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FOOTBALL: Happy Taylor hails Wealdstone for win



Wealdstone players celebrate with fans after their FA Cup win at Grimsby

Image: Jon Taffel

Stones boss toasts FA Cup upset at Grimsby

MATT Taylor was exuberant after Wealdstone progressed to the second round of the FA Cup by beating League Two side Grimsby Town 1-0 on Saturday.

After weathering an early storm, loan signing Alex Reid's last-gasp winner snatched victory for the Stones, who were handed a home tie against Wycombe Wanderers in Monday's draw.

"In the first half we were a little bit, I felt, not good enough at keeping the ball," Taylor told the club website.

"There were a couple of hairy moments. The penalty the referee gives is never a penalty. You can tell from where I'm standing the direction of the ball. We got that bit of luck we've been talking about for so long and don't concede."

"There were a couple of moments in the first half where you understand you

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cannot play against a team doing well in their division. They're going to have opportunities, they're full-time professionals. They're a big club with great history and really good players.

"But we made a tactical change at half-time, and it just gave us so much control in the second half. I said to the players it's been really good to share this moment with the supporters - 168 of them come here. It's a long way and a big number of people for a small club like ours.

"Before the game, nobody gave us a chance, apart from us, and I spoke about that with the players. There has to be

a real belief we can come and win, but what pleases me, especially today, is we've kept a clean sheet.

"We probably weren't as easy on the eye as we have been previously, but we've had to make a change, and that change is bringing us results."

The Stones fared well in the second half, dominating the ball in the final third and mustered several decent chances to take the lead, and Taylor was keen to focus on the team's improving performances in recent weeks.

"I felt we had chances. I felt we were the only team in it in the second half," he added. "We dominated and picked up second balls. We did the side of the game we haven't been so good at this season, the ugly side. That was making sure we made first contact.

"If we didn't, we picked up second balls. We were combative in midfield as if we had energy, legs, and desire - all the things required for you to be a professional footballer we had a lot of.

"The moment in the game fell to our most confident, in-form player (Reid) after an excellent run by Kallum Cesay, which I thought was a penalty. I thought we could've had a penalty earlier on Alex Reid, but I thought they probably should have had a penalty afterwards, so the referee has evened it out.

"For us to come here, no one to give us a chance, and walk away with an excellent result and really good performance in the second half, the players found a way to win and deserve the credit."

Stones return to National League action at Aldershot on Saturday.

Itoje focus on England hitting back

AUSTRALIA UP NEXT AFTER SLENDER AUTUMN LOSS TO NEW ZEALAND



Maro Itoje attacks New Zealand
Image: PA

SARACENS captain Maro Itoje says England will be fully focused on getting a victory over their old sporting rivals Australia at Allianz Stadium, Twickenham on Saturday after their agonising narrow defeat to New Zealand, writes Ziad Chaudry.

George Ford missed late penalty and drop goal attempts as the All Blacks held on to a thrilling 24-22 success to retain the Hilary Shield for the sixth straight occasion.

Steve Borthwick's men looked set to erase the two summer defeats in New Zealand when a converted Immanuel Feyi-Waboso try and Marcus Smith penalty in the second half put them 22-14 ahead. But after Damien McKenzie slotted a penalty on 67 minutes, Mark Tele'a came back off the bench to score a converted try three minutes from time and, after Ford's misses, it eventually sealed the game for the visitors.

Camden-born Itoje, 30, who played alongside Sarries colleagues Ben Earl, Nick Isiekwe and Jamie George - England's captain - admitted the hosts squandered their chance.

"We got ourselves in a position to win the game if certain things went over," he said.

"Probably in a couple of key areas we weren't as clinical. We played with loads of passion and played lots of attacking rugby but it wasn't our day."

Australia arrive at RFU headquarters after a disastrous Rugby Championship campaign where they finished rock bottom behind Argentina, New Zealand and current world champions South Africa who visit Twickenham on November 17.

"I'm looking forward to getting a win at Twickenham (against Australia)," added Itoje.

"This is a different team to 18 months ago with the way we play, the endeavour and I think we will have to take our medicine now but I think we will get it."