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**TAUNTON TOWN V  
TORQUAY UNITED**

TUESDAY 16 APRIL 2024 | KICK-OFF 7:45PM

**TAUNTON TOWN V  
WESTON-SUPER-MARE**

THURSDAY 18 APRIL 2024 | KICK-OFF 7:45PM

**TAUNTON TOWN V  
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN**

SATURDAY 20 APRIL 2024 | KICK-OFF 3:00PM



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#### FA VASE

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#### SOMERSET PREMIER CUP

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2014-15, 2016-17

## CONTACT DETAILS

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Head Coach: Connor Sidley-Adams  
Coach: Steve Phillips  
Goalkeeping Coach: Lloyd Irish  
Sports Therapist: Anthony Cornish ITMMIF  
Sports Masseur: Paul Edwards  
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# THE GAFFER

Welcome to Wordsworth Drive for the final three Vanarama National League South games of the 2023/24 season as we welcome Torquay United, Weston-super-Mare and Hemel Hempstead Town. My welcome extends to the officials, management, players and supporters joining us and also to the match officials for all of these remaining matches.

To say this season has been a roller coaster for the club would be a huge understatement with all the adversity we have gone through, but we are still here and still in a position to avoid the drop out of this league. We have put ourselves in this position by picking up a big win at the weekend at Farnborough.

It was never going to be an easy task with the amount of outgoing players and the players we were able to bring in, but full credit goes to the boys for sticking with the job in hand and giving us a real opportunity to survive and then look to rebuild ahead of next season.

In closing I would like to thank all of you the supporters for sticking by the club and supporting us through thick and thin this season, we know it hasn't been easy and at times extremely frustrating, but we are here and we no we are fighting for that Peacocks badge. Keep the faith!!

*Rob*

Rob Dray  
Head of Football, Taunton Town FC



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## THE AWAY END



1899

## TORQUAY UNITED

The history of Torquay United begins with the merging of Ellacombe, Babbacombe and Torquay Town. The elevation of Exeter City and Plymouth Argyle to the Southern League at the end of World War I prompted the emergence of a new Torquay United in 1921.

We immediately joined the Western League and finished sixth in that first season. In 1925, we reached the first round proper of the FA Cup, only losing out to Reading after two replays.

Two years later, we were crowned champions of the Western League and the club successfully applied for full membership to the Football League. Our first game was a 1-1 draw with Exeter at Plainmoor, with the players now changed from the early light and dark blue ensemble to a black and white kit similar to the famous Newcastle United strip.

Now referred to as the Magpies, United's first ever league goal was a penalty from Herbert Turner, but that credible early draw was swiftly followed by a painful 9-1 defeat at Millwall. Our first league campaign ended with United finishing bottom of Division Three (South).

Fortunately, our re-election to the league was immediately confirmed and the 1930s was a decade of quiet consolidation, with the club never finishing higher than tenth place.

When the Football League resumed after World War II, United found a goalscoring hero in the form of Sammy Collins, who helped us finally break the top-ten duck in 1949. Collins would go on to become the club's record scorer with 219 goals from 379 games.

The famous Yellow and Blue shirts we all love today became a reality in the 1954-55 season and the new-look kit played its role in a fabulous run to

the fourth round of the FA Cup. After humbling the mighty Leeds United 4-0, a record 21,908 crammed into Plainmoor for a narrow loss to Huddersfield, and that remains our highest ever attendance.

The new era of manager Eric Webber saw United come within goal difference of winning promotion to Division Two for the first time ever but we were pipped by Alf Ramsay's Ipswich Town on the final day of the 1956-57 season.

A change to the league structure and abolition of the regionalised system placed United in the newly-formed Division Four and the date of April 27, 1960 would finally see the club win promotion from the bottom league.

Players like Don Mills and the Northcott brothers of Tommy and George were the heroes of the day and we survived our first season in Division Three before dropping down the following year.

The emergence of young goalscorer Robin Stubbs kept us near the top of Division Four and 1965 paired us with the mighty Tottenham Hotspur in the third round of the FA Cup. Just over 20,000 people witnessed a stunning 3-3 draw, courtesy of a brace from Stubbs. Although the replay at White Hart Lane was a heavy loss, the episode was a fitting end to 15 years of Webber management.

Frank O'Farrell swept in as his replacement and guided the Gulls back to Division Three in 1966 and we were only denied a place in Division Two by a poor finish to the 1967-68 season. We were eventually relegated back to Division Four in 1972 and it would be 19 years before the club graced the third tier again.

The 1970s was something of a non-event but Bruce Rioch's arrival as boss coincided with another run to the fourth round of the FA Cup, where we lost out in a 3-2 thriller with Sheffield Wednesday.

We then hit rock-bottom in 1985, finishing at the foot of Division Four for the first time in 57 years. That campaign of misery was immediately followed by another two disastrous seasons and we were extremely fortunate to earn re-election to the Football League.

The introduction of a relegation system to the Conference was obviously a concern in the 1986-87 season and we only escaped the drop by holding Crewe to a 2-2 draw on the final day, in a match that was held up by defender Jim McNichol being bitten by a police dog named Bryn. Paul Dobson would go on to equalise for the Gulls in the time subsequently added on.

Cyril Knowles assumed the helm for the following season and steered United to the newly-created play-offs, but we lost out to Swansea 5-4 on aggregate. Among those helping the Gulls to battle away at the right end of the table was teenage winger Lee Sharpe, who was sold to Manchester United at the end of the campaign.

The Sherpa Van Trophy became familiar to the Yellow Army when Dean Edwards scored twice over a two-legged semi-final against his hometown club, Wolverhampton Wanderers, and took United to Wembley, but Bolton were too strong in the Final.

A wonderful start to the 1990-91 season took us clear at the top before Christmas but a lull in form saw John Impey introduced as manager. A finish of seventh place booked a place in the play-offs and Burnley were defeated in the semi-final.

Wembley once again beckoned and Blackpool were the opposition. Edwards and Wes Saunders scored in a 2-2 draw and goalkeeper Gareth Howells would score in the penalty shoot-out before Dave Bamber missed for the Tangerines.

A managerial merry-go-round resulted in Neil Warnock briefly taking the reins to rescue the plummeting Gulls from a double relegation out of the Football League. Unfortunately, the pattern was set and United finished bottom in 1996, only escaping relegation because Conference Champions Stevenage Borough failed to meet League ground regulations.

The Kevin Hodges era briefly stabilised the club and we even flirted with promotion after a record-breaking run of eight straight wins but a late stutter thwarted automatic promotion. Another

play-off campaign beckoned but Colchester triumphed at Wembley to deny United.

Wes Saunders came in as boss and certainly boosted the financial coffers, selling star striker Rodney to Crewe for half-a-million. On the pitch, we just missed out on the play-offs in Saunders' second season but a dip in form led to Colin Lee taking over.

The struggle continued, however, and we eventually needed a desperate last-day win at Barnet to avoid relegation. Next into the hot-seat was Leroy Rosenior and he would guide a talented young side to promotion in a thrilling 2004-05 season.

Sadly, the return to English football's third tier was brief and a period of decline for the club resulted in a disastrous campaign that saw us relegated out of the Football League in 2007, the first time in 80 years we had been a Conference outfit.

A major revamp behind the scenes rescued the club from the brink of extinction and a new consortium containing lottery winner Paul Bristow helped to stabilise a financial crisis at Plainmoor.

On the pitch, the Gulls were left disappointed at Wembley again, this time losing the FA Trophy Final to Ebbsfleet. The pain was heightened by a play-off semi-final loss to bitter rivals Exeter City, but the following year was one to savour.

Former midfielder Paul Buckle was in charge and he steered the Gulls to the fourth round of the FA Cup and a play-off final win over Cambridge. The Yellows were back in the Football League and a season of consolidation was followed by two thrilling campaigns.

The final year under Paul Buckle ended with United reaching the League 2 play-off final at Old Trafford but Stevenage proved too strong. The 2011-12 season, the first under Martin Ling, the new manager brilliantly rebuilt his squad and only missed automatic promotion on the final day before losing to Cheltenham in the play-offs.

Sadly, Martin Ling fell ill midway through last season and Alan Knill took over on a temporary basis, steering the Gulls away from relegation on the final day of a traumatic campaign. The club then parted company with Ling and installed Knill as permanent boss.

The Alan Knill era proved unsuccessful and a poor start to his permanent tenure ended with the club sacking their manager in December 2014. Chris Hargreaves was appointed boss in the January but the mountain was too much to climb, and United suffered relegation to the Conference.

Manager Chris Hargreaves was placed on gardening leave and ex-Eastwood and Mansfield manager Paul Cox was put in charge of 1st team duties with a reduced playing budget for the coming season.

United started the season with a 1-0 win over Macclesfield but further wins were hard to come by and Cox resigned from his post in September 2015.

The Board of Directors appointed former player Kevin Nicholson to turn the season around and save the club from relegation.

At one point United were twelve points from safety but with the addition of some canny signings, Kevin Nicholson and his squad were able to avoid relegation from the National League. 'The Great Escape' was celebrated with a 2-0 win away to Bromley.

Just like the season before, Kevin Nicholson and his coaching team were able to turn the season around and stay in the National League.

The summer of 2016/17 was a season of change at the Club. Kevin Nicholson signed fourteen new players to revamp the playing squad.

After three defeats in the first four games, Kevin Nicholson and the Club parted ways. Assistant manager Robbie Herrera took the reins and led the team for the next six games picking up two points.

After an extensive search for a new management team, the Club appointed Bath City manager Gary Owers as Head Coach, and former Reading U23 coach Martin Kuhl as his Assistant on September 13th 2017.

Despite strengthening United's squad with a number of signings, Owers was unable to lift United out of the relegation places, and despite a brief upturn in results and performances, United's fate was sealed following a 1-1 draw away to Hartlepool, as the club was relegated to National League South.

United's board and management insisted that

their stay in the sixth tier would be a brief one, and Owers was immediately given the funds to put together a side capable of bouncing back at the first attempt.

Eleven new faces were named in the Gulls squad that opened up with a 0-0 draw against Chelmsford, and this was followed up with successive wins over Bath City and Hemel Hempstead. However, one win in the next six games, culminating in a 1-0 home defeat by Chippenham, signalled the departure of Owers, and within 24 hours, former Yeovil Town and Bristol City manager Gary Johnson was announced as his replacement.

Their was surprise and delight in equal measure amongst United's fan base at the appointment, and Johnson's impact was immediate. Three wins and three draws preceded a record-breaking ten match winning streak, which lifted the club up from 14th into 1st place. What seemed like a season-long battle for top spot ensued, with United, aided by the goals of reinvigorated striker Jamie Reid, fighting it out with Woking for pole position on a weekly basis. As the season entered it's final stages though, it was Johnson's men who held their nerve as Woking faltered. A late equaliser in the match between the two sides looked to be vital, and sure enough, a 2-0 victory over Eastbourne the following weekend secured the club's first championship title since 1927, and with it, promotion back to the National League at the first attempt.

Two years later, despite playing almost the entirety of the 2020/21 campaign behind closed doors, Johnson's men went agonisingly close to securing a return to the Football League with a 2nd-placed finish, before a memorable 4-2 Play-Off Semi-Final over Notts County at a raucous Plainmoor set the stage for a Promotion Final against Hartlepool United at Ashton Gate.

Once again, The Gulls' never-say-die spirit was on full display in front of a national TV audience, as goalkeeper Lucas Covolan's last-gasp header sealed a 1-1 draw, to send the match into extra time. Sadly, penalty kicks would eventually deny United of the victory many felt they deserved.

With the club now in better shape than it has been for many years on and off the field though, Torquay United's loyal band of supporters can finally look ahead to the future with optimism once again.



# TWO TO WATCH



### AARON JARVIS

24-year-old centre-forward Aaron Jarvis spent 2021/22 at League Two side Scunthorpe United. With his goalscoring exploits for non-league Basingstoke Town prompting Luton Town to pay an undisclosed fee for the 6ft 2in striker back in 2017, Jarvis went on to represent The Hatters in both their League Two and League One promotion successes, as well as leading the line during loan spells as The Gulls' National League rivals Boreham Wood and Scottish Championship side Falkirk. After departing Kenilworth Road, another spell in English football's fifth tier for Sutton sealed a return to the Football League with Scunthorpe, with the striker spending the next two seasons at Glanford Park.



### ASA HALL

Hall brings a wealth of experience to the squad having made over 300 first team appearances turning out for teams such as Luton Town, Oxford United, Shrewsbury Town, and Cheltenham Town. He was part of Gary Johnson's squad that earned the Robins a return to the Football League in 2016, prior to being reunited with his former manager again in 2018. Asa's calming presence, not to mention important goals, helped steer United towards the National League South summit last season, and he was recognised for his influential performances by being named in the 2018/19 National league South 'Team of the Season'. United's captain will now be hoping that history repeats itself once again as he leads his team once again in 2022/23.

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# THIS SEASON AT A GLANCE



PLAYED **43**

**44** PLAYED

WON **10**

**17** WON

DRAWN **15**

**7** DRAWN

LOST **18**

**20** LOST

+/- **-25**

**-9** +/-

POINTS **45**

**48** POINTS

LGE POS **21<sup>ST</sup>**

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



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SCAN ME

# THE TEAMS

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH | TUESDAY 16 APRIL 2024 | KICK-OFF 7:45PM



**HEAD OF FOOTBALL:** ROB DRAY

- DAN LAVERCOMBE (GK) 1
- ZAC BELL 2
- NICK GRIMES 4
- DAN BALL 5
- JAY MURRAY 6
- OLLIE CHAMBERLAIN 7
- LLOYD JAMES 8
- NAT JARVIS 9
- BEN ACEY 11
- 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
- LOUIE SLOUGH 23
- SEB BOLTON 27
- JADEN BROWN 31
- EVANDER GRUBB 32



**MATCH OFFICIALS**

- REFEREE:**  
LEWIS SANDOE
- ASSISTANT REFEREE:**  
OLIVER KAYA
- ASSISTANT REFEREE:**  
JACK BROMHAM

**MANAGER:** AARON DOWNES

- 1 MARK HALSTEAD (GK)
- 2 ARKELL JUDE-BOYD
- 3 DAN MARTIN
- 4 TOM LAPSLIE
- 5 AUSTEN BOOTH
- 6 ROSS MARSHALL
- 7 RYAN HANSON
- 8 ASA HALL
- 9 AARON JARVIS
- 10 LEWIS COLLINS
- 11 BRAD ASH
- 14 BRETT MCGAVIN
- 15 FINLEY CRASKE
- 16 RONNY NELSON
- 17 DILLON DE SILVA
- 18 WILL JENKINS-DAVIES
- 19 DUANE OFORI-ACHEAMPONG
- 21 DEAN MOXEY
- 22 RHYS LOVATT (GK)
- 23 OLLIE TOMLINSON
- 24 CALUM THOMAS
- 27 JACK STOBBS
- 28 KEVIN DAWSON
- 30 ETHON ARCHER

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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.



# THIS SEASON AT A GLANCE



PLAYED **43**

**43** PLAYED

WON **10**

**16** WON

DRAWN **15**

**7** DRAWN

LOST **18**

**20** LOST

+/- **-25**

**-7** +/-

POINTS **45**

**55** POINTS

LGE POS **21<sup>ST</sup>**

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

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# THE TEAMS

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH | THURSDAY 18 APRIL 2024 | KICK-OFF 7:45PM



V



HEAD OF FOOTBALL: ROB DRAY

- DAN LAVERCOMBE (GK) 1
- ZAC BELL 2
- NICK GRIMES 4
- DAN BALL 5
- JAY MURRAY 6
- OLLIE CHAMBERLAIN 7
- LLOYD JAMES 8
- NAT JARVIS 9
- BEN ACEY 11
- 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
- LOUIE SLOUGH 23
- SEB BOLTON 27
- JADEN BROWN 31
- EVANDER GRUBB 32



**MATCH OFFICIALS**

- REFEREE:  
STEVEN HUGHES
- ASSISTANT REFEREE:  
GRAHAM PEARCE
- ASSISTANT REFEREE:  
JOHN DUFFY

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

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## THE AWAY END



## HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN

The history of Hemel Hempstead Town FC is a complex past, with mergers between local clubs and numerous name changes before finally settling as the club as it is known today.

Of the clubs that merged over the years to form the club as we know it today, the history of Apsley FC goes furthest back. Formed in 1885 as Apsley End FC, the club was based at Salmon Meadow and played in a claret and blue strip. The first record of competitive football was in 1889, when the club entered the Herts Senior Cup. Apsley End were then one of the founding member clubs of the West Herts Football Association and entered their first league competition in 1891/92, before changing the name to just Apsley FC two years later. Apsley won the Division One championship in 1894/95, the first honour in the clubs history. Around this time, many clubs competed in more than one league at a time; small numbers of competing clubs meant that entering more than one competition would allow the clubs to play more regularly. Apsley also competed in the Wolverton League and the Herts County League, entering the latter as a founding member club in 1898/99. Apsley were one of the more successful local teams competing in the Herts County League either side of the first World War, winning three league championships along with many other high league finishes. In 1922, Apsley left the Herts County League to join the Spartan League.

Apsley: 1908/1909 Hertfordshire County Cup Winners Apsley competed in the Spartan League for 30 years, during this time the club

moved home twice, first to Gee's Meadow in Bourne End for one season, before moving to the new Wood Lane Ground, more commonly known as Crabtree Lane where the club remained until 1972. Whilst in the Spartan League, Apsley claimed three runners up spots in the lower divisions, there was a Division One championship place in 1933/34, but the club failed to make an impression in the Premier Division and were soon relegated. Apsley were one of 29 clubs who rejoined the Spartan League in the season immediately following the second World War, the club showed a great improvement in form and consistency at this time but again only had a couple of runners up spots to show for it. The clubs name changed to Hemel Hempstead Town, it had been some time now since the club had actually been based in Apsley, and following promotion to the Spartan Premier League for the 1951/52 season, the club left to join the Delphian League.

Hemel didn't set the Delphian League alight, finishing in the bottom two of the division on five occasions during eleven seasons. The clubs best finish in the Delphian League was as runners up in 1961/62, this success was unable to be built upon as the following season continuous poor weather caused the Delphian League to be abandoned after Hemel had played twelve games. An emergency competition was organised giving Hemel a further eight fixtures, however the Delphian League disbanded once the season finished in 1963 and the clubs formed Division Two of the Athenian League. In January of 1962 the attendance record at Crabtree Lane was set

when 3,500 spectators paid to watch the first time the club had played in the First Round Proper of the Amateur Cup, Hemel lost 1-3 to Tooting & Mitcham after missing two penalties.

In their opening season in the Athenian League, Hemel finished fifth in Division Two and were subsequently promoted to Division One due to restructuring. In 1964-65 Hemel finished as runners up in Division One, winning promotion to the Premier Division. Hemel only lasted three seasons in the Premier with a best finish of ninth in 1966 before two consecutive relegations saw Hemel start the 1969/70 season in Division Two, a level which Hemel remained for nearly 30 years! 1962 and 1966 saw Hemel reach the final of the Herts Senior Cup but Hitchin Town then St Albans City kept the trophy from Hemel's grasp. In 1967 Hemel reached the final of the Herts Charity Cup for the first time, losing 0-1 to St Albans City. During this period Hemel also reached the final of the Herts Charity Shield five times, although only won in 1964. In the summer of 1972, Hemel Hempstead Town merged with Hemel Hempstead United, the new club took the simple name of Hemel Hempstead and made United's Vauxhall Road ground as its home.

With ground moves, mergers and (almost all of) the name changes out of the way, the club as we know it was born. Hemel remained in the Athenian League for a further six seasons, during that time it was only the last two seasons Hemel shone with two consecutive fourth place finishes. In the FA Cup during this period, Hemel failed to get past the First Qualifying Round. In 1976 Hemel again reached the final of the Herts Charity Cup, this time losing 0-4 to Hitchin Town. Six Herts Charity Shield finals beckoned over the forthcoming years, but The Tudors were only victorious in 1977 and 1984. In 1977, Hemel left the Athenian League to join the rapidly expanding Isthmian League, who boasted to be the south of England's premier football league.

Hemel joined the Isthmian League in Division Two, and this was a level the club struggled to

progress from. Mid-table mediocrity was the norm for many years and numerous restructuring failed to kick start The Tudors – shuffling to the Isthmian League Division Two North in 1984, then back to just Division Two again in 1991. Hemel managed to finish in the top half of the table just seven times in twenty five years, with the best efforts during this time being three finishes in fourth place – in 1976, 1977 and 1993. 1993 was the closest Hemel had been to promotion, missing out by two points to local rivals Berkhamsted Town who clinched third place and the last promotion spot. Only the previous season Hemel had fought bravely against Barnet in the Herts County Senior Cup final, losing 4-1, although the score line doesn't sound generous towards Hemel, it was superior fitness and three late goals and which clinched it for the Football League Division Four side. It was downhill from there, in November 1992 Hemel's Vauxhall Road ground was rocked by fire, the destroyed clubhouse and changing rooms were replaced by temporary structures, which remained for over five years. 1996/97 saw The Tudors concede 125 goals, score only 34 (an average of less than one goal per game!) and finish rock bottom, relegation to the Isthmian Division Three loomed. This was only the fifth time in 112 years the club had suffered relegation.

The last ten years has been very eventful for Hemel with various ground improvements, 2 league championships, a play-off final win, two automatic promotions, promotion through restructuring, and a relegation, not to mention seven changes of manager. The first tasks of the new Committee which gained control of the club in 1997 were to change the name back to Hemel Hempstead Town FC, then to install successful Leverstock Green manager and ex-Hemel captain Mick Vipond as manager. The result was a quick promotion with Hemel winning the Division Three championship at the first attempt, conceding only 28 goals that season and scoring 86, quite a turnaround from the previous season. This was the first league championship the club had won since 1934. After a stuttering start to Division Two, Hemel

parted company with Vipond in December 1998 and ex-Watford star and 1985 FA Cup finalist Neil Price was appointed as manager. Price guided the Tudors to 4th place and bettered this the following season when Hemel won the Division Two championship, only to be denied promotion due to insufficient ground grading. In this championship season Hemel conceded just 27 goals in 42 league games, the best defensive record in the clubs history. Hemel followed this up with a 6th place finish and in the summer of 2001 Price was replaced at the helm by former Barnet goalkeeper Gary Phillips. By this time various ground improvements had led to a "B" grading for Vauxhall Road which made the club eligible for promotion. Hemel failed to find their feet in the 2001/2002 season and following the resignation of Phillips after a 6-1 defeat at the hands of Chertsey, ex-Hemel player Tony Kelly was appointed as manager. Following another 6th place finish, restructuring saw Hemel leave the Isthmian after nearly 30 years of competing in that league and for the first time Hemel started a season in the Southern League, competing in the Premier division.

It was never going to be easy settling in the new league but Hemel struggled, with Kelly being replaced by ex-Arseley manager Nicky Ironton in November. Just 3 wins in 12 games saw Hemel slide in to the relegation zone and Ironton was replaced by Hemel's 3rd manager of the season Byron Walton, who inherited a side 10 points from safety with 12 games to go. A short unbeaten run was not enough and Hemel were relegated to the Southern Western Division. Hemel began to slip in 2005/2006 and Walton was replaced by ex-Hemel player and former Chesham and Berkhamsted manager Steve Bateman. A nail biting end to the season saw Hemel beat Brackley Town in the play-off final to secure promotion back to the Southern Premier Division at the first attempt. Last season, 2006/2007, saw Hemel achieve a play-off position which could have seen the club promoted to the Conference South. However, the play-off semi-final away to Team Bath resulted in defeat. The Tudors had to settle for

finishing the season with four cup final appearances, the Errea Cup, Herts Senior Cup, Herts Charity Cup, and the St Mary's Cup. Victorious in one of those competitions, the St Mary's Cup were brought home to Vauxhall Road in a 3-2 win over local rivals Berkhamsted Town.

In 2008/09, Hemel started brightly and by Christmas the club was in a play-off position having just beaten league leaders Farnborough. Former star striker Anthony Thomas returned to Vauxhall Road and things were looking good for the Tudors. However, a poor start to the New Year led to the sacking of Steve Bateman on the 16th February, the eve of the clubs appearance in the final of the Herts Charity Cup. The next day, Hemel beat Ware 2-1 to lift their first silverware of the season and former Celtic and Southend midfielder Paul Byrne was appointed as Bateman's successor. A good start under Byrne was followed by inconsistent form; however Hemel fought their way in to the play-offs, with Thomas again finishing as the clubs top scorer as he overtook Hugh Boycott-Brown as the clubs all-time leading goal scorer. The Tudors lost the play-off semi-final on penalties at Farnborough. By the start of the 2009/10 season, Byrne had been replaced at the helm by Dennis Green, but the club was not on good form and he was replaced in October the season by Gary Philips, who was himself replaced in March by Dean Brennan. Hemel still ended up in a relegation position but were spared going down by the requirement of restructuring. Hemel finished the season with a St Mary's Cup final win over Oxhey Jets.

During the summer of 2010, Hitchin manager Colin Payne was appointed the new Tudors manager in time for the 2010/11 season which saw the Tudors celebrate their 125 years in existence. The season started well but inconsistent form saw Hemel finish 15th in the league. Payne led the team in to the 2011/12 however with Hemel firmly attached to a relegation position he was replaced in October by former Salisbury manager Tommy

Widdrington. Despite the team not enjoying much better form under Widdrington, there was at least a slow progress so it was a great disappointment to the club when he left his position after just four months to take up a job at Eastbourne. Mark Eaton and Alan Biley formed a partnership to manage the Tudors however their best efforts could not pull the club to safety and relegation loomed after finishing 19th.

Relieved from relegation, Hemel appointed Dean Brennan for his second spell as manager for the 2012/13 season. Brennan brought in a lot of new faces in to the squad and after a flying start to the season Hemel found themselves top of the league table, where they spent a total of 19 games before a dip in form saw eventual champions Leamington take over. Hemel finished the table in a club record fourth place and made it to the play-offs, facing third place Chesham United in the semi-final. Hemel won 0-2 at Chesham and set up a home tie against Gosport Borough in the final. 2254 eager fans packed in to Vauxhall Road to watch the game that was to decide Hemel's fate; Gosport went 2-0 up in the first half but Hemel fought right to the end and scored 2 late goals to draw level. After a goal-less extra-time, Hemel lost on penalties. Hemel did gain some silverware though, winning the Herts Senior Cup for the first time since 1926, beating Potter Bar in the final. Hemel's last honour this season was the Sir Stanley Rous Memorial Trophy, awarded by the Herts FA to the club or individual that has brought the most prestige to Hertfordshire.

2013/14 was a fantastic season for Hemel. The Tudors got off to a flying start, despite losing the opening league game at Hitchin, Hemel went on to win ten consecutive games and went on to spend the majority of the season well clear at the top of the Southern League Premier Division league table. Hemel were also in the draw for the FA Cup First Round proper for the first time since 1938 after drawing 3-3 with Conference South high fliers Sutton United, but unfortunately lost the replay. With just the league to concentrate on, Hemel went on to

break records with striker Ben Mackey scoring a club record 43 goals in all competitions and 'keeper Laurie Walker keeping the most clean sheets by a single goalie in Hemel's history. The Tudors had the Southern League's highest average attendances and Vauxhall Road entertained nearly two thousand fans against both St Albans City and Chesham United. It was at home to Chesham on Easter Monday that Hemel lifted the Southern League Premier Division winners shield, having secured the championship away to Hungerford two days previously.

It was the start of a whole new era for Hemel Hempstead Town FC in August 2014, the clubs first season in the second tier of the English non-league game. The Tudors first ever game in the Conference South was an away win at Basingstoke Town, however stuttering form during the seasons early stages led to numerous changes of playing personnel, with some of the previous seasons championship winning side leaving Vauxhall Road to make way for some more experienced players and some young professionals loaned from some of the area's leading clubs. Hemel's form improved as the season developed and the club was still capable of reaching the play-off's within a few weeks of the season ending. A respectable 9th place finish was accompanied by cup final wins in the Herts Senior Cup and the St Mary's Cup, while club record runs were achieved in the FA Cup (first round, losing away to League Two Bury) and FA Trophy (third round, losing at home to National League Torquay United). In 2015/16, inconsistent form and many injuries saw The Tudors exit all the cups early on and at one stage there was a threat of a relegation scrap – however fantastic late season form saw another record finish, sixth in the table, with defeat at home to Whitehawk on the final game of the season seeing our visitors secure the final play-off spot over us. During the season, the management team of Dean Brennan and Stuart Maynard became the longest serving Manager(s) at Hemel for thirty years.

The 2016/17 season was a significant one at Vauxhall Road, as it was the twentieth season Chairman Dave Boggins led the club as Chairman. On the pitch, the momentum gained in recent seasons slowed down, with inconsistent form during the opening stages of the season making a push for promotion highly unlikely by the halfway stage. There were also quick exits from the major cup competitions. However, the return of former captain Jordan Parkes and the recruitment of some key players via loan signings led Hemel on a mid-season charge up the table, at one stage being the division's form sides as the play-off's became an achievable target. The change in fortunes didn't last though, and as form dipped in the latter stages, The Tudors season resulted in a 12th place finish - lower than expected but not unreasonable for a club still establishing itself at this level of the game.

The Tudors bounced back in 2017/18, in a season which saw the National League South increase play-off positions to the second to seventh placed sides in the final league table. With the prospect of a play-off position much more achievable, a competitive season saw many clubs fancying their chances at promotion. Despite some inconsistent form, a more settled Hemel squad than previous seasons did well enough to spend much of the season in the play-off's and even in the latter stages of the campaign automatic promotion was still with sights. Eventually, a new club record finish of fifth place in the National League South secured a home play-off "elimination" tie (effectively a "quarter-final) against Braintree, who beat Hemel on penalties on their way to winning the play-offs. The Tudors reached the final of the Herts Senior Cup this season but conceded the final against Hitchin Town, due to Hemel staffs concerns about the safety of their players on the playing surface of the neutral venue. This season also saw landmark appearances for Tudors players Jordan Parkes and Kyle Connolly who each reached 200 appearances for Hemel, whilst the management team of Dean Brennan and Stuart Maynard took charge of their 300th

game.

The 2018/19 season proved to be by far the most disappointing during our time in the National League south. The season started well but by mid-September the management team of Dean Brennan and Stuart Maynard had moved on to the Glen Tamplin revolution at Billericay Town. This turned out to be a fairly short stay as they were then sacked after 3 months. Post Dean and Stuart, players Jordan Parkes and Darren Ward took the team temporarily whilst the club looked for a new permanent manager. In their short spell at the helm they oversaw victories in the Emirates FA Cup over Bowers & Pitsea and Ramsgate before going out to Oxford City in a 4th Round Replay. At the beginning of November Joe Deeney was appointed to the position of manager, Joe was formerly assistant manager at NLS rivals Oxford City. Joe started very well with three League victories in November, winning away at Bath City, East Thurrock and at home to Gloucester City. In the Buildbase Trophy he masterminded a victory over Lewes in a 3rd Round Qualifying Replay. Probably the best performance and victory during this tenure was a home victory (2-1) over National League side Eastleigh in the 1st round of the Buildbase FA Trophy. Unfortunately there were very few memorable points during the remainder of the season as it petered out with the Tudors finishing a very disappointing 16th at the end of the season. This was the worst finishing position in the League since being promoted to National League South in 2014.

The summer of 2019 saw one of the biggest overhauls at Vauxhall Road for some time, with Concord Rovers manager Sammy Moore departing our NLS rivals to join us at Hemel. Moore set about rebuilding the squad, releasing almost all of the previous squad and assembling a group of experienced players in an attempt to turn around the club's dip in form. Hemel got off to a flying start and by October were placed second in the league and enjoying the type of form you'd expect from promotion candidates. However, lengthy spells without a

win followed; The Tudors remained "thereabouts" in the league thanks to the good string of results earlier in the season but the club was often placed at the bottom end of the current form table from November through to March, then the season was brought to a premature end by the global coronavirus pandemic. By this time, Hemel were placed 11th in the league table having played 34 games, six points below the play-off positions and nine points above relegation. One could only speculate how the season may have finished, but three wins and four clean sheets in the last five league games Hemel played had instilled some optimism at Vauxhall Road. The Tudors had also reached the final's of both the Herts Senior Cup and the Herts Charity Cup, albeit these competitions were also ended before completion. However, during the summer of 2020, Tudors Chairman Dave Boggins made the decision not to renew Moore's contract. At this stage, plans for the 2020/21 season remain "up in the air" while the FA and respective leagues consider how best to move forward from the

pandemic and The Tudors will seek to appoint a new gaffer nearer the return of competitive football.

The management team of Lee Bircham and Steve Bateman, a partnership that impressed at neighbours Berkhamsted, were appointed at Vauxhall Road for the 2020/21 season; the summer of 2020 saw the introduction of artificial grass to Vauxhall Road, with FIFA-Pro standard all weather playing surface adding to the continually improving on and off field facilities at Vauxhall Road. Bircham and Bateman and remained in charge for the duration of another season affected by the Covid pandemic and abandoned, but lasted just a few games in to 2021/22; a poor run of form saw another change, with former Barnet Academy Manager Mark Jones taking the reins at Hemel. Jones set about strengthening the squad and as the season progressed there was a stage where The Tudors were knocking on the doors of the play-off's, albeit the season culminated in a 15th place finish.







# TWO TO WATCH



**JOE**  
**IACIOFANO**

**JOE IACIOFANO**

Joe joined the Tudors in the summer of 2023. Joe has a wealth of National League South experience.

He's a product of the Northampton Town academy. Whilst at Northampton, Joe made five first team appearances in various competitions and had a number of loan spells with non-league clubs.

After being released by Northampton at the end of season 2018/19, Joe spent the next two seasons with National League South sides St Albans City.



**KAYLEN**  
**HINDS**

**KAYLEN HINDS**

Kaylen signed for the Tudors in January 2023. He moved to Arsenal from the Leyton Orient Academy in 2016.

He then followed his Academy manager to Germany to sign for Wolfsburg. A change of manager saw him return to England and sign for Watford.

Kaylen's other clubs include Aldershot Town and Welling United.

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# THIS SEASON AT A GLANCE



PLAYED **43**

**45** PLAYED

WON **10**

**13** WON

DRAWN **15**

**10** DRAWN

LOST **18**

**22** LOST

+/- **-25**

**-16** +/-

POINTS **45**

**49** POINTS

LGE POS **21<sup>ST</sup>**

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

# THE TEAMS

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH | SATURDAY 20 APRIL 2024 | KICK-OFF 3:00PM



**HEAD OF FOOTBALL:** ROB DRAY

- DAN LAVERCOMBE (GK) 1 ○
- ZAC BELL 2 ○
- NICK GRIMES 4 ○
- DAN BALL 5 ○
- JAY MURRAY 6 ○
- OLLIE CHAMBERLAIN 7 ○
- LLOYD JAMES 8 ○
- NAT JARVIS 9 ○
- BEN ACEY 11 ○
- 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 ○
- LOUIE SLOUGH 23 ○
- SEB BOLTON 27 ○
- JADEN BROWN 31 ○
- EVANDER GRUBB 32 ○



**MATCH OFFICIALS**

**REFEREE:**

ROBERT ABLITT

**ASSISTANT REFEREE:**

ROBERT HARRISON

**ASSISTANT REFEREE:**

COLIN HUBBARD

**MANAGER:** ALAN DOWSON

- 1 CRAIG KING
- 2 MONTEL MCKENZIE
- 3 JOSH WILLIAMS
- 4 KYLE O'CONNOR-AJAYI
- 5 JOSH HILL
- 6 JETHRO HANSON
- 7 GEORGE WILLIAMS
- 8 ALFIE MATTHEWS
- 9 JOE IACIOFANO
- 10 KAYLEN HINDS
- 11 TRE MITFORD
- 12 TARRELLE WHITTAKER
- 14 JOE RE
- 15 JUNIOR GYAMFI
- 16 CHRIS SMITH
- 17 TYRESE BRISCOE
- 18 IKE ORJI
- 19 MICHAEL FOLIVI
- 20 ANTON DWORZAK
- 21 JAMES TAYLOR
- 22 MYLES JUDD
- 23 PIERRE FONKEU
- 24 MICHAEL MACAULAY
- 25 KOMBE KAWIMBE
- 26 JAMIE SENDLES-WHITE
- 27 AIDAN ELLIOTT-WHEELER
- 28 BRADLEY ROBERTS
- 29 BRAD SMITH

# DAVE WEBSTER *View from the stands*

**FARNBOROUGH 0 TAUNTON TOWN 1**  
Vanarama National League South



Not the prettiest of games to watch, but what does that matter when your team have just played 9 without a win!

This was all about grinding out a result. And grind it out, Taunton did, fighting for every ball, defending like their lives depended on it, as body after body was thrown into the firing line of the Farnborough strike-force.

The home team may well have had the experience and skill to beat us, but what they lacked, which Taunton had in abundance was a never say die spirit, to take the lead and then keep hold of it. There were some immense shifts put in by the Peacocks, all over the field. As the game moved on, it became more baffling by the minute of how on Earth are Farnborough so high up the league, when their finishing was so abysmal. They saw chance after chance go wide of the posts and crossbar. Taunton really only had the one chance in a first half that saw neither keeper having to do anything exceptional.

Much of that was down to Taunton's defence, that were in no mood to give anything away. The only goal of the game came quite late in the half, when Cam Evans got his head to the ball from a corner, that gave Turner in the Boro goal no chance. In fairness to the likeable keeper, his view was i suspect obstructed with the box being heavily congested.

Could we hang on to this slender lead for a second half, that saw Taunton confined to their box for long periods? Oh yes, i cannot praise our rear guard enough. Farnborough tried with all their might, to get back into a play off position, they hit the post, forced Dan Lavercombe into making some last ditch saves, and peppered

the Taunton goal with shots resembling pellets from a blunderbuss!

Taunton did manage to make the occasional counter attack, with Ross Stearn having two opportunities to hit the net. His first from the left side certainly had the power, but not the direction, as Turner quickly retrieved the ball after losing his grip. The 2nd chance was saved by the feet of Turner, as Ross attempted to go round him, which resulted in a corner. Taunton were doing their utmost to slow the game down, unfortunately Ben Acey, who had not been on the field long, got himself a yellow for knocking the ball away, in his attempt to run the clock down. This was followed by a 2nd yellow, for an alleged foul when the Farnborough player made a real show of himself, rolling about on the ground for the slightest of touches.

Two offences that had they occurred in the earlier stages of the game, would have received no punishment. Very harsh, many of us thought. And so we finally got our first win after a run of 9 without victory, giving us all hope of playing NLS football next season. The travelling support were delighted that at last we had something to celebrate, in this long, hard season.

Next up is Torquay, we all know just how colossal this match is, where a Taunton win would see us leapfrog our West country neighbours, and put us in the safety zone, and indeed put extreme pressure on the Gulls. Come on Peacocks, lets complete a 2nd double on the bounce. We can do this. Bring it on!!! UTP.

## OFFICIAL MATCH REPORT

# FARNBOROUGH 0 TAUNTON TOWN 1

14.4.2024 | VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH | ATT: 684

A first half goal from Cameron Evans proved decisive as a gutsy performance from the Peacocks saw them end a run of nine National League games without a victory to claim their first double of the season. And what an absolutely vital three points it was to keep Town hot on the heels of relegation rivals Eastbourne Borough and Torquay United as the campaign enters its final week.

The visitors' side showed two changes from the one that had been soundly beaten by Slough less than 48 hours earlier, with Nat Jarvis restored up front and Marcus Day adopting a more accustomed outfield role following his enforced goalkeeping appearance against Slough. The weather for once had chosen to behave itself for Town's final away trip of 2023-34 as the sides kicked off in the welcome warm sunshine, with Farnborough first to show when Ricky Holmes' shot deflected for a corner. Edon Pruti's back header following a long throw was then punched clear by Town keeper Dan Lavercombe although the referee's whistle curtailed any further threat.

Borough keeper Jack Turner claimed a high Lloyd James cross and then watched a half volley from James travel wide through a crowd of players while Guy Hollis' header looped well wide of the

Target from Olly Pendlebury's corner at the other end as both teams struggled to make headway during the opening half hour. However with 33 minutes gone the Peacocks broke the stalemate. Zac Bell hassled the defender into conceding a corner on the left and when James swung it in, Evans was there to glance it home from six yards.

Farnborough set about trying to restore parity but were left frustrated up until the break. When a corner was only partially cleared, the ball was fed back in by Holmes' angled cross which Millar Matthews-Lewis just failed to connect with at the back post, with Hollis collecting to see his strike brilliantly blocked by Evans. Callum Dolman then headed Holmes' cross clear off the line before a late Town raid culminated in some ping-pong in the box as the half ended with the Peacocks holding a narrow advantage.

The home side emerged on the front foot after the interval, Taylor Clark's strike from 20 yards searing just past the post and then another effort from the same player going wide of the opposite stick before Town countered, Ollie Chamberlain breaking to find Ross Stearn who sidestepped Jordan Norville-Williams to see his well-struck drive from the right side of the box parried well by Turner.

Another half chance just past the hour saw Jarvis get on the end of James' low flighted free kick but his header went the wrong side of the post while the Peacocks' defence were proving a brick wall to Borough attempts to get back on terms and when a sight of goal did materialise Lavercombe was up to the task, getting down well to turn a Holmes' shot wide.

When Turner caught a James free kick, he quickly distributed upfield to find Connor Cullen on the right and when his pass set up Clark, Day was there to obstruct the shot, epitomising the dogged resistance of the Town team who put their bodies in the way on numerous occasions throughout the 90 minutes. Holmes dragged a tame effort wide while Lavercombe safely grasped a Maxwell Mullins' cross at full stretch as the hosts continued to press forward without finding the key to unlock the Town unit.

Ben Acey took over from Day with just under ten minutes remaining before another home attack fell away and when the ball was cleared, Stearn got goalside of Edon Pruti but was frustratingly deemed to have committed handball as he went down under Pruti's challenge. Back to the other end as the kitchen sink was added to the Farnborough artillery, but their finishing left a lot to be desired. Joe Haigh fired badly wide from a decent position and Clark set up Selim Saied to flash a strike wide of the target from the left as home irritations increased before the game entered six minutes of stoppage time, with the Peacocks having a golden chance to wrap the game up. Acey broke from a Borough corner to find Stearn inside and through on goal, but Turner won the battle to block Stearn's effort for a corner.

If that had gone in, points done and

If that had gone in, points done and dusted. However when Town tried to hold the ball from the ensuing corner they conceded a throw which Acey impeded at the expense of a yellow card. Barely 20 seconds later the Town substitute then tripped Haigh on the left touchline and a second yellow followed along with the obligatory red, leaving the visitors to see out the rest of time with ten men. This they did with few issues as any remaining threat dissipated when Norville-Williams and Pendlebury both sent strikes well wide to confirm Town's fourth away success of the season. Not a pretty game to watch but that is of no consequence, the result was the all-important aspect to keep the Peacocks' hopes alive of pulling off the great escape.





## VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH 2023-24 LEAGUE STANDINGS

P	Team	GP	W	D	L	F	A	+/-	PTS
1	Yeovil Town	44	28	8	8	78	44	+34	92
2	Chelmsford City	45	24	11	10	75	42	+33	83
3	Worthing	45	25	6	14	100	70	+30	81
4	Braintree Town	45	23	12	10	62	39	+23	81
5	Maidstone United	45	23	11	11	67	51	+16	80
6	Bath City	44	20	13	11	69	49	+20	73
7	Hampton & Richmond	44	20	12	12	60	51	+9	72
8	Aveley	45	20	10	15	66	61	+5	70
9	Farnborough	45	19	12	14	74	66	+8	69
10	Slough Town (+3)	44	17	13	14	80	68	+12	67
11	St Albans City	44	19	7	18	74	65	+9	64
12	Chippenham Town	45	16	13	16	61	61	0	61
13	Tonbridge Angels	45	15	12	18	63	64	-1	57
<b>14</b>	<b>WESTON-SUPER-MARE</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>55</b>
15	Welling United	45	12	17	16	55	70	-15	53
16	Weymouth	43	12	16	15	56	62	-6	52
17	Truro City	43	14	9	20	56	65	-9	51
<b>18</b>	<b>HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>-16</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>TORQUAY UNITED (-10)</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>48</b>
20	Eastbourne Borough	44	13	9	22	49	71	-22	48
<b>21</b>	<b>TAUNTON TOWN</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>-25</b>	<b>45</b>
22	Dartford	45	11	10	24	54	74	-20	43
23	Havant & Waterlooville	45	10	7	28	52	87	-35	37
24	Dover Athletic	44	4	15	25	39	73	-34	27

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

### UPCOMING FIXTURES

#### Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024

- 7.45pm St Albans City v Hampton & Richmond Borough
- 7.45pm Taunton Town v Torquay United
- 7.45pm Truro City v Dover Athletic
- 7.45pm Weston-super-Mare v Eastbourne Borough

#### Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024

- 7.45pm Taunton Town v Weston-super-Mare
- 7.45pm Truro City v Weymouth

#### Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2024

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



[WWW.THENATIONALLEAGUE.ORG.UK](http://WWW.THENATIONALLEAGUE.ORG.UK)

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**N/A**

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# The Untold Game

## El Magico

It can be easy to convince ourselves that our sport is meritocratic. That the talent always rises to the top, and failing is proof that a player isn't good enough, or wasn't professional enough to get there. But we ignore the role that geographical luck can have on a player's career. George Best was lucky to be born in Britain, so spotted by one of the biggest clubs in the world. He was unlucky - in footballing terms - to be born in Northern Ireland, so he couldn't show his ability at international level. But what if he had been born in a country with no footballing heritage? One away from the spotlight, before widespread coverage, and without access to a giant to develop him? What if his name was Jorge Gonzalez?

El Magico, as he was known, was born in El Salvador, not a country known for its football. He made his debut for ANTEL in the top flight at just 17, and quickly earned himself a move to the bigger Independiente, and then once more FAS, where he won three league titles. But Gonzalez wasn't just part of a team. He was the team. He developed the kind of ability that, in Europe, would have made him one of the hottest talents in the world. And he developed the kind of discipline and lifestyle that would make Maradona blush. He was a superstar, and it wouldn't take long before he showed it.

Already a star of the national team, by 1982 he had led El Salvador to the brink of the World Cup. One game against a respectable Mexico was in their way, and for the first time El Magico would be in front of a significant television audience. He spent the evening trying flicks and tricks and generally being bulldozed by Mexican defenders who were aware of the danger he posed. But deep into the second period, he picked up the ball in his own half. He danced around one challenge, and then a second, and was off. Defenders chased him down, but couldn't get near him as he jinked past another. It would have been a goal of the century contender if it had been on a bigger stage and, crucially, if it had gone in. His shot from the edge of the box was saved, but too much to handle for the goalkeeper, as teammate Ever Hernandez scored the winner from the rebound.

The World Cup, at only 22, would be El Magico's zenith. El Salvador were hopeless, losing all three of the games. But he stood out once again. Like dropping Messi into the team from the Dog and Duck, and telling them to play Man City. They were hammered, but his quality was evident. Atletico Madrid and Cadiz made offers. He chose the latter, not because of their quality, but because of the freedom they would afford his lifestyle.

As prolific as he was on the pitch, Gonzalez was even more so off it. The king of Cadiz' nightlife, he would spend his nights in the clubs and his days rolling into training whenever he pleased. Still, his ability helped them into the top flight, but wasn't enough to keep them there. Once relegated, a Diego Maradona-inspired Barcelona came calling.

El Magico would never link up with the Argentine. In a story befitting his career, he blew his chance on a pre-season tour of America. When the rest of the squad evacuated the hotel for a fire alarm, he remained in his room with his date. When asked why, he replied that 'I never leave things half done.'

He returned to Cadiz, but a change of manager meant that it wasn't the place for him. He was loaned out to Valladolid, who tried to instill some discipline into him. It didn't work, and Cadiz brought him back. He was a hero, and his antics only fed into his legend.

The club hired a member of staff whose sole job was to wake Gonzalez up every

morning, which just meant that he had an excuse to party harder. In one match against Atletico, he fell asleep standing up waiting for a corner to be delivered. In another against Barcelona, he had partied so hard he missed the first half. Still, he came on for the second, and scored two goals, setting up a third, and winning the match. Tests later showed that he played whilst still drunk.

By 1991, his legs were beginning to fail him, and he left his adopted home to head back to El Salvador. He saw out his playing days at FAS, in a haze of parties and alcohol.

It's very easy to point to El Magico as a cautionary tale of lost potential, and undoubtedly his career could have reached far greater heights. But, when Maradona was told by a Neapolitan journalist that he was better than Pele, the Argentinian great replied that 'there is a player even better than Pele and I. His name is Jorge Gonzalez.' When the journalist asked who that was, he added 'go and find out, ignorant man'. Which, I think, is pretty high praise indeed.





# 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)	4-0 L	1436	20 <sup>th</sup>
<b>APRIL</b>					
Mon 1st	League	BATH CITY (H)	0-2 L	1059	21 <sup>st</sup>
Wed 3rd	League	MAIDSTONE UNITED (H)	0-1 L	126	21 <sup>st</sup>
Sat 6th	League	Hampton & Richmond (A)	1-1 D	752	22 <sup>nd</sup>
Tue 9th	League	Braintree Town (A)	0-0 D	709	22 <sup>nd</sup>
Thu 11th	League	SLOUGH TOWN (H)	0-4 L	684	22 <sup>nd</sup>
Sat 13th	League	Farnborough (A)	0-1 W	1246	21 <sup>st</sup>
Tue 16th	League	TORQUAY UNITED (H)	7:45pm	-	-
Thu 18th	League	WESTON-SUPER-MARE (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.

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4. Persons must not throw any object onto the pitch or within the spectator areas.
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11. Alcohol must not be brought into the stadium.
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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.
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**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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