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## FOOTBALL: Stones boss reflects on Oldham loss



Wealdstone in action at Oldham Athletic on Saturday

Image: Jon Taffel

# Taylor: Defeat shows how far we've come

WEALDSTONE boss Matt Taylor backed his players to bounce back from defeat after they surrendered a two-goal lead and lost 3-2 against Oldham Athletic at Boundary Park on Saturday.

Micah Obiero's opener paired with Max Kretzschmar's powerful effort saw Taylor's side out in front early on.

But a second-half fightback from the Latics condemned the Stones to another National League defeat on their travels.

Nonetheless, Taylor told the club website: "I thought the players were excellent for large periods of the game; we started extremely well, and the game plan to press them high worked.

"We scored two goals and looked comfortable away from home against a team that I believe, with the players they have, will be in contention for automatic

By TOM NORTON  
londoncommunity@newsquest.co.uk

promotion come the end of the season."

The hosts halved the deficit thanks to a header from striker Josh Stones just before the break and levelled the score-line just seconds after half-time when the Englishman converted another chance moments from the restart.

Taylor added: "Unfortunately, we conceded goals that were avoidable either side of half-time; however, the players' response to this was very good, and we had chances to go back in front."

Mike Fondop-Talom completed the turnaround, converting Oldham's winner after his initial penalty was saved by Toby Stewart.

The defeat was just the third time the Stones had played at Boundary Park against the Latics, having emerged victorious in the previous two.

Taylor said: "We made individual errors that have ultimately cost us in this game, and we have been punished. However, I must stress that being disappointed in the result away to Oldham shows how far this team has come from the start of the season.

"We got the performance again; however, we haven't got the result that it deserves. I expect a reaction at home against Dagenham next Saturday."

The Stones are just above the relegation zone on goal difference, having played a game less than those below them.

They face Dagenham & Redbridge

at Grosvenor Vale on Saturday in the reverse round of fixtures from the opening day without a win in three.

Stones travel to Maidenhead United on Boxing Day, then start 2025 with a home game against Boston United on January 1 (3pm).

\*HARROW Borough host Westfield in Isthmian South Central on Saturday, then welcome Hayes & Yeading on Boxing Day.

They won at Badshot Lea last weekend, after first-half goals from Keegan Bloom (2) and Stephan Langley put them 3-0 up.

The hosts hit back with a brace, but Borough held on despite having goalkeeper Andrew McCorkell sent off five minutes from time ahead of a Velocity Cup tie against Binfield in midweek.

## Saracens make Stade pay price

FRENCH HOSTS LACK DISCIPLINE IN CHAMPIONS CUP CLASH



Jamie George

Image: PA

ENGLAND captain Jamie George was among the scorers as Saracens made Stade Francais pay for indiscipline in their Champions Cup clash in France at the weekend.

George, Liam Williams and Theo Dan all crossed in the 28-17 win over their Pool 3 rivals at Stade Jean Bouin - with George's 45th-minute effort and Dan's seven minutes from time coming with the hosts down to 14 men.

And Fergus Burke added 13 points from the kicking tee to help see the visitors home comfortably.

The home side raced into an early 10-point lead, with Peniasi Dakuwaqa's try converted by Zack Henry on four minutes, with an easy penalty following soon after.

But Stade then saw Sekou Macalou sent off for a dangerous tackle on Ivan van Zyl and Saracens opened their account on 24 minutes when Burke's run into the 22 set up Elliot Daly for a superb pass to Williams to finish in style.

Burke's conversion cut the gap to three and he levelled with a penalty on 33 minutes, then landed another to make it 13-10 at the break.

Tanginoa Halaifonua was sinbinned soon after the restart for a high tackle on Rotimi Segun, with George rumbling over from a rolling maul to open up an eight-point gap.

Burke landed another penalty with 15 minutes left, but Stade hit back when Leo Barr went through a gap and converted to make it a four-point game. A collapsed maul led to another yellow card for the home side, though, and Dan finished off another maul and Burke converted to complete the tally. Saracens return to Gallagher Premiership action this weekend as Northampton Saints visit StoneX Stadium on Sunday (3pm). They head to Bath on December 28 (12.45pm).