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## FOOTBALL: Safety hopes hit by illness in camp



Kallum Cesay netted Wealdstone's late weekend winner over Woking before they lost to Aldershot on Tuesday

Image: Jon Taffel

# Sickness bug leaves Stones shot in defeat

WEALDSTONE boss Neil Gibson revealed a sickness bug had spread through the camp after his side's 3-1 home defeat to Aldershot on Tuesday.

Dominic Hutchinson gave the Stones the lead after just eight minutes, but three goals in 10 second-half minutes condemned them to another home defeat under the Welshman's tenure.

The defeat leaves the club struggling in the National League in 19th place, with just two points separating them from Dagenham & Redbridge and Boston United, who are level on 40 points going into the last few weeks of the season.

"It was a game of two halves, really. First half, I thought we started really brightly - full value for our 1-0 lead in the first 20, 25 minutes of the game," Gibson told the club website.

By TOM NORTON  
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"I thought, probably, we needed to take one of the next couple of chances that we didn't quite take to get ourselves two or three nil ahead, because we always know that in the second half when teams attack down this end - we've done it to other teams and they've done it to us today - it can be very difficult to get ourselves out.

"I think also, could I ask any more of the players in terms of their efforts? No, I don't think so. We don't need to try and look for excuses. We just look for reasons. We probably ran out of steam a bit in the second half because, you can probably tell from my voice, there's

a bit of an illness that's been running through the camp this week.

"We've had a couple of players missing with the illness. A couple of people played who probably weren't fully 100 per cent, or anywhere near it."

Disappointed by the nature of Aldershot's equaliser, Gibson seemed to expect better from his defensive unit as the second and third goals went in soon after with no reply thereafter.

He said: "We're disappointed with the goals we conceded, and that's something we've got to look to address in terms of where those goals come from.

"Two from set-pieces, so we take full responsibility. Collectively, that starts with us as coaching staff and then the players on the pitch to fulfil the jobs they're being asked to do.

"We have to make sure we get that right, because we can't keep conceding from set-pieces, because if you take those set-pieces out of the game today we still come away with a 1-1. Ultimately, it's something we've looked really strong at it in the last three games.

"To concede three in 11 minutes - that probably changed the whole perspective of the game - is disappointing. Aldershot are a good team if they get their tails up, and once the first goal went in, they were able to get their tails up and were difficult to stop."

Kallum Cesay's injury-time goal had earned a 1-0 win over Woking on Saturday and Wealdstone's battle for National League survival continues at York City, who have seen their title challenge fizzle out recently.

## Saracens to bounce back says Willis

DERBY DEFEAT WAS BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT



Saracens' Tom Willis in action against Harlequins  
Image: PA

TOM Willis insists Saracens will be determined to bounce back from their agonising showpiece Gallagher Premiership derby defeat against Harlequins when they travel to Leicester Tigers on Sunday (3pm), writes Ziad Chaudry.

The north London outfit are seeking a huge response to get back into the top-four play-off places after losing 23-12 to fellow hopefuls Harlequins in front of 54,414 at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on Saturday.

The visitors came back from a 12-0 half-time deficit to stun Sarries with 23 unanswered points in the last 20 minutes. The last time Harlequins recorded an 'away' success at Saracens was a 24-19 win at Wembley Stadium in front of a world record club rugby crowd 83,761 fans (that still stands) in March 31, 2012. Saracens, who welcomed back captain Maro Itoje, Jamie George, Nick Tompkins and Willis from 2025 Guinness Six Nations Championship duties, saw their first-half points come from tries by Samoan international and Tobias Elliott and a conversion from Spurs fan Alex Lozowski. "I guess we didn't fire enough shots," 26-year-old Willis told the club's official Facebook page.

"We didn't capitalise when we got the opportunities. It was incredibly frustrating obviously in the first half when we managed to get hold of the scoreboard at least, we defended a lot of phases and got through.

"However Quins got a few runaway tries and ticked away the scoreboard with those couple of penalties so eventually they were the better team."

And Willis is confident Saracens can get back to winning ways in the East Midlands.

"One hundred per cent, we've got no other choice but to react to this," he added.