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FOOTBALL: New boss celebrates first league win



Wealdstone players celebrate Josh Grant's winner at Yeovil on Saturday

Image: Jon Taffel

Gibson gives credit after Stones success

NEIL Gibson recorded his first win as Wealdstone manager as the Stones narrowly overcame Yeovil 2-1 at Huish Park on Saturday.

Veteran forward Enzo Boldewijn opened the scoring with a free header after 15 minutes played before Finn Cousin-Dawson equalised on the stroke of half-time.

Josh Grant won it for the visitors shortly after the break as the Stones held off a late onslaught from the hosts to seal the victory and secure Gibson's first win as boss.

"I must say that all the credit today goes to the players," a delighted Gibson told the club website.

"They were absolutely magnificent to a man. We worked on some things this week that we thought could try to

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improve us in certain areas of the pitch, and the players have really driven that.

"They've taken on board the information, and they've really driven it. I thought there were some monumental performances from some of the players today.

"To a man, you can't carry anyone and win games at this level and today proved that. Everybody was the best version of themselves that they could be. I thought we fully deserved the three points."

Gibson has often spoken of his desire to win games by playing attacking football and scoring goals, but Saturday's

crucial win away from home proved that he has foundations to build on at the other end of the pitch.

"We spoke in the week about ensuring how hard we work out of possession. It's just a given, and it's part of our DNA and what we want to be about," the Stones boss continued.

"What are Wealdstone Football Club about? We're about an honest, hard-working group of players who want to give their absolute all for everybody involved at the football club.

"We probably felt today's performance was coming, but when you look on the pitch and you see how hard every single individual is working, you take no individual performances out of it in terms of what they've done individually together as a group; they were put-

ting their bodies on the line.

"When there's opportunities on the edge of our 18-yard box, you've got three or four men putting their bodies on the line, so it was an absolutely terrific performance from the players, and they have to take all the credit from that because they've executed (the game plan).

"We can only ask them to do certain things and then have to go out onto the pitch and do it. It's been a testing week in terms of players being unavailable, so for them to galvanise in the manner that they did shows what this group is all about."

The Stones continued their fight to stay in the National League with a mid-week trip to Steve Pitt's Braintree Town before hosting bottom side Ebbsfleet United on Saturday.

Ben up for a big date with Scots

ENGLAND'S SARACENS STAR RELISHING SIX NATIONS SHOWDOWN



England's Ben Earl attacks against France
Image: PA

BEN Earl revealed the agony of rewatching recent Calcutta Cup failures has left England gunning for redemption as he admitted Scotland's last visit to Twickenham caused him to question his suitability for international rugby.

Gregor Townsend's team are chasing a record-breaking fifth consecutive win over their fierce rivals during Saturday's pivotal Guinness Six Nations showdown at Allianz Stadium.

Part of England's preparation to end Scottish domination stretching back to 2021 has involved analysing painful footage of their two defeats in the fixture during the reign of head coach Steve Borthwick.

Saracens' back-row forward Earl came off the bench in the first - a 29-23 loss in south-west London at the start of the Borthwick era - before being dropped for the remainder of the 2023 championship following a round-two cameo against Italy.

"It certainly feels like a big week in terms of this is a team that's got the wood over us at the moment," he said.

"This is a team we've not had a huge amount of joy against, certainly for a good chunk of time. It's got a big-game feel to it and that more times than not has brought the best out of us.

"We've watched the last two games we've played (against Scotland); that's almost unidentifiable in terms of what we've been as a team when we've been at our best over the last couple of years since Steve's come in.

"We've watched some of that back, we've learnt some lessons. We're not going to be short of motivation, that's for sure."

Having initially been jetisoned by Borthwick, Earl returned from a period of soul searching to become a key cog in the England side which finished third at the 2023 Rugby World Cup in France and then remain a regular.