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**TAUNTON TOWN V  
BATH CITY**

MONDAY | APRIL 2024 | KICK-OFF 3:00PM

**TAUNTON TOWN V  
MAIDSTONE UNITED**

WEDNESDAY 3 APRIL 2024 | KICK-OFF 7:45PM



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#### FA VASE

Winners 2000-01

#### SOMERSET PREMIER CUP

Winners 2002-03, 2005-06, 2013-14,  
2014-15, 2016-17

## CONTACT DETAILS

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Wordsworth Drive  
Taunton  
Somerset  
TA1 2HG

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Chairman: Kevin Sturmey  
Chief Executive: Kevin Sturmey  
Vice Chairman: Brian Pollard  
Directors: Derek Perry, Richard Smith  
Company Secretary & Finance Manager: Alan Slade  
Football Operations Manager: Karl Lindsay  
Retail & Commercial Manager: Lee Derrick  
Hospitality Manager: Keith Woodmason

### LIFE MEMBERS

Mr D. Budge, Mr M. Dongworth, Mrs J. Ellis, Mr T. Gibbs,  
Mr J. Mayled, Mr P. Mayled, Mr R. Musker,  
Mr H. Needs, Mrs M. Needs, Mr A. Payne

### FOOTBALL OPERATIONS

Head of Football: Rob Dray  
Assistant Manager: Matt Villis  
Head Coach: Connor Sidley-Adams  
Coach: Steve Phillips  
Goalkeeping Coach: Lloyd Irish  
Sports Therapist: Anthony Cornish ITMMIF  
Sports Masseur: Paul Edwards  
Analysts: Jordan Barrow, Adam White  
Kit Manager: Karl Lindsay  
Assistant Kit Manager: Bobby Porter  
Club Doctor: Dr Tim Norbury  
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### MEDIA TEAM

Communications Manager: Paul Smith  
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Media Officer: Darren Harris  
Club Photographers: Debbie Gould, Darren Harris  
Videographer: Alex Anderson  
Peacocks Radio: Rich Wilcox-Smith, Jon Reed



# THE GAFFER

Welcome to Wordsworth Drive for our next two home fixtures as we host Bath City and Maidstone United. My welcome extends to the officials, management, players and supporters joining us and also to the match officials for both matches.

Following two good wins in the league we have hit a run of three defeats on the bounce, the latest a very late winner by Chelmsford City saw us come away from the game empty handed.

We still have a number of games in hand on teams around us, so our fate is in our own hands at present, but we must start to grind out results, even if it is a point here and there, but that is if those around us continue to not pick up any points.

It is going to be difficult with a small squad of players and playing so many games in a very short space of time, but we know what we have to do, it is no secret.

There are still plenty of points to play for, please keep the faith and as ever Peacocks, loud and proud for the boys in claret and blue.

*Rob*

Rob Dray  
Head of Football, Taunton Town FC



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## THE AWAY END



## BATH CITY

On July 19, 1889 Bath City were formed as Bath AFC (Bath Association Football Club) at the Christopher hotel in the city, a group of men met to consider forming an association club. The team commenced play at the North Parade Ground in Bathwick. Bath competed in their first ever recorded match on 10 October 1889, in which they lost 9–4 to Trowbridge Town at The North Parade Ground. By 1891, the club was struggling heavily financially. As a consequence, it was put forward that Bath AFC amalgamate with the local rugby club; Bath Football Club. For an entire nine years the club ceased play. Until, on 11 September 1900, Bath AFC was re-formed by members of the Bath Association Cricket Club, led by eventual player, William Hyman. The meeting was a success and Bath City FC, by name was officially born. In 1900, the club commenced play in The Wiltshire League, finishing seventh in their first season.

The club altered names for the final time on 26 July 1905, in which they reverted to "Bath City FC"; the name has remained unchanged to the present day. The following year, the club joined The Bristol and District League Division One, in which they remained for two years. In 1908, Bath club joined a multi-county division for the first time, joining the Western League Division Two. In 1909, Charles Pinker was appointed manager, and that year, the club moved up to The Western League Division One. Bath finished third at this level in the 1910–11 season. Bath remained in the Western League until 1921, in which they joined the English Section of the Southern League, regarded as the strongest division outside of the Football League at the time. More than 4,000 saw the club's first ever game in the Southern League, a 2–1 defeat to Swindon Town. In 1921, manager Charles Pinker left the club after a successful twelve-year period. He was replaced by former Swindon Town player, Billy Tout who retained this role until 1925.

The team remained in the Southern League until 1939, with former Liverpool player, Alex Raisbeck as first

team coach from 1938 to 1939. Raisbeck left to be replaced by Ted Davis, his second spell at Bath. Upon the outbreak of the Second World War, the club were accepted to join the temporary Football League North, competing with the likes of Bristol City and Aston Villa. That season the club competed in their highest attended game to date, playing Aston Villa at Villa Park in front of over 30,000. The team finished the eventual champions under Davis. In 1944, the club were, once again, in talks for entry into the English Football League, with the aim of being admitted into either the Third Division, or the planned Fourth Division. However, on 27 July 1945, the Football League refused to allow any non-league clubs into the Third Division. Ted Davis, then left the club in 1947. Vic Woodley was the first to succeed Davis, though he left in 1950 after four mid-lower placed finishes, and was replaced by Eddie Hapgood. In 1956, Hapgood left the club and was replaced by Paddy Sloan, who only remained for the 1956–57 season.

In 1965, under Welsh manager Ivor Powell, the club were relegated for the first time in their history. Powell was replaced by Arnold Rodgers on 25 February 1967. From 1964 to 1974 Bath City became a yo-yo club, being relegated from, and promoted back to the Premier Division on six occasions. On 10 August 1976, Brian Godfrey was appointed as manager. Two years into his reign, in the 1977–78 season, the team won the Southern League title for a second time in front of hoards of travelling fans. Under Godfrey, the club made it to two Anglo-Italian Cup finals in 1977 and 1978; They fell short of election to the Football League by three votes in 1978, with Wigan Athletic gaining 26 and Bath 23. As a result, the club became founding members of the Alliance Premier League, now the National League. In 1991 Tony Ricketts was appointed manager, replacing George Rooney. They reached the third round of the FA Cup during the 1993–94 season, losing 4–1 to Stoke City at Twerton Park in the third in front of 7,000 fans. The club remained in the Conference from 1991 to 1997, though only managed

teseveral mid-placed finishes.

Ricketts's departure in 1996 was followed up by the appointment of Welsh manager Paul Bodin. Following decades of playing in the top division of non-League football, the club were relegated from the 1996–97 Football Conference. As a result, Bath returned to the Southern League. In 2001, Bodin was replaced by Alan Pridham. However Pridham only lasted until 2003, after being sacked in November due to a poor run of results. In 2004, the club lost in the FA Cup second round to Peterborough United and in the third round of the FA Trophy to Canvey Island. John Relish was appointed manager on 22 June 2005. The subsequent year, they were promoted, winning the Southern League in 2006–07, finishing on 91 points. In October 2008, manager John Relish was replaced by his former assistant Adie Britton.

Bath beat League Two side Grimsby Town in the FA Cup first round in 2009, only to lose to Forest Green Rovers in the second round. On May 9, 2010, Bath reached the National League South play-off final, in which they played Woking. The club won 1–0 and returned to the fifth tier for the first time since 1997. Bath finished tenth in the 2010–11 Football Conference. However, they had a poor season in 2011–12 and were relegated from the Conference. The club finished in twelfth place in the 2012–13 season. Britton, subsequently stepped down from being the first team coach. Britton was replaced by Australian manager, Lee Howells. For the following two years, they were

poor again, finishing fourteenth on 53 points in both the 2014–15 and 2015–16 season. What little success the club had during this period was in the 2014–15 season, reaching the semi-final of the FA Trophy, losing on penalties to eventual winners, North Ferriby United. Howells eventually resigned after a 4–1 defeat to Dartford, due to a run of low placed finishes.

On 5 October 2017, former player, Jerry Gill, was appointed first team manager. The first season under Gill saw the club finish in ninth, the same as the previous 2016–17 season. In the 2018–19 National League South season the club finished fifth, on 71 points, subsequently, they entered play offs to compete for a place in the National League, but lost 3–1 to Wealdstone on the first May 2019. The club climbed once spot higher up the table again in 2019–20, finishing fourth.

However, the team were beaten 2–1 by Dorking Wanderers in the play-off eliminator at Twerton Park. Attendances also rose greatly, from the club averaging 612 in the 2016–17 season to 1,142 in the 2018–19 season. Though it looked as though the club were edging closer to ending their longest spell in the sixth tier, following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bath finished 18th twice in both the 2020–21 and 2021–22 seasons, the club's second lowest finishes of all time. The club improved in the 2022–23 season, gaining 67 points and finishing in 11th place, the team also won The Somerset Premier Cup for a record 25th time on 1 May 2023.



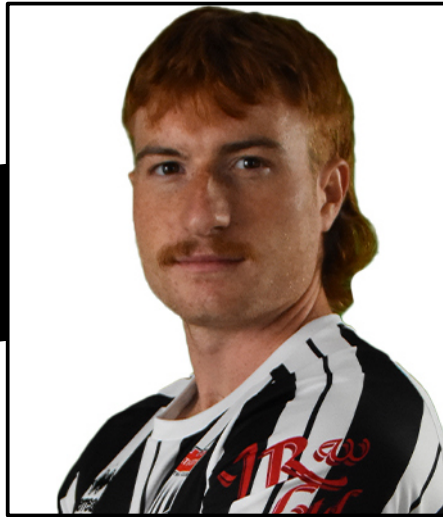


# TWO TO WATCH



**CODY COOKE**

Striker Cody began his career with Penryn Athletic in the South West Peninsula League before joining Truro City in the summer of 2011. He spent seven seasons with the Cornish side. In June 2018 he was offered a place at Jamie Vardy's V9 Academy with the chance to win a contract at a professional club. This led to a two-year contract with Scottish Premier Division side St Mirren. In July 2020, signing for National League newcomers Weymouth. The 29-year-old was released by the Terras at the end of the 2020/21 season and joined City in July. He was City's top scorer for the 2021/22 season with 20 goals.



**TOM SMITH**

Midfielder Tom first joined City on loan from Swindon Town in October 2017. He has made 16 first team appearances for the Robins in the three seasons since he was handed his first professional contract in the summer of 2014. Tom also spent the latter stages of 2016-17 season out on loan with League of Ireland First Division outfit, Waterford, scoring once in ten outings. He enjoyed a successful spell at Twerton, scoring 11 goals in 31 games, before returning to Swindon but was released in May 2018. He has now played over 200 games for the Romans.

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# THIS SEASON AT A GLANCE



PLAYED **36**

**39** PLAYED

WON **9**

**17** WON

DRAWN **13**

**11** DRAWN

LOST **14**

**11** LOST

+/- **-15**

**+16** +/-

POINTS **40**

**62** POINTS

LGE POS **20<sup>TH</sup>**

**9<sup>TH</sup>** LGE POS



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SCAN ME

# THE TEAMS

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH | MONDAY | APRIL 2024 | KICK-OFF 3:00PM



**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:**  
STACEY PEARSON
- ASSISTANT REFEREE:**  
PAUL COLLIER
- ASSISTANT REFEREE:**  
WILLIAM PAYNE

**MANAGER:** JERRY GILL

- 1 WILL BUSE (GK)
- 2 JOE RAYNES
- 3 DANNY GREENSLADE
- 4 JORDAN DYER
- 5 JACK BATTEN
- 6 KIERAN PARSELLE
- 7 EWAN CLARK
- 8 DAN HAYFIELD
- 9 CODY COOKE
- 10 TOM SMITH
- 11 ELLIOTT FREAR
- 12 DUNCAN IDEHEN
- 13 JOSEY CASA-GRANDE (GK)
- 15 RICHARD CHIN
- 17 SCOTT WILSON
- 18 JACK BATES
- 19 LUKE RUSSE
- 20 ISAAC VASSELL
- 21 EPHRAIM YEBOAH
- 23 JAMES ALABI

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LAST TIME WE MET

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# DAVE WEBSTER *View from the stands*

TAUNTON TOWN 2 CHELMSFORD CITY 3  
Vanarama National League South



It does not get much more heart-breaking than this defeat, i can promise you. Anyone that loves our club will be absolutely devastated by the outcome from this game. The day began in party mood, with a very much noticeable happiness in the air, with many events aimed at the much younger generation taking place.

Sadly, this game will be remembered for actions and words that occurred after the 90 minutes. Scenes, i have never before seen take place at Tauntons stadium. Oh yes, i have witnessed scenes at away games when certain "so called" supporters have turned on their own team, but never as bad as this at our own ground.

The game kicked off at a frantic pace, with Ross having a half-chance in the opening minutes, which with a fierce wind in the air, was ballooned over the bar. The Taunton pressure on a club chasing Yeovil for top position, continued. Our lads meant business! And so on the 5th minute, we went 1-0 up. Lloyd James, who in my opinion has been playing some phenomenal football of late, fed Zac Bell perfectly, who slammed the ball into the net, for his first TTFC goal.

It got even better on 20 minutes, when again with Lloyd James playing a part, we went 2-0 up. From a James corner, the ball fell to Captain Nick Grimes, who absolutely walloped it through the packed defence, the ball smashed against the underside of the bar and over the line. Taunton fans were in wonderland, not quite believing what was going on! We knew Chelmsford would come at us, they are not 2nd in the league for nothing, and come at us they did. With their first shot on target, and with the Taunton defence failing to clear the ball, they had a second bite at the cherry, which was hammered home beyond Lloyd Irish's reach.

And so the half ended. 3 shots on target, 3 goals, with both defences working above the line of duty.

The 2nd half was a different ball game completely, with Chelmsford showing their dominance throughout. Attack after attack on the Taunton goal was the order of the day. It was relentless, as the opposition strike-

force peppered our goal, only to be met by the tungsten like wall, our rear guard had built. It seemed only a matter of time before Chelmsford would score a second. And yet, we so easily could have gone 3-1 up, after some great work from Nat Jarvis in preventing keeper Henly from getting near the ball, as he laid it onto Ross, whose shot hammered against the post. If only!!!

The pressure on the Taunton goal went on and on, as we hit the 90 minutes. If the ref had blown on 91, our players would have left the field as heroes, i would have been £75 better off, after sticking a fiver on a Taunton 2-1 win at 14 to 1, and there would not have been the disgraceful scenes many fans witnessed.

The least said about the added on time the better, but to concede twice and lose 2-3, felt like a kick in the maris pipers. Boy, that hurt, fans were gutted, players were gutted and management were gutted, particularly after our defence had worked so well to thwart the Chelmsford attack. Yes, everyone has the right to an opinion, but the actions of a minority, with their verbal onslaught of the team they supposedly support, went well over the line of what is considered, simply having a view.

Why the hell should our team have to endure such venom? Pull a dogs tail enough times and it will bite. Our players, management are human, and so will retaliate. Its human nature. What began has a small group of 3 or 4 has grown like a virus, as the poison spreads. They know who they are, we all bloody know who they are. Our players and management are not stupid they know full well who the perpetrators and indeed instigators are.

No one is forcing these people to come to Taunton games, their actions will only succeed in deterring newer fans from supporting the club. We had almost 1,400 at yesterdays game, many with children, what must they have thought of the negativism from these people? If they cannot handle defeat, then maybe they should stop coming altogether, maybe go and support Bridgwater, Chard, Wellington or Bishops Lydiard.

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## THE AWAY END



## MAIDSTONE UNITED

Maidstone United Football Club was founded in 1897. Following the demise of the Football League side in 1992, the club was reborn as Maidstone Invicta and joined the Kent County League Division Four for the 1993/94 season. They won the title at the first attempt and also picked up the West Kent Challenge Shield and the Tunbridge Wells Charity Cup.

Following a restructuring of the league, they were promoted to Division Two and won the title again as well as lifting the Kent Junior Cup. After three seasons in Division One, the Stones finally earned promotion to the Kent County League Premier Division with former player turned manager Jason Lillis at the helm. Lillis has a place in Stones' history as the only player to appear in Maidstone United's first and last games in the Football League.

In their second season in the Kent County League Premier Division – during which Maidstone United were awarded senior status – the Stones finished as runners-up to Bearsted and duly earned promotion.

The club returned to the Kent League for the 2001/2002 season and played their home games at Central Park in Sittingbourne. There were several highlights during the campaign, including their first ever match in the FA Vase in which the Stones defeated Hellenic League Carterton Town 4-1.

Maidstone became league champions on the last day of the season when they defeated Deal Town at the Charles Sports Ground. The following week the Stones completed the Kent

League and Cup double after defeating Whitstable Town 2-0 at Folkestone Invicta's Cheriton Road.

The highlight of the 2002/2003 season was the club's return to the FA Cup. With the added attraction of being chosen by the BBC for The Road To Cardiff, the Stones started their cup trail at Ramsgate and on the way defeated Tonbridge Angels and Newport (IoW) before losing to Boreham Wood in the Second Qualifying Round in front of a home crowd of 937.

In the league the club led the table for almost the entire season but following the late resignation of Faversham Town, the League Management Committee decided the title would be awarded to the club with the highest points earned per match average. The Stones lost the league title by 0.14 points! Silverware was forthcoming though, as the club won the Kent Senior Trophy for the first time with a 3-0 victory over Cray Wanderers at Chatham Town FC.

The Stones were crowned Kent League champions in 2006 for the second time and secured the league and cup double, with the title being won on the last day of the season with a resounding 4-1 win away to Sevenoaks Town. The Kent League Cup was also won again with a 4-1 hammering of VCD Athletic at Folkestone Invicta's Cheriton Road ground. Promotion to Ryman League Division One South was confirmed at the end of the season.

The Stones repeated their championship victory

for a second successive season when, yet again on the last day of the campaign, they travelled to Walton Casuals and secured the Ryman League Division One South title with a 2-1 win.

Following another promotion the club spent five years in the Ryman League Premier Division with little in the way of playing success. An eight-year groundshare agreement with Sittingbourne ended and for two seasons the Stones moved to The Homelands in Ashford.

The Chairman of 19 years, Paul Bowden-Brown, stepped down in October 2010 and with the club in dire financial straits Oliver Ash and Terry Casey took over as joint chairman and owners. The 2010/11 season ended in disappointment as the Stones were relegated for the first time in their history to Ryman League Division One South but off the field the exciting stadium plans were taking shape.

Construction work started during the 2011/12 season. Although the Stones missed out on the play-offs at the end of that campaign, the £2.6million Gallagher Stadium was completed and 2,226 watched first match between Maidstone and Brighton & Hove Albion on Saturday 14 July.

The first season back in the county town ended in a massive celebration when the Stones won promotion to the Ryman Premier Division beating Faversham Town 3-0 in the play-off final.

At the end of the 2013/14 campaign Maidstone missed out on a play-off place by two points but silverware came in the form of the Robert Dyas League Cup.

The following season was one to remember; the Stones made it to the second round proper of the FA Cup, beating League Two Stevenage Town in a first round replay in front of BT Sport cameras and a capacity crowd. The season ended in style with the Ryman Premier Division title and with

it promotion to the Vanarama National League South.

During the 2015/16 season the club again qualified for the first round proper of the FA Cup where they narrowly lost 1-0 at home to League Two side Yeovil Town in front of a record-breaking crowd of 2,811. After finishing third in the league the Stones faced Ebbsfleet United in the Promotion Final at Stonebridge Road. The match finished 2-2 after extra time and Maidstone won the resulting penalty shoot-out 4-3 to win promotion to the Vanarama National League.

The first season back in non-league's top flight ended with a 14<sup>th</sup> place finish and a further expansion of the Gallagher Stadium. The opening of the Genco Stand in March 2017 saw capacity rise to 4,200 and just shy of that figure watched the fifth anniversary game against Crystal Palace that summer.

The Stones' three-year stay in the National League came to an end in April 2019 but a return to non-league's top flight was secured in May 2022 when the Stones were crowned National League South champions in front of a capacity crowd – capping what had been a fantastic season post-Covid. That stay was to last just one season, with the Stones now in their third stint in the South in 2023/24 campaign.





# TWO TO WATCH



**LUCAS COVOLAN**

Formerly of Port Vale, he spent last season on loan at Chesterfield. During his time at Vale Park, he made 21 appearances in League Two and was part of the Valiants' squad for their play-off final victory over Mansfield Town at Wembley Stadium. A move to England in 2016 saw him make appearances for Whitehawk, Lewes, Worthing and Torquay United, where he made headlines for his injury-time equaliser in the 2021 National League play-off final. Days after that goal, he signed the two-year contract at Port Vale.



**CHI EZENNOLIM**

The left-back spent the last two seasons with fellow National League South side Welling United, winning the Players' Player and Supporters' Player of the Year for 2022/23. He left Park View Road last month in a bid to secure a move to the National League but George Elokobi's persistence has paid off with the 21-year-old signing a one-year deal with the Stones. Chi came through the youth set-up at Millwall, before joining The Wings in the summer of 2021.

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# THIS SEASON AT A GLANCE



PLAYED **36**

**39** PLAYED

WON **9**

**19** WON

DRAWN **13**

**10** DRAWN

LOST **14**

**10** LOST

+/- **-15**

**+10** +/-

POINTS **40**

**67** POINTS

LGE POS **20<sup>TH</sup>**

**5<sup>TH</sup>** LGE POS

# THE TEAMS

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH | WEDNESDAY 3 APRIL 2024 | KICK-OFF 7:45PM



V



HEAD OF FOOTBALL: ROB DRAY



MATCH OFFICIALS

REFEREE:

NIALL SMITH

ASSISTANT REFEREE:

SAID OUCHENE

ASSISTANT REFEREE:

ADAM MCANROY

MANAGER: GEORGE ELOKOBI

- 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 ○

- 1 LUCAS COVOLAN (GK)
- 2 GAVIN HOYTE
- 3 CHI EZENNOLIM
- 4 REISS GREENIDGE
- 5 GEORGE FOWLER
- 6 RAPHE BROWN
- 7 JACOB BERKELEY-AYGEPONG
- 8 SAM CORNE
- 9 SOL WANJAU-SMITH
- 10 LAMAR REYNOLDS
- 12 HARLEY EARLE (GK)
- 14 HARRY KYPRIANOU
- 15 SAM BONE
- 16 LIAM SOLE
- 17 JEPHTE TANGA
- 18 BIVESH GURUNG
- 19 PERRI IANDOLO
- 20 CONOR KELLY
- MATT RUSH
- PAUL APPIAH
- MO FAAL
- MANNY DUKU
- RILEY COURT
- SAM SMITH

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# THE NON-LEAGUE PAPER



ESSENTIAL READING FOR FOLLOWERS OF THE NATIONAL GAME

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If winning the league by Easter is a mark of ultimate domination, then Paul Cook's Chesterfield have blown the National League apart this season.

At the time of writing this, the Spireites were battling it out for the single point they need to seal the title – this, remember, in only the third week of March!

As it stands, Cook's men are well on course to top the 100-point, 100-goal mark – a tally almost unthinkable in this crazy division prior to the exploits of Wrexham and Notts County last season.

Indeed, both Wrexham's record season haul of 111 points and Notts County's 117 goals, set last season, can still be surpassed by Cook's men, whose five defeats in 39 games have represented as comprehensive a title campaign as you'll find in any professional league in this country.

Thankfully, though, for the neutrals there is still plenty to play for in Non-League's top-flight, starting with the play-off battle to join Chesterfield in League Two next season.

Barnet and Bromley have proved to be Chesterfield's two closest rivals all season and will start as favourites to clinch the two home play-off semi-final places.

That said, Solihull Moors have found form at the right time, as have Altrincham after a wobble, while surprise package Aldershot Town just won't go away and have the quality in the ranks to topple any of their rivals on their day.

Oldham Athletic have serial winners both in the dugout and on the field and can not be discounted, similarly last season's Isuzu FA Trophy finalists FC Halifax Town and Gateshead, who have both been there before.

The bottom half of the National League table is even more intriguing with seven points separating no fewer than TWELVE teams in the lower half of the table.

Sadly, Oxford City look as though they have too much to do to maintain their top-flight status, but the battle to avoid occupying the remaining three positions in the drop zone looks as if it is going right down to the wire.

Last season's other promoted sides, AFC Fylde, Kidderminster Harriers and Ebbsfleet United, have all found form at just the right time to set up a gripping final month.

This time 12 months ago, we were waxing lyrical over Tamworth's cruise to the Southern Premier Central league title – now we're raving about the way they

have continued their dominance in National League North,

Thirteen points clear of pre-season favourites Scunthorpe United, Andy Peaks' Lambs are on the verge of sealing back-to-back titles and reclaiming their top-flight status after 10 years away, conceding just 22 goals in 40 games along the way.

Scunthorpe and Chorley are strong fancies to lead the play-off chase, but the National League North is notorious for its tense play-off chases and anyone as far down as Buxton, in 14th, have something to play for.

In the South, Mark Cooper's Yeovil Town have led a procession to reclaim the top-flight place they lost last season, but the usual suspects are all still in the play-off mix with the entire top half, down to Slough Town in 11th, in contention.

Step 3 is just as intriguing.

Radcliffe have enjoyed a storming season under Anthony Johnson and Bernard Morley and lie 12 points clear at the top of the Northern Premier League Premier Division at the start of the week, ahead of Warrington Rylands, Hyde United, Marine and Guiseley in the play-off places.

Don't discounted Michael Clegg's Macclesfield, however, who lie just two points further back and have an Isuzu FA Trophy semi-final with Gateshead to look forward to.

At Step 4, one of the three titles are nearing their conclusion with Leek Town 15 points clear of Runcorn Linnets in NPL West, but the other two look set for a fight to the finish.

Stockton Town may be 11 points clear of NPL East but Dunston and Hebburn have games in hand, while the NPL Midlands title has turned into a shootout between leaders Harborough Town, Spalding United and Anstey Nomads.

In the Isthmian League, Hornchurch, with just one defeat to their name all season, are seemingly cruising to the Premier Division title with Chatham Town their closest rivals in their first season at Step 3.

From there, just two points separate Enfield Town, in third, to Horsham, in eighth, with big guns Dulwich Hamlet stalking their every move.

It's somewhat closer at Step 4 with Suffolk rivals Felixstowe & Walton United and Lowestoft Town battling it out for the North title and Kent pair Ramsgate and Cray Valley PM locking horns in the South East division.

Chertsey Town look to have the South Central sown up, nine points clear of closest rivals Marlow.

In the Southern League, Needham Market are the surprise leaders of Premier Central after a blistering season under Kevin Horlock, but they are battling with Mickleover, who have lasted the distance throughout after a storming start.

Chesham United are closing in on the Premier South title, 14 points clear of closest rivals Salisbury.

Gosport Borough, AFC Totton and Merthyr Town occupy the other play-off places but Walton & Hersham and Bracknell Town are not far behind.

## OFFICIAL MATCH REPORT

# TAUNTON TOWN 2 CHELMSFORD CITY 3

23.3.2024 | VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH | ATT: 1371

The Peacocks suffered yet another demoralising slap in the face during this most tortuous 2023-24 season as they saw a 2-1 lead evaporate in stoppage time to increase their worries at the foot of the table. Things hadn't gone to plan for the high-flying visitors who had trailed for the 90 minutes, with a determined Town defying everything that was thrown at them until a manic five added minutes witnessed an unlikely turnaround.

With Zac Smith having been injured during the Chippenham game, Lloyd James returned to an otherwise unchanged side. The various family-friendly Easter Eggstravaganza activities going on around the ground on Non-League Day had generated the second highest League crowd of the season at Wordsworth Drive and the feel-good factor translated onto the pitch as the Peacocks made a fantastic start to proceedings. Playing with the wind behind them, the hosts nearly opened their account inside two minutes, Zac Bell's long pass finding Ross Stearn who fired a half volley wide. It wasn't long though before the home fans had something to shout about, a move down the right seeing Marcus Day find Ollie Chamberlain and he passed inside to James who demonstrated a neat feint to make room and cross for Bell to drive home the

opening goal at the back post after five minutes.

Chelmsford posted their initial effort through Freddie Hockey who scooped a shot over before a delay for treatment for City's Cameron James halted play. That brief pause failed to deter Town who promptly added a second after 20 minutes. Cameron Evans flicked on a James corner and the ball fell nicely for captain Nick Grimes to drill home via the underside of the crossbar for his sixth goal of the campaign.

Conscious of their need for points at the opposite end of the table, City finally began to show glimpses of what has got them there but without unduly troubling the Town rearguard or keeper Lloyd Irish who claimed crosses from Jermaine Francis and Charlie Ruff. Grimes was the first man into the book after taking down Francis who had capitalised on a tangle between Stearn and Marcus Day to drive towards the box. From Samir Carruthers' free kick, the ball was cleared as far as former Peacock player Callum Watts who sliced his shot over the top.

The visitors kept pressing and reduced the arrears after 35 minutes when Grimes cleared a cross from Carruthers which reached Francis on the cusp of the box

and after one attempt hadn't really gone anywhere he had a second bite of the cherry to fire home into the bottom corner. A scrappy period ensued leading up to the break, with some further possession around the box seeing City fail to create another chance before the break while Bell's pass promised momentary hope, but Stearn couldn't get on the end of it and Chelmsford keeper Henry Gray gathered.

A quiet start to the second half produced two long Bell throws but little else before the Peacocks lost Grimes with a knock and he was replaced by Rabby Tabu Minzamba. Irish fielded another cross from Josh Castiglione who then saw his header smothered by the Town custodian at his post before a defining moment of the half came on 64 minutes. A high ball into the box was picked up by Nat Jarvis who fended off Henry to tee up Stearn but unfortunately his strike from six yards found the post rather than the net and Chelmsford could breathe again.

After Callum Dolman had sent a shot wide for the hosts, the Clarets went on to boss the remainder of the game. Irish pulled off a terrific save to turn wide Carruthers' shot from distance, Ruff screwed an effort across goal and wide and then Watts drilled over after a Francis header had been blocked on the line from Castiglione's cross. Evander Grubb took over from Stearn with around a quarter of an hour to go as the Peacocks continued to stubbornly dig in to frustrate the visitors. Castiglione's drive diverted off Dolman for a corner and then Irish safely claimed a deflected shot from the same player with the only respite coming when Tabu Minzamba sent a delivery across the box and out.

Into the final ten minutes and City were unrelenting as they pressured for an

equaliser. Castiglione powered in from the left and when the ball fell loose, Watts had his shot blocked before another corner ended with Luke Jenkins firing over. Seb Bolton replaced Jarvis with five to go, with the home side hanging in there and Irish making a firm save from Castiglione's shot.

Five minutes of stoppage time had to be negotiated to secure a priceless victory, but football can be a cruel game. A goal kick came straight back into the final third in 90+3, the instrumental Carruthers finding Ruff who needed no second invitation to lance a strike over the despairing dive of Irish into the far corner. If that wasn't bad enough, City then completed the great escape with six minutes of added time played, winning a corner from the left which fell to Ruff inside the six yard box, and he slotted over the line to send the travelling support into raptures. A sorry end to a match in which Town had been second best after the break but had defended bravely to protect their lead. A quick recovery is needed though with the visit of Slough in 48 hours and with this being a crucial game in hand, the need for three points is paramount.





## VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH 2023-24 LEAGUE STANDINGS

P	Team	GP	W	D	L	F	A	+/-	PTS
1	Yeovil Town	40	25	8	7	69	40	+29	83
2	Chelmsford City	41	22	10	9	67	39	+28	76
3	Braintree Town	40	19	11	10	56	38	+18	68
4	Hampton & Richmond	39	19	10	10	58	47	+11	67
<b>5</b>	<b>MAIDSTONE UNITED</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>+10</b>	<b>67</b>
6	Worthing	40	20	6	14	84	65	+19	66
7	St Albans City	40	19	6	15	70	57	+13	63
8	Farnborough	41	17	12	12	69	62	+7	63
9	Aveley	41	18	9	14	58	54	+4	63
<b>10</b>	<b>BATH CITY</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>+16</b>	<b>62</b>
11	Chippenham Town	40	15	12	13	58	53	+5	57
12	Slough Town	39	15	11	13	68	60	+8	56
13	Tonbridge Angels	41	15	10	16	61	58	+3	55
14	Weymouth	39	12	14	13	55	58	-3	50
15	Weston-super-Mare	38	14	6	18	52	62	-10	48
16	Hemel Hempstead Town	40	12	9	19	47	61	-14	45
17	Torquay United (-10)	39	16	6	17	61	66	-5	44
18	Welling United	40	10	14	16	52	69	-17	44
19	Truro City	35	12	6	17	48	55	-7	42
20	Dartford	40	10	10	20	49	62	-13	40
<b>21</b>	<b>TAUNTON TOWN</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>-15</b>	<b>40</b>
22	Eastbourne Borough	39	10	8	21	42	66	-24	38
23	Havant & Waterlooville	40	9	6	25	47	77	-30	33
24	Dover Athletic	40	3	14	23	37	70	-33	23

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

### UPCOMING FIXTURES

#### Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2024

7.45pm Truro City v Hemel Hempstead Town

#### Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024

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

#### Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024

- 7.45pm Braintree Town v Taunton Town
- 7.45pm Dartford v Worthing
- 7.45pm Hampton & Richmond v Bath City
- 7.45pm Maidstone United v Weymouth
- 7.45pm Truro City v Torquay United
- 7.45pm Weston-super-Mare v Chippenham Town

#### Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024

7.45pm Havant & Waterlooville v Welling United

#### Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024

7.45pm Truro City v Yeovil Town



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# NEXT UP AT HOME

WEDNESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024  
KICK OFF - 7:45PM



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NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH

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# The Untold Game

## Here's Lookin' At Just, Kid

When we talk about Casablanca, everybody thinks of the same thing. The dark charisma of Humphrey Bogart, the unparalleled beauty of Ingrid Bergman, and some of the greatest lines ever delivered on the silver screen. We don't, as a rule, think about one of the most prominent players in World Cup history. But until 1955 Morocco was part of the French empire, and so its players could be called up by the European nation. And so, a short, powerful striker who started his career in Casablanca went to the 1958 World Cup as a Frenchman, and became the highest scoring player at a single tournament ever. And he wasn't even supposed to play.

Just Fontaine grew up in Casablanca as one of seven children, and showed enough talent with a ball at his feet to join the local team in 1950, at the age of 17. He made an immediate impact, and over the next three years he made nearly 50 appearances for USM Casablanca, scoring 68 goals. It was enough to capture the attention of clubs in France, and Fontaine was ambitious enough to want, desperately, to play there. In 1953, he made the move to Nice. He also made his first appearance for the French national team, scoring a hat trick against Luxembourg, but didn't play for Les Bleus again for another year.

His time in Nice was interrupted by the requirement to complete two and a half years worth of national service, exacerbated by the Algerian War that was raging. But even with his military commitments, he found the time to score 42 goals in 69 appearances. When French champions, and European Cup finalists Reims lost star player Raymond Kopa to Real Madrid, they turned to Fontaine. The Moroccan, free of national service and able to focus on his football, was flying. He was top scorer in the French league over the next two seasons, which was enough to get him back into France squad. But Kopa was ahead of him, as was his Reims teammate Rene Bliard. He went to the 1958 World Cup as a reserve, not expecting to play very much. But when Bliard picked up an injury, he started the first game alongside Kopa. It was the start of a beautiful friendship.

He had to borrow a pair of boots for the opening game against Paraguay, and the South Americans scored first, but from then on it was all about the magic Fontaine and Kopa could work together. The Moroccan scored a hat trick, three of France's seven, as their forward line clicked into gear. They lost to Yugoslavia in the next game, but Fontaine got another two. He and Kopa got one each in their final group game against Scotland, after

which Scottish wing half Tommy Docherty described the pair as 'greased lightning'.

The quarter final against Northern Ireland saw the greased lightning working again, as Kopa worked his magic to create four goals. Fontaine got two of them, and their opponents couldn't find a response. It was a magnificent performance, which set up an exciting semi-final against a rampant Brazil, and their 17 year old wonderkid, Pele.

One of football's great 'what might have been' questions comes in the form of French defender Robert Jonquet. Fontaine scored early, but at 1-1 Jonquet clashed with Brazilian forward Vava, which fractured his fibula. No substitutions were allowed in 1958, and remarkably, with the aid of a painkilling injection, Jonquet played on. But a hobbling passenger was no match for arguably the greatest player to ever play the game. Brazil ran out as 5-2 winners, the same scoreline by which they would beat Sweden in the final.

France had one more chance to play for some pride, in the third placed playoff final against reigning champions West Germany. The Germans had injuries of their own to contend with, and couldn't cope with the magic of the French attack. Fontaine scored first, and West Germany equalised, but then France ran riot. Fontaine won a penalty which he allowed Kopa to take, and then scored his second. Germany pulled one back in the second half before France added three more, Fontaine getting four of the six. Their opponents added a consolation late on. That took Fontaine's total to 13, a record that has never been beaten. He was the only French top scorer at a World Cup until Kylian Mbappe.

The year following the World Cup,

Fontaine was top scorer in the European Cup as well, firing Reims back to the final. But of all the teams in all the world, it was Real Madrid, inspired by one Raymond Kopa. The Spanish side won their fifth trophy in a row, and that summer Kopa rejoined Reims. The two played together for three more years, until Fontaine broke his leg and was forced to retire.

He ended his career with four league titles and two French cups, alongside 21 international caps with 30 international goals. But those 13 in 1958, those are what he'll be remembered for.





# 2023-24 FIXTURES & RESULTS

Date	Competition	Opponents	KO/Score	Att	Lge Pos
<b>AUGUST</b>					
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
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>					
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
<b>OCTOBER</b>					
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
<b>NOVEMBER</b>					
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
<b>DECEMBER</b>					
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
<b>JANUARY</b>					
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
<b>FEBRUARY</b>					
Sat 3rd	League	Welling United (A)	0-0 D	484	20 <sup>th</sup>
Tues 6th	League	TRURO CITY (H)	0-0 D	489	20 <sup>th</sup>
Sat 10th	League	St Albans City (A)	0-6 L	1,663	20 <sup>th</sup>
Sat 24th	League	Dartford (A)	1-1 D	1,018	20 <sup>th</sup>
<b>MARCH</b>					
Sat 2nd	League	Truro City (A)	2-0 L	198	21 <sup>st</sup>
Sat 9th	League	Worthing (A)	1-3 W	1350	21 <sup>st</sup>
Tues 12th	League	Torquay United (A)	0-3 W	2238	18 <sup>th</sup>
Sat 16th	League	Eastbourne Borough (A)	2-0 L	1337	20 <sup>th</sup>
Wed 20th	League	CHIPPENHAM TOWN (H)	1-2 L	669	20 <sup>th</sup>
Sat 23rd	League	CHELMSFORD CITY (H)	2-3 L	1371	20 <sup>th</sup>
Fri 29th	League	Weston-Super-Mare (A)	3:00pm	-	-
<b>APRIL</b>					
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	-	-
TBA	League	WESTON-SUPER-MARE (H)	TBA	-	-
TBA	League	SLOUGH TOWN (H)	TBA	-	-



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4. Persons must not throw any object onto the pitch or within the spectator areas.
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8. Persons must not use obscene, indecent, discriminatory, offensive or threatening gestures.
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11. Alcohol must not be brought into the stadium.
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13. Persons must not consume alcohol in any alcohol free designated areas.
14. There will be zero tolerance to alcohol abuse/misuse.
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17. Umbrellas are permitted within the stadium but must not be used if obstructing the view of other spectators.

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- 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.

**THE CLUB RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CARRY OUT PERSONAL SECURITY SEARCHES AND/OR REFUSE ADMISSION TO ANY PERSON AT ANY TIME, WITHOUT EXPLANATION.**

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“

I really enjoyed my time at GIS where I gained valuable analysis knowledge and additional coaching experience. This is definitely the place to go if working in football is your long term aim.

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

”

They say if you have a job that you love you'll never work a day in your life and I genuinely feel like that.

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



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