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THE GAFFER

Good evening everyone and fingers crossed you are reading these welcome notes from me tonight and we have a home game of football to play as we welcome Weston-super-Mare to Wordsworth Drive for tonight's Vanarama National League South game. My welcome extends to the fans and also the match officials.

What a few days they have been Peacocks!! Two fantastic wins against two very good teams on the road in Worthing and Torquay United. However we will not get too ahead of ourselves as there is still plenty of work to do and in a short space of time.

I have to say I am immensely proud of this group of players, through the tough times we stuck together and they have given everything they had for this club and finally in the last two outings we have been rewarded with that hard work and never say die attitude.

We need more of the same this evening and you in the stands can help us out and let the boys know we are all in this together.

Come on you Peacocks!

Rob Dray

Head of Football, Taunton Town FC



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THE AWAY END



WESTON SUPER MARE

The club's first site was known as the Great Ground at the junction of Locking Road and Hutton Moor Road, this has now since been developed as a private housing estate. The Football Club came into being after players in the former Weston Aircraft side had suggested at their AGM that a team bearing the town's name should be formed.

Mr Ted Recardo, who was running the Aircraft Side, approached a member of the then Borough Council Mr George Cooper, who responded enthusiastically to the idea and became the founder chairman. At first, friendly matches were played and players changed at the rear of a garage opposite the Locking Road Ground. The first record of a Weston-super-Mare side in a competitive match was in the 1887/88 season when they lost to local rivals Clevedon Town 2-1 in a Medal Competition organised by the Somerset FA. The following year Weston were members of a County Committee of the Somerset FA.

Weston's first cup win was in March 1911 when they beat Clevedon 3-0 in the Weston Charity Cup. In 1913/14 they finished third in the Bristol Charity League behind Bath City and Bristol Rovers Reserves.

In 1922/23 they played in a Bristol and District League coming second behind Bristol Leather Trades, winning 17 and drawing six of their 28 games. That season they also won the Bristol Charity Cup beating Clevedon 8-2 in the final on the 5th May 1923 at Yatton's football ground.

The third Cup victory was in the 1926/27 season when they won the Somerset Senior Cup, defeating Paulton Rovers 3-2 in the semi-finals

after starting with only nine men because two players had been sent bogus telegrams advising that the match was off. They went on to defeat Welton Rovers in the final in front of a 6,000 crowd.

They were also finalists that year in the Clevedon Charity Cup, losing 5-1 to Clevedon. In those days Weston players were paid half a crown (12p) to play. Clevedon again beat Weston in the replay of the 1936/37 Somerset Senior League knock-out cup after drawing 1-1 in the first match.

After the outbreak of the Second World War, the club was sadly disbanded.

Following the Second World War, the present club reformed in 1948. A meeting at the Town Hall decided to form a semi-professional Club. A committee was formed to look into the possibility of buying the Locking Road Ground, which at the time it was thought could be acquired for around £4,000.

In the following months the club were elected into the Western League Division 2 alongside Barnstaple Town and a new club, Chippenham United.

Weston played their home matches at the Great Ground in Locking Road where they regularly attracted attendances of over 1,000, and even for a friendly against local side Langford Rovers over 600 turned up. The first league game at home attracted some 1,500 fans, with the changing accommodation for players taking place in a large marquee. There was no cover for spectators but enthusiasm ran high and crowds rolled in regardless of the

weather. The first league match was away to Chippenham United, a side that included seven professionals, some of them former Football League players. Weston were beaten 6-1, but it should be noted that the Chippenham side proved too strong for most opponents in that season and were a really formidable outfit.

The first Weston win at Locking Road came against Cinderford Town, and that was followed by the first away win at Stonehouse. A further boost came with the formation of the Supporters Club in 1948, with Mr Sam Wooding becoming its first Secretary. The club spent most of the 1950s in the Second Division, going close to promotion on a couple of occasions before the division was disbanded.

The move to the Langford Road Ground came in time for the 1955/56 season and the first game saw Weston defeat Peasedown 7-0.

In 1960/61, along with Trowbridge Town, Exeter City Reserves and Welton Rovers, Weston were elected to Division 1 of the Western Football League. Weston held the unique distinction of never winning promotion or suffering relegation, a record that would remain intact for many more years to come.

The first modern taste of cup glory came in 1961 when Weston reached the First Round Proper of the FA Cup. Unfortunately, it ended in bitter disappointment as they were beaten by local rivals Bridgwater Town in the replay before a home crowd of 2,500. It was not Weston's day, as after having what looked like a good goal disallowed on a hairline offside decision, Weston went down by a goal scored minutes from the end. They missed a plum home tie against Crystal Palace, who were then in Division 3 of the Football League.

At Langford Road the set up was a great improvement of that at the Great Ground. Apart from the changing accommodation for the players, a licensed Social Club was eventually established in what had been a large Nissan Hut.

A period of success began in the 1975/76 season with the arrival of Kim Book as team manager. During the seven seasons under his control and

that of his successor Dave Stone, Weston reached second place in the league, won the League Cup and also won the Western Senior Cup on five occasions. Only once did they finish lower than the top ten and in 1980/81 they reached the Western League Goldliner Cup Final, only to lose 2-1 to Dawlish Town.

In the 1983-84 season, Weston moved to a new ground at Woodspring Park, which was built almost entirely by supporters. The Woodspring Park ground was greatly developed over the years, with a clubhouse costing £100,000 and floodlights installed in 1986.

In 1989, John Ellener was appointed manager. In three seasons he took the club to two cup finals and, for the first time since they were reformed, Weston won the Western League Championship in 1991/92 to earn promotion to the Southern League Midland Division.

In 1993, team coach Peter Amos replaced Ellener as manager and guided the club to 11th position in their first season in the Midland Division. A club record was set at the beginning of the 1993/94 season with an undefeated run of 10 matches. The run also included an appearance in the First Round proper of the FA Cup for only the second time in the club's history, being drawn against non-league Woking. After drawing 2-2 at Woking, Weston lost in the replay at Woodspring Park in front of a crowd of 2,623 supporters, a new ground record attendance. A new record was also achieved that season by getting into the First Round proper of the FA Trophy. In that same season, the league record attendance was broken with a 1,260 attendance against Clevedon Town. 91 points were collected in the league but promotion was missed out on by one point, as Rushden & Diamonds and VS Rugby were promoted ahead of Weston.

The 1994/95 season saw the recruitment of Len Ashurst as the club's new manager, and he steered the side to sixth place in his first season. Ahead of this season, Weston were transferred to the Southern League Southern Division. The success of the club was affected in the following season due to an enforced budget cut. The sale of Danny O'Hagan to Dorchester Town and Stuart Jones to Sheffield Wednesday

for a club record fee of £20,000, left the need for team rebuilding. Despite this process, Weston had some more good seasons until eventually finishing in 19th place in the 1997/98 season.

The start of the 1998-99 saw the appointment of John Relish as manager and a move back to the Midland Division. The season started poorly, but did however see a run in the FA Trophy to the 4th round against Hitchin Town. Defeat saw the club miss out on an exciting home tie against Conference side Forest Green Rovers.

In the league, the side plunged to the bottom three of the table, but an improvement in consistency from Christmas 1998 produced a string of good results which could have resulted in a top six finish if the run had started earlier in the season. During this campaign, Weston made yet another sale, this time Ryan Souter went to Football League side Bury.

In the year 2000, Weston secured the purchase of the Westlands Site, only a stone's throw away from Woodspring Park. The plans were to create a new purpose-built stadium incorporating a 250 seater stand with integral bar and entertainment facilities, with a first class pitch and dressing rooms.

At the end of October 2001, the board decided that to achieve their ambitions of being promoted to the Dr. Martens League Premier Division, it was time for a new progressive management team. As an interim measure, Director of Football Alan White took over first-team affairs from John Relish and his staff.

The board then appointed Frank Gregan in November, although due to his contract commitments with Aberystwyth Town, he did not take up the position until 23rd February 2002. In the meantime his assistant Chris Smith took control of first team affairs.

In the 2002-2003 season, the club made history when they won promotion to the Dr. Martens League Premier Division, finishing runners up in the Western Division behind Merthyr Tydfil. Weston went up following a 1-0 win at local rivals Clevedon Town at the Hand Stadium.

In the 2003-04 season, the club had a successful first season in the higher division as they finished high enough to gain entry into the newly formed Nationwide Conference South. The team also reached the Second Round proper of the FA Cup

for the first time in their history, eventually losing 4-1 at Northampton Town. A tremendous run in the FA Trophy also ended when the team lost 4-2 to Telford United away in the 4th Round.

August 14th 2004 saw the opening game at the current Woodspring Stadium in a momentous match against Hornchurch, which ended in a 1-0 victory for The Seagulls. In Weston's first season in the new division they finished a credible 11th with 58 points.

After the 2006-07 season The Seagulls seemed doomed for relegation, the first time in their history. However, Farnborough Town were relegated and Hayes and Yeading merged to form Hayes & Yeading United, leaving the Conference South one team short, earning a reprieve for Weston.

The 2007/08 season ended in a similar way. A 20th placed finish meant the club was eligible for relegation, only to be spared by the enforced demotion of Cambridge City, who failed a ground inspection.

In the 2008/09 season Weston finished a more respectable 17th after an impressive start to the season. But from around November onwards, The Seagulls' campaign took an uneasy dip towards the relegation zone. Tony Ricketts departed the club and it was left to caretaker-manager Andy Gurney to lift the team to 17th position.

The 2010/11 season began with renewed hope as Craig Laird was appointed First Team Manager, and he brought with him Jon Haile as his assistant. In Laird's first season, Weston achieved a 12th placed finish with 53 points, whilst going on to win the Somerset Premier Cup for the first time with a 1-0 victory against Yeovil Town at Huish Park, courtesy of a goal from Ben Kirk.

The 2012/13 season saw the highest ever finish for The Seagulls in seventh place and 67 points, a record highest-ever position in the pyramid that remains to this day. Weston only missed out on a play-off place on the penultimate game of the season, a great achievement considering the lowly finishes in previous seasons.

After Laird and Weston parted company in 2014, Mickey Bell was appointed First Team coach ahead of the 2014-15 season, with Clayton Fortune becoming Player/Assistant First Team Coach. Bell brought in a number of the Weston Academy youngsters who had been on the fringes of the first

team squad.

However, after a string of poor results, Bell was replaced by Director of Football Ryan Northmore at the end of November 2014 with The Seagulls at the bottom of the table. Despite the disappointing start to the league season, Bell managed to steer Weston into the First Round proper of the FA Cup, where they hosted Doncaster Rovers. In front of a record attendance at the 'new' stadium of 2,949, Weston were defeated by four goals to one.

Northmore took the team on a string of unbeaten games, taking them to promotion challenging form. Unfortunately, this didn't continue and after defeating Bath City at home 4-1 in a rearranged fixture, The Seagulls didn't win another league game and saw them finish 17th.

The 2015/16 season saw the side struggle to gain a win throughout August in the League, earning just one point from 18, with that point coming at home in the Somerset derby against Bath City.

During the last month of the season, The Seagulls once again turned on the style and ended the season with six unbeaten games from seven, with Wilson and Grubb netting in a 2-0 win over Maidenhead to spark manic celebrations from the home fans at the Woodspring, knowing that the Seagulls had avoided relegation.

The 2016/17 league season started off promisingly, with three wins and a draw from the first four games, putting Weston at the top of the table. Shawn McCoulsky, who joined The Seagulls on loan from Bristol City days before the season began, scored four goals in the opening four games to see Weston start off stronger than ever expected.

Then, a run of seven league games and a 2-1 defeat to North Leigh in the Second Qualifying Round of the FA Cup saw the sacking of Northmore. His replacement was former Weston player Scott Bartlett, with Chris Barker joining the club as Player/Assistant Manager.

Bartlett and Barker were given the task of keeping The Seagulls in the National League South, and a tricky November saw things look bleaker than before, despite a 4-3 win away to Eastbourne Borough. The defensive signing of Rollin Menayese in December saw an upturn in Weston's form, with new signing Gethyn Hill poking home away to Truro on Boxing Day for a vital three points.

As we entered 2017, Weston got into their stride thanks to Grubb's two trademark free-kicks against Truro on New Year's Day, with the team going on a good run of form to start off the second half of the season, a 3-2 loss away to Dartford in January being the only blemish to their good form.

March saw the games come thick and fast, with the majority of the fixtures against teams at the top end of the table. Weston lost out to Bath 2-1 thanks to McCoulsky's 88th minute winner for the Romans, but Weston still had survival to secure after the trickiest month the club endured all season.

In the 2018-2019 season, Weston suffered their first-ever relegation, bringing their 15-year tenure in the National League South to an end. Manager Marc McGregor left the club in March, with coach Mark McKeever taking caretaker charge for the final games. Weston reached the FA Cup First Round proper and faced Wrexham at home, losing by two goals to nil. In the latter half of the season, the Woodspring Stadium name was changed to the Optima Stadium as Optima Care took over as stadium sponsors.

At the start of the following season, Weston made another hugely significant signing as Dayle Grubb also returned to the club. The 2020/21 campaign proved to be even more short-lived than the previous one as further lockdowns meant that the season was curtailed in the autumn.

However, the following two seasons were to prove to be far more fruitful for The Seagulls. The 2021/22 season saw Weston qualify for their first-ever end of season play-offs, but Weston were sadly defeated in the semi-final at Hayes & Yeading.

But Weston went one better in the 2022/23 season, winning the Southern League Premier South championship, the first time The Seagulls had won a league since topping the Western League in 1991/92. Weston went into their final home game of the 2022/23 season knowing a win against Hendon would see them crowned as champions. A goal from Jason Pope and a hat-trick from Marlon Jackson ensured the three points and a much coveted return to Step 2 football. The celebrations at the final whistle then continued long into the night for Bartlett's talented side.



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SCAN ME

THIS SEASON AT A GLANCE



PLAYED **33**

35 PLAYED

WON **9**

14 WON

DRAWN **13**

6 DRAWN

LOST **11**

15 LOST

+/- **-11**

-4 +/-

POINTS **40**

48 POINTS

LGE POS **18TH**

15TH LGE POS



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DAVE WEBSTER *View from the stands*

WORTHING 1 TAUNTON TOWN 3
Vanarama National League South



And so it came to pass, that on the 182nd day, the Peacocks were to return triumphantly from their trip on the road to West Sussex, after winning away from home for the first time since a scorching hot day in Kent, way back on September 9th of 2023!!!!!!

Be sure of this, football is not always about skill, and the magic of seeing spectacular goals. No, it is also about Lady Luck being on your side. The Lady was certainly with us in this match between top and bottom. Luck, hard work and determination by the bucket load were in abundance, from start to finish at Woodside Road, where our team fought tooth and nail for every ball. All eyes were focused on Worthing dangerman Ollie Pearce who had 33 goals to his credit...Well not today Ollie, who was to have a shocker!!!!

We all sensed that Worthing would come at us like a pack of hunting dogs, and so they did, hitting the woodwork in the opening minutes. The Taunton defence had to be on top form today, and again, so they were! A revitalised Lloyd James, alongside Evans, Ball, and Grimes defending like Trojan warriors. With Day and Bell making continuous ground down the wings, Worthing were being caught off their guard much more than they could possibly have desired.

Taunton were on a mission. New lad Seb Bolton started and did not disappoint, he is a big lad and caused many problems for Worthing in his nigh on hour on the field, Seb scored the opening goal from an almost prone position, which came about when Worthing keeper Bull made the first [of many] errors. In the keepers panic-stricken endeavour to clear the ball, after a bloomer of a back pass from a defender, the ball struck the legs of Seb and duly trickled over the goal-line.

The 10 or so, of us fans behind the goal went absolutely delirious. Worthing went up a gear in pursuit of a leveller, and so the pressure on our goal mounted, as did the passion of our players! Hearts dropped with the Taunton faithful, when Worthing were awarded a penalty after a schoolboy error from Zac Bell. Up steps goal machine Pearce who, it has to be said, hit one of the softest penalties i have

witnessed, making it very easy for Lavercombe to keep out. Going in for their halftime pints of cider leading 0-1, with all associated with TTFC, wishing it was full time, we knew this game was far from over.

Worthing came out for the 2nd half full of fire, throwing everything at us, kitchen sinks, toilet brushes and anything else they could get their hands on! Only to be met by a stonewall rear-guard! Taunton wanted these 3 points desperately, and were not going to give them up. The woodwork was hit again, a Worthing goal was ruled offside. Zeus, Apollo and Athena were looking down on us, spurring us on.

Our 2nd goal really was a comedy of errors from the young Bull in goal. Coming about after a Bell throw-in, by Jove, this lad can throw a ball. It landed slap bang in the middle of a crowded defence, which the keeper fumbled and knocked into his own goal, whilst under extreme duress from Captain Nick. How good it was to see Grimes back, after missing last weeks defeat v Truro. 0-2 up and buzzing.

The fun got better when 10 minutes later, with about 15 remaining, against all the odds, [Taunton were 8/1 to win!] we were to go 3 up, when Lloyd planted a free kick onto the head of Nat Jarvis, who with a snake-like reaction put it into the Worthing net. Utter pandemonium broke out in the corner where around 15 Taunton supporters had taken their places, amongst the 1,350 crowd. Could Worthing really come back? They tried, but again our defence stood strong, only allowing them a consolation goal right at the death.

With Welling, Eastbourne and Havant & Waterlooville also winning, this incredible victory makes the win even more important, particularly with both Dartford and Truro losing!

We must now carry on with this surge, and repeat this performance at Torquay. Have faith everyone, get behind our club, make every effort possible to get to Torquay and cheer these lads on. We WILL escape relegation!

BELIEVE!!!!!!

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Postponements are tiresome. Late postponements even more so.

It doesn't take long to learn the tweet 'Game definitely on' doesn't always mean the game is definitely on.

And even when the match kicks off, it doesn't necessarily mean it will definitely finish.

This year feels particularly wet but we probably say the same most seasons.

Everyone shares the same frustration when the weather beats the football – especially for the fans who may have already set off on a long journey or even arrived at the ground.

Over at NLP HQ on a Saturday, chaos tends to fill the air as we put tentative plans together for redrawing the paper, only for a late call off to mean tearing up the idea to start again. Sometimes one game being postponed causes a domino effect you usually see for club allocations in the summer.

But it does allow me to stretch back into my chair and say, 'Did I ever tell you about the time I went to Albania?'

Rewind to October 2012 and England C were off on another adventure, The NLP fortunate enough to bag a seat on the

plane to cover Non-League's Three Lions breaking new ground.

The Tirana weather was....pretty good actually. In fact, the day before the game we even made the most of some downtime in the schedule to sit out on the hotel's sun deck overlooking the ocean. This was why I got into journalism!

The day of the match was good too. Players went through set-pieces in shorts and t-shirts and an anticipation slowly built through the day.

During the final meeting at the hotel before jumping on the bus, it started raining. Driving towards the stadium, the rain continued. And got heavier. And heavier. The puddles got larger. The streets started to become streams.

The first sign of concern was seeing the stadium's adjacent 3G pitch - trained on just hours earlier - with large puddles.

Inside the stadium, the running track began to look more like a moat. Word came up from the dressing rooms that they too were slowly filling with water, the cables for the TV stations like electric eels swimming around.

By now the game had been called off. Brian Lee, the late former Football Conference chairman, wondered if

anyone could find a sports hall to at least get some sort of action!

The car park was now a lake and it was time to man the lifeboats as players, still in full kit, waded to the coach – interrupted by a SUV driving up to the main door and sending a tidal wave of water back into foyer.

All that way for a game that never was. Some of the squad missed out in the future because of their age, never to be capped. If we hadn't travelled so far it would have been comical.

Funnily enough, England's senior game in Poland later that night was also rained off after the stadium roof wasn't closed in time. England 0-2 Weather.



OFFICIAL MATCH REPORT

WORTHING 1 TAUNTON TOWN 3

9.3.2024 | VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH | ATT: 1350

A resolute performance characterized by graft, determination and a sizeable chunk of luck secured the Peacocks their first win in 14 National League South games. And how vital those three points were given victories for relegation rivals elsewhere, with Town building a three goal lead thanks to two slices of good fortune and a Nat Jarvis header before the hosts notched a very late consolation. It's about time though that the Peacocks enjoyed a break with all that has been thrown at them in recent months and to claim only their second away win this season against a top three side, apart from being a brilliant result, will hopefully provide the boost needed for the challenges remaining over the next six weeks.

Captain Nick Grimes returned to the team following suspension while Marcus Day and recent recruit Seb Bolton started in place of Rabby Tabu Minzamba, Louie Slough and the injured Callum Dolman, with the reshuffled side being made fully aware of the task in front of them inside six minutes when a long ball forward from Alfie Young found Danny Cashman who wrapped his foot around a strike which cannoned off the net stanchion. Town responded with their first meaningful foray, a great lay-off from Ollie Chamberlain releasing Zac Bell down the left but Jarvis was unable to get a shot

away from the cross.

Much of the early possession belonged to the hosts without a clear chance presenting itself. A crossfield pass saw Cameron Tutt dissect the defence, but his ball across the face was too far in front of Cashman and put out for a corner from which Joe Felix curled an effort over the top. Joel Colbran's pass then found the division's top scorer Ollie Pearce who failed to test Town keeper Dan Lavercombe while some neat kicks, flicks and movement around the box threatened more than it delivered. There was nothing neat about the opening goal of the contest which stunned the vast majority of the 1350 crowd into silence after 19 minutes. Worthing midfielder Jack Wadham's touch from Joe Rye's pass was too heavy and when Bolton closed down with a tackle, the ball ricocheted towards an open goal and crossed the line with stranded Rebels' keeper Toby Bull frantically attempting to backtrack to keep it out. They all count!

Taunton saw another glimpse of goal when Dan Ball planted a header just over onto the roof of the net from a Lloyd James free kick before Worthing set about their attempts to draw level. Despite numerous intrusions into the area though there was little to trouble Lavercombe.

Tutt's shot from a decent position looped over while Pearce remained out of luck, seeing his hooked effort safely pouched by the Town keeper before the striker received Cashman's pass to curl a deflected shot wide and then drive another strike wide of the target from the ensuing corner.

Pearce was given the perfect opportunity to add to his 33 goal haul five minutes before the interval. Bell's lunge upended Cashman in the box but Pearce's penalty was tame and Lavercombe blocked with his foot as he dived to his right, with the ball booted clear. Pearce connected with Colbran's cross to bobble wide while Colbran himself flashed a strike narrowly past the far post as the half ended in frustration for the hosts, with the Peacocks counting a few chickens.

The exasperation continued for Pearce inside the first five minutes of the second half when good work from Tutt down the left set up him for a left-footer from 15 yards which smacked off the crossbar while the impressive Joe Felix's angled attempt took a deflection to fall into the clutches of Lavercombe. The Town backline was standing up well to the potent 78 goal Rebels strikeforce although they might have been tighter on one occasion, Wadham gliding through too easily to drill a shot inches wide.

Ross Stearn replaced Bolton just before the hour and within minutes the home side were celebrating when Colbran flicked a header beyond Lavercombe from Pearce's cross into the far corner. A raised flag ruled the goal out and Town rubbed it in by doubling their lead after 65 minutes. Bell's long throw aimed at the near post saw Bull come to claim but his handling let him down as the ball

escaped his fingertips to sneak just over the line despite Colbran's attempted block, with Chamberlain making sure.

Bull redeemed himself moments later when he palmed away James' whipped free kick from the left as Worthing's frustrations continued at the opposite end, Cashman wriggling across the edge to post a weak effort well off the mark and Jake Robinson drilling high and wide. Town now had real belief and after Marcus Day had cut inside to see his strike blocked, the visitors put the travelling faithful into dreamland with a third goal on 77 minutes. There was no luck about this one either, with Jarvis getting ahead of his man to glance a header into the far corner from James' cross.

Evander Grubb took over from Jarvis for the final minutes, meanwhile the Sussex side remained out of kilter, Colbran failing to hit the target with another shot, until the 89th minute when Wadham stroked home a precise finish from the edge of the box. Town then had to negotiate five minutes of stoppage time, the only near miss coming when Greg Luer failed to connect with Felix's cross, before the relief of the final whistle confirmed a crucial victory. Little time to bask in the glow of this win though with a congested programme of 15 games to get through. Next stop Plainmoor.





VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH 2023-24 LEAGUE STANDINGS

P	Team	GP	W	D	L	F	A	+/-	PTS
1	Yeovil Town	38	24	7	7	68	40	+28	79
2	Chelmsford City	39	20	10	9	61	36	+25	70
3	Worthing	38	20	5	13	81	60	+21	65
4	Braintree Town	37	18	10	9	55	37	+18	64
5	St Albans City	38	19	6	13	68	53	+15	63
6	Hampton & Richmond	36	18	9	9	55	44	+11	63
7	Bath City	37	17	10	10	60	42	+18	61
8	Maidstone United	37	17	10	10	53	46	+7	61
9	Aveley	39	17	9	13	55	50	+5	60
10	Slough Town	36	15	9	12	66	57	+9	54
11	Farnborough	38	14	12	12	60	60	0	54
12	Torquay United	37	15	6	16	59	62	-3	51
13	Tonbridge Angels	39	13	10	16	55	56	-1	49
14	Chippenham Town	37	12	12	13	49	50	-1	48
15	WESTON-SUPER-MARE	35	14	6	15	51	55	-4	48
16	Weymouth	36	11	13	12	51	56	-5	46
17	Hemel Hempstead Town	38	12	8	18	45	58	-13	44
18	TAUNTON TOWN	33	9	13	11	38	49	-11	40
19	Welling United	37	9	13	15	47	63	-16	40
20	Truro City	32	11	5	16	45	52	-7	38
21	Dartford	37	10	8	19	48	59	-11	38
22	Eastbourne Borough	37	9	7	21	39	65	-26	34
23	Havant & Waterlooville	37	8	5	24	44	72	-28	29
24	Dover Athletic	38	3	13	22	36	67	-31	22

- P - Position GP - Games Played W - Won L - Lost D - Drawn F - For A - Against PTS - Points -

TONIGHT'S FIXTURES

Thursday 14th March 2024

7.45pm Taunton Town v Weston-super-Mare

UPCOMING FIXTURES

Saturday 16th March 2024

- 3pm Chelmsford City v Bath City
- 3pm Chippenham Town v Worthing
- 3pm Dartford v Maidstone United
- 3pm Dover Athletic v Havant & Waterlooville
- 3pm Eastbourne Borough v Taunton Town
- 3pm Farnborough v Aveley
- 3pm Hemel Hempstead v Hampton & Richmond
- 3pm Slough Town v Yeovil Town
- 3pm St Albans City v Truro City
- 3pm Tonbridge Angels v Torquay United
- 3pm Welling United v Weston-super-Mare
- 3pm Weymouth v Braintree Town

Tuesday 19th March 2024

- 7.45pm Braintree Town v Weymouth
- 7.45pm Truro City v Eastbourne Borough

Saturday 23rd March 2024

- 3pm Aveley v St Albans City
- 3pm Braintree Town v Yeovil Town
- 3pm Chippenham Town v Welling United
- 3pm Dartford v Hemel Hempstead Town
- 3pm Dover Athletic v Farnborough
- 3pm Maidstone United v Weston-super-Mare
- 3pm Slough Town v Eastbourne Borough
- 3pm Taunton Town v Chelmsford City
- 3pm Tonbridge Angels v Truro City
- 3pm Torquay United v Hampton & Richmond
- 3pm Weymouth v Havant & Waterlooville

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NEXT UP AT HOME

WEDNESDAY 20TH MARCH 2024

KICK OFF - 7:45PM



VANARAMA
NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH

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Adult: £14
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Concession: £11
(State Pensioners & Students with ID)

Youth: £5
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Junior: £2
(6-12 years)

Child: Free

(Under 6 with a full paying adult)



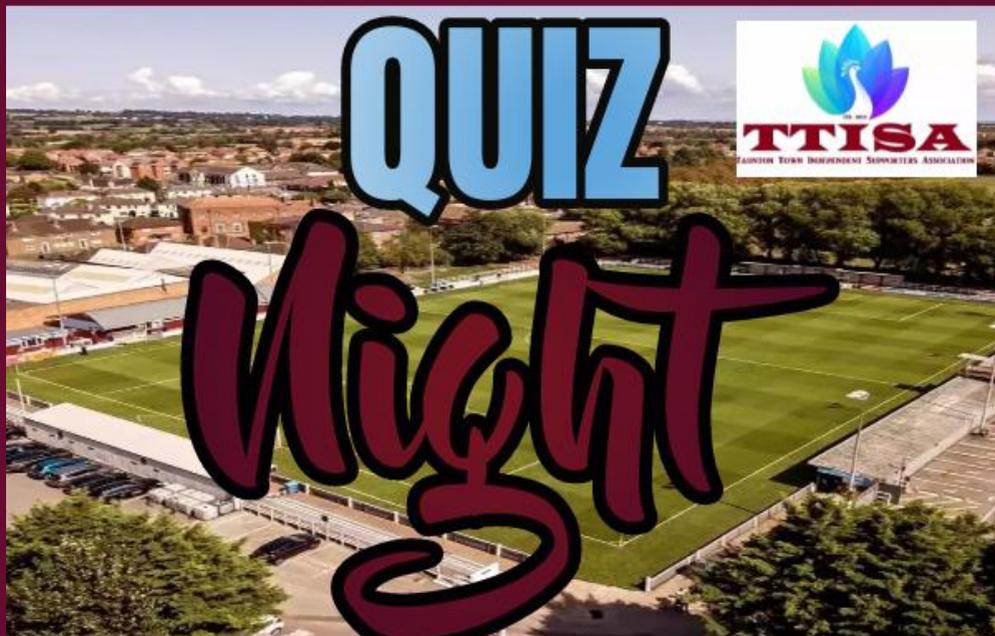
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The Untold Game

Superstars of the Subcontinent

One of football's great mysteries is the struggle of the subcontinent to make an impact on the global game. India now has the biggest population in the world, nearly 1.5 billion people, and yet the nation has been unable to find 11 individuals to get them to a level where they can even take part in a World Cup, let alone compete for one. Of course, football fights a losing battle for popularity with cricket in India, but perennial underachievement didn't have to be the expectation. There was a time when the future of Indian football looked bright, and they reached the summit of their continent's elite.

The Asian nation had shown promise in the previous decade, taking on France in an infamous barefooted performance at the 1948 Olympics and losing by a single goal. The appointment of Syed Abdul Rahim brought a focus on tactics rather than endurance. As the 1950s progressed, he adopted the successful Hungarian style that brought them so close to the World Cup in 1954, and saw his team grow in stature.

India reached the semi-finals of the 1960 Olympics with impressive victories against Hungary and France. But the 1962 Asian Games in Jakarta were nearly missed altogether. The Indian government almost didn't provide the finances for the team to travel to Indonesia, and then, under

pressure from some countries, the Indonesian government refused to provide visas for Israeli and Taiwanese athletes. Guru Dott Sondhi, the Indian member of the International Olympic Committee, suggested the games be renamed the Jakarta games, if not every nation in Asia were able to compete. There was uproar.

India's team arrived in Indonesia to jeers that would continue throughout the tournament. Players had to sit on the floor of the team bus to avoid missiles. The offices of the Indian High Commission were ransacked by baying mobs. Not the best preparation for a talented team.

And the team was talented. Peter Thangaraj had been voted the best goalkeeper in Asia just a few years before. Jarnail Singh was a powerful centre-back who had won international acclaim in the Olympics. Yusuf Khan was a beautifully versatile midfielder who gave the team whatever they needed. And Chuni Goswami, the best footballer India has ever produced, and a prolific inside-forward. He turned down a trial with Tottenham to stay at home, such was his talent. The omens were promising.

But the atmosphere was not. India wilted under the Indonesian pressure in their first game, against South Korea, who they had

never beaten. They slumped to a disappointing 2-0 defeat, with nobody doing themselves any credit. The only superstar who avoided criticism was Thangaraj; the goalkeeper was absent with 'flu.

The second match required a response, and after some harsh words from Rahim, India certainly provided it. Goswami opened the scoring in a 4-1 victory, but Jarnail Singh picked up a head injury toward the end of the match. India's confidence was up, though, and they cruised to a fairly comfortable 2-1 victory over Japan in their final group game, despite a late scare.

In the semi-finals, India would have to overcome a South Vietnam side who were quietly having a very good tournament, having scored 9 and conceded just 1 in the group stages. Rahim brought Jarnail Singh back into the team after missing out against Japan, but decided to reintroduce him as a striker.

India took the lead in the 12th minute, and ran riot in the first half, hitting the post before Jarnail Singh added a second just before half time. But South Vietnam were not overawed, and came out for the second half fighting. They reduced the deficit with a penalty, and then equalised just past the hour. India responded, and upped their attack again. On 75 minutes, Goswami scored a cheeky lob to reestablish their lead. It would turn out to be the winner.

In the final, India's opponents would be South Korea once again. The night before, unable to sleep, the squad went for a walk. They encountered Rahim, smoking in the darkness. With quiet calm, he asked them to win the gold for him.

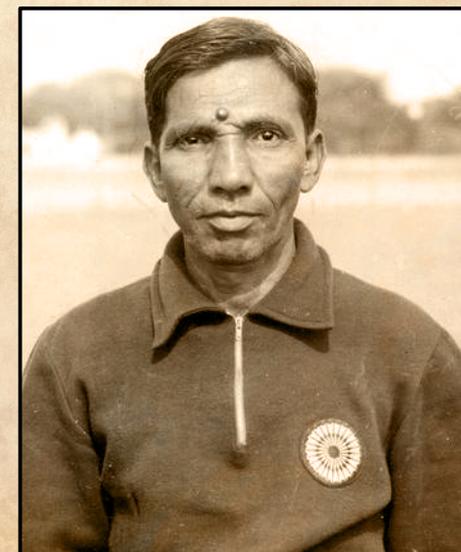
India flew out of the blocks, and on 17

minutes Goswami danced around a couple of defenders to set up PK Banejee for the lead. Three minutes later, Jarnail Singh - playing as a forward again - headed home a free kick. His move forward confounded the Koreans.

But India didn't extend their lead, and near the end of the game South Korea found a consolation. But the Indian defence held firm, and gave Rahim the gold he had wanted so desperately. As the players celebrated, and the disappointed crowd booed, they found their inspirational manager sitting quietly in the dressing room, crying with joy.

The country and the government were ecstatic, but that joy was short. Having achieved his gold, Rahim - a chain smoker - passed away from lung cancer the following year. His replacements, ever since, have focussed on the physical side of the game, to India's detriment.

As one of his players said, Rahim took Indian football with him to the grave.





2023-24 FIXTURES & RESULTS

Date	Competition	Opponents	KO/Score	Att	Lge Pos
AUGUST					
Sat 5th	League	BRAINTREE TOWN (H)	2-1 W	801	4th
Sat 12th	League	Aveley (A)	4-1 L	372	15th
Tues 15th	League	Weymouth (A)	1-1 D	1,252	14th
Sat 19th	League	WELLING UNITED (H)	1-0 W	727	9th
Sat 26th	League	ST ALBANS CITY (H)	3-2 W	642	5th
Mon 28th	League	Maidstone United (A)	1-1 D	2,014	6th
SEPTEMBER					
Sat 2nd	League	DARTFORD (H)	1-0 W	902	5th
Tues 5th	League	Chippenham Town (A)	3-3 D	634	6th
Sat 9th	League	Tonbridge Angels (A)	0-3 W	852	5th
Fri 15th	FAC 2Q	Merthyr Town (A)	1-1 D	1,583	N/A
Tue 19th	FAC 2QR	MERTHYR TOWN (H)	1-2 L	774	N/A
Sat 23rd	League	HAVANT & WATERLOOVILLE (H)	0-0 D	877	4th
Sat 30th	League	EASTBOURNE BOROUGH (H)	2-1 W	670	3rd
OCTOBER					
Tue 3rd	SPC1	PORTISHEAD TOWN (H)	5-2 W	273	N/A
Sat 7th	League	Dover Athletic (A)	2-2 D	617	2nd
Sat 21st	League	HAMPTON & RICHMOND (H)	0-1 L	843	3rd
Tues 24th	League	Bath City (A)	3-0 L	1,537	5th
Sat 28th	League	Chelmsford City (A)	0-0 D	645	5th
NOVEMBER					
Tues 7th	SPC2	STREET (H)	2-2 (4-3W Pens)	298	N/A
Sat 11th	League	Hemel Hempstead Town (A)	1-0 L	491	13th
Tues 21st	League	Truro City (A)	2-2 (8-7L Pens)	-	15th
Sat 25th	League	WORTHING (H)	1-1 D	765	15th

Date	Competition	Opponents	KO/Score	Att	Lge Pos
DECEMBER					
Sat 2nd	League	Eastbourne Borough (A)	A-A	N/A	15th
Sat 9th	League	FARNBOROUGH (H)	4-0 W	680	14th
Sat 16th	League	Havant & Waterlooville (A)	3-0 L	766	16th
Sat 23rd	League	TONBRIDGE ANGELS (H)	2-2 D	768	17th
Tues 26th	League	Yeovil Town (A)	4-1 L	6,301	19th
JANUARY					
Sat 6th	League	Slough Town (A)	3-0 L	947	19th
Tue 9th	League	YEOVIL TOWN (H)	0-1 L	3,001	19th
Sat 13th	League	DOVER ATHLETIC (H)	1-1 D	847	20th
Tues 23rd	League	WEYMOUTH (H)	0-2 L	661	20th
Sat 27th	League	AVELEY (H)	2-2 D	766	20th
Tue 30th	SPC QF	BRIDGWATER TOWN (H)	1-1 (5-4W Pens)	579	N/A
FEBRUARY					
Sat 3rd	League	Welling United (A)	0-0 D	484	20 th
Tues 6th	League	TRURO CITY (H)	0-0 D	489	20 th
Sat 10th	League	St Albans City (A)	0-6 L	1,663	20 th
Sat 24th	League	Dartford (A)	1-1 D	1,018	20 th
MARCH					
Sat 2nd	League	Truro City (A)	2-0 L	198	21 st
Sat 9th	League	Worthing (A)	1-3 W	1350	21 st
Tues 12th	League	Torquay United (A)	0-3 W	2238	18 th
Thur 14th	League	WESTON-SUPER-MARE (H)	7:45pm	-	-
Sat 16th	League	Eastbourne Borough (A)	3:00pm	-	-
Wed 20th	League	CHIPPENHAM TOWN (H)	7:45pm	-	-
Sat 23rd	League	CHELMSFORD CITY (H)	3:00pm	-	-
Mon 25th	League	SLOUGH TOWN (H)	7:45pm	-	-
Fri 29th	League	Weston-Super-Mare (A)	3:00pm	-	-
APRIL					
Mon 1st	League	BATH CITY (H)	3:00pm	-	-
Wed 3rd	League	MAIDSTONE UNITED (H)	7:45pm	-	-
Sat 6th	League	Hampton & Richmond (A)	3:00pm	-	-
Tue 9th	League	Braintree Town (A)	7:45pm	-	-
Sat 13th	League	Farnborough (A)	3:00pm	-	-
Wed 17th	League	TORQUAY UNITED (H)	7:45pm	-	-
Sat 20th	League	HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN (H)	3:00pm	-	-



STADIUM RULES & REGULATIONS

Persons entering this stadium must abide by the Stadium Regulations as printed in the matchday programme and displayed on posters inside the stadium. Failure to do so may result in ejection from the premises, a ban from attending any future events and also be the subject of a football banning order. Admission to and the right remain within the stadium is strictly on condition that any person attending will adhere to the Stadium Regulations as detailed below.

1. All persons must comply with any directions given by a Steward, Club Official or Police Officer
2. Encroachment onto the playing area, sterile area, or its adjoining parts is prohibited.
3. Climbing on any building, wall, fence or any other structure is prohibited.
4. Persons must not throw any object onto the pitch or within the spectator areas.
5. Persons must not be in possession of, and/or lighting any firework or flare.
6. Chanting or singing of an obscene, indecent, discriminatory or offensive nature is not permitted.
7. Persons must not use obscene, indecent, discriminatory, offensive or threatening language.
8. Persons must not use obscene, indecent, discriminatory, offensive or threatening gestures.
9. Persons must not damage or deface Club and Stadium property.
10. Persons must not damage, deface or obstruct any notice or advertisement.
11. Alcohol must not be brought into the stadium.
12. Persons must not consume alcohol that has not been purchased at Taunton Town FC.
13. Persons must not consume alcohol in any alcohol free designated areas.
14. There will be zero tolerance to alcohol abuse/misuse.
15. There will be zero tolerance to drug possession, use and abuse.
16. Smoking is permitted in the stadium except in areas designated as a No Smoking area.
17. Umbrellas are permitted within the stadium but must not be used if obstructing the view of other spectators.

Spectators must also note the following:

- A) The Club does not accept any responsibility or liability whatsoever for any loss or damage to vehicles or their contents, or any other personal property brought onto the Clubs premises and stadium.
- B) The Club is unable to accept any additional responsibility for minors attending matches beyond those matters covered by the Stadium Regulations.
- C) Photography and use of video including CCTV is in operation at all matches and events and may be used in any of our media channels as well as press releases.
- D) Dogs on a lead are permitted in the Stadium but they remain the sole responsibility of their owner at all times.

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Dene Field
GIS graduate, First Team Analyst and Coaching Assistant at **Watford FC Women**

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Mya Graham,
UCFB graduate, Assistant Producer at **talkSPORT**



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THE TEAMS

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH | THURSDAY 14 MARCH 2024 | KICK-OFF 7:45PM



HEAD OF FOOTBALL: ROB DRAY

- DAN LAVERCOMBE (GK) 1
- ZAC BELL 2
- NICK GRIMES 4
- DAN BALL 5
- OLLIE CHAMBERLAIN 7
- LLOYD JAMES 8
- NAT JARVIS 9
- RABBY TABU MINZAMBA 12
- ROSS STEARN 13
- PHIL MENDONCA 15
- ZAC SMITH 16
- CAMERON EVANS 17
- MARCUS DAY 18
- CALLUM DOLMAN 19
- LLOYD IRISH (GK) 21
- MARLEY ROSE 22
- LOUIE SLOUGH 23
- EVANDER GRUBB 32



MATCH OFFICIALS

- REFEREE:**
LEWIS SANDOE
- ASSISTANT REFEREE:**
JAMES GOULD
- ASSISTANT REFEREE:**
ANDREW GLANVILLE

MANAGER: SCOTT BARTLETT

- MAX HARRIS
- FREDDIE BUTCHERS
- KEIRAN THOMAS
- SAM AVERY
- JASON POPE
- BAILEY KEMPSTER
- LLOYD HUMPHRIES
- JAMES DODD
- JACOB JAGGER CANE
- DAYLE GRUBB
- JORDAN BASTIN
- ROBBIE WILLMOTT
- OPI EDWARDS
- REX MANNINGS
- MARLON JACKSON
- REUBEN REID
- JAMIE SOULE
- ALEX FLETCHER