 124 overall – surpassing what we achieved in Tokyo – is testament to our incredible athletes, coaches and support staff and the years and months of dedicated hard work they all put in. "Every Paralympic Games we see competition from around the world getting tougher and tougher, so to return home with so many fantastic performances from across the entire team really is so special."

The gold medal rush began in the pool with Games' debutant Poppy Maskill in the S14 100m butterfly and continued throughout the 11 days of competition. Day was four a notable highlight as ParalympicsGB won 12 gold medals – the greatest number in a single day this century. Brock Whiston won S88 200m medley gold in the pool.

Day nine saw the team claim their 42nd gold medal – surpassing the number won in Tokyo with two more days of competition still to go.

Maskill's medal haul of three gold and two silver medals made her the most successful athlete in the team, but there was plenty of promise from others.

ParalympicsGB's youngest athlete, 13-year-old Iona Winniffrith, won her first Paralympic medal, a silver in the 100m breaststroke SB7, and 14-year-old Bly Twomey claimed Para table tennis bronze medals in the women's WS7 singles and WS14 doubles with Floss Pickard.

Dame Sarah Storey had 18 Paralympic medals to her name by the time Winniffrith was born – and became ParalympicsGB's most decorated Paralympian ever at Tokyo 2020 with 17 gold and 28 medals overall.

The 46-year-old, at her ninth Games, added two further Para cycling golds. Every member of ParalympicsGB's 10-strong rowing squad won medals with Lauren Rowles the first Para rower to claim consecutive gold medals at three Games.