

The new independent source for Maidstone United news: Edition 19 (December 19th 2025)

The Back Page

Yeovil and Out Penalty misery goes on The Steve Watt Column

"I loved a replay ..."

PLUS: Merry Xmas Gianni, you spineless bastard
The Stones Quiz: End of the year special
Hampton, Dover and Hornchurch previews
Anorak Corner: Legends Day goes badly wrong

The Back Page is a new, independent news resource covering Maidstone United.

The team is a mixture of professional journalists, experienced amateurs and aspiring newcomers. We aim to offer previews, reports, features, rumours and more.

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19th edition:
Friday December 19th
Published by Back Page Media
To advertise with us email:
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Next edition:
Friday January 2nd 2026



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I found this picture on the Unofficial Maidstone United History page and realised I may well have taken it myself: I never had any photographic skills, but at the time this was taken I was covering the team for the Adscene group who seldom sent professionals to our matches and this was typical of the kind of shot I used to get: blurred and distant.

The club's official photographer at the time was club legend Pete Norris, who usually stood at pitch level and from the angle it looks as though it was taken from the terracing on the east side of the ground.

The club had been in a Catch 22 situation in 2001: it couldn't return to the senior leagues while playing at the old London Road training ground, which had no floodlights. At a supporters meeting a majority of fans voted

that we should share with Sittingbourne, which enabled us to return to senior football after a nine-year absence. Central Park was a Football League standard venue, built when Sittingbourne were chasing a dream that rapidly went sour.

By the time we moved in as tenants they were languishing in the Southern League Southern Division and their average gate was under 200. It was unsustainable and was soon taken over by Cairns Sports, who ran the greyhound racing at the venue.

At the end of this season Sittingbourne moved into the training pitch to the north east of this stadium and after one last friendly with Gillingham on the main pitch, we moved with them.

The Maidstone player to the left is Steve Butler and Jamie Kempster identified himself as the amber shirt furthest to the right. The player about to receive the ball is probably Steve Marshall and my best guess is that the other figure, on the right of midfield, is Adrian Webster.

We won 2-0 and my main memory of the afternoon is that afterwards our manager Jim Ward said it was so one-sided that Ramsgate "were jumping up and down when they won a corner." We went on to win the league and cup double.

It isn't a great quality image, but it is an accurate reminder of what it was like playing at "Central" Park. It's the kind of

pitch you just don't see any more, even at the lowest levels of the pyramid, and the grass surface was unable to cope with either the elements (it was never warm in Sittingbourne) or the workload.

The crowd looks sparse but there were probably 300 there, with only a handful coming from Thanet - last season nearly 700 watched Sittingbourne play Ramsgate at their new Woodstock Park home.

As a football stadium Central Park was a white elephant from the moment it opened, but nearly 25 years later greyhound racing is still being held there. **FA.**



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Penalties: still the bane of our existence

YEOVIL TOWN 1

Tobin 89

MAIDSTONE UNITED 1

Kargbo 92

Yeovil win 4-2 on penalties

Attendance: 1,691 (88 away)

By Tom Rogers

Despite showing a great deal of defensive resolve and spirit throughout, the Stones were knocked out of the FA Trophy as our penalty woes continued.

Having frustrated Yeovil for much of this low-key encounter, there are numerous positives as we were far from outplayed. However, our collapse on penalties means it was only a moral victory that could be salvaged from Somerset, rather than anything tangible.

On the way into the ground one of Yeovil's least intimidating teenagers promised his equally unimposing mates the 'Yoof' would be turning up to 'make some noise', but all they did was make wanker signs at some similarly unimposing teenagers from Kent.

Everything else about the atmosphere, and the game, was incredibly genteel until the last ten minutes or so. Both sides appeared content to let the game drift without any desire to take control. The only decent first half chance came when Leo Hamblin misjudged an attempt



Yellow v Amber. In old money, this is known as a "kit clash".



A perfect cross from Hamblin but Kargbo misses a free-header

to shield the ball out of play, letting James Daly nip in and win it back, before whipping a teasing ball in that Aaron Jarvis could only head into the gloves of Lenny Holden.

It became clear that Yeovil had set out to attack Hamblin on that left side and get balls into Jarvis, but they struggled to create frequent chances.

Alex Whittle was replaced by Efete after half an hour, despite the physio vigorously rubbing his groin in front of the travelling support, to the backdrop of the odd heckle and wolf-whistle.

Jarvis was also booked for leaving an arm in on Fowler during an aerial duel and he then committed another foul sometime later, which a harsher referee could have sent him off for. The target man was subsequently replaced at the break.

The second half saw Maidstone have a bit more presence; however we struggled to turn it into any concrete chances, with our attacking output being limited to a few corners and crosses from Court or Papadopoulos.

Things did improve though when we shifted to two upfront, allowing Kargbo and Moore to press Yeovil higher up the pitch in a way Golding on his own couldn't.

Although Yeovil were able to pass through the front line of this press quite

easily, they were often forced to go long in the second phases because of the high press, which allowed the Stones to regain the ball quickly and box Yeovil in.

Against a lesser NLS side, this system looks like it would be effective as many won't have the composure to pass through the lines like Yeovil could do at times.

"One of Yeovil's least intimidating teenagers promising to his equally unimposing mates the 'Yoof' would be turning up to 'make some noise'..."

However, in the 89th minute, and against the run of play, Yeovil did break through the press with a speculative ball forward. Campbell did a lot of the hard work by holding the ball up to allow for reinforcements despite strong physical pressure from Fowler.

Once Daly was able to pick the ball up and catch Sesay out of position with a darting run out left we were in trouble. The subsequent ball in was a good one and debutant Josh Tobin was able to get enough power on his downward header to get it past Holden and Fowler on the line.

Tobin is a Maidstone native who went to school in the area. He's also a

nephew of Bill Williams and was reportedly an option for us in the summer before he eventually chose Bromley, who have since loaned him out.

However, minutes later a long free kick by Holden wasn't cleared by the hosts, allowing Court to hold the ball up and recycle it out to Carvalho on the left, who shimmied to find an angle before unleashing a wicked ball that dropped perfectly for Kargbo to head home at the back post.

Out of the seven goals our strikers, Moore and Kargbo, have mustered this season, six have been headers, with Deon's tap-in at Enfield the only exception.

It's clear that the sort of service Carvalho provided is what they are crying out for. Kargbo especially looks a nightmare for defenders to handle and looks like he has the potential to move up the pyramid.

The joy was short lived though, as the Stones came unstuck from the spot. Prior to the shootout we'd scored just two of six penalties this season, with Bramble and Papadopoulos the only ones to score while Gilbert, Corne, Moore and Carvalho have had efforts saved.

Perhaps it was to be expected when Jed Ward got down for a poor Papadopoulos penalty to give the Glovers an early advantage, before Sesay then went on to be denied in an equally weak fashion.

All four of Yeovil's penalties were flawless, and Moore and Kargbo did dispatch theirs comfortably, albeit the pressure was off by the time they got to take theirs.

All ten of our spot kicks this season have been on target, with just four finding the net. That must be some type of record.

The optimist in me suggests that this was a decent outing, we nullified a respectable National League side, fought back to level things up well and at no stage looked out of our depth during the ninety minutes, although the disappointment at missing out on a cup run is immense.

The next round takes place on the 10th of January. As it stands we won't be in league action on that day as Weston are still in the FA Cup, but there's a strong chance another game, most likely at home, will be brought forwards to fill the gap in the schedule.



89 minutes and Tobin puts Yeovil in front.



Stoppage time: Carvalho (inset) delivers and this time so does Kargbo.



The team wait for Sesay's penalty



Yeovil score their fourth and we exit the trophy on penalties for the third time

Our shoot-out record isn't actually *that* bad

My New Year resolution ought to be not to write about penalties anymore, but that's easier said than done at the moment.

There was £4,500 on the line for the winners and £1,250 for the losers of the tie at Huish Park and we gave a pretty good account of ourselves against a National League side. It was also good to see Lenny Holden get some more valuable minutes.

That said, when it came to the final whistle, I think a lot of supporters were dreading the penalty shoot-out. It almost had an England feel to it – who historically have not had the best record on penalties. And with only 33 percent of our penalties converted from the spot this year, that was a valid feeling.

One of those came only the week before in the Stones' 2-0 victory against Bath, when Antony Papadopoulos converted after having to wait a good five minutes to take the kick.

That didn't faze him and when he stepped up to take the first kick, I think we were all a bit hopeful!

That feeling lasted a solid 10 seconds until he missed and what ensued was a humbling lesson in how to take penalties. Yeovil scored all four of theirs and won 4-2.

Now, as I explained in [edition four](#), penalties are a lottery. As long as the player gets it on target, you can't really blame them if it's saved – the keeper has just picked the correct side to dive. But what does our penalty shootout record in the FA Trophy actually look like?

"It's not as bad as you might think ... in the FA Trophy is P5, W2, L3 ..."

Well, it's not as bad as you might think – played five won two, lost three.

The earliest shootout following the abolition of replays was in the 2021-22 season in the second round at home to Billericay Town and we won 6-5. The same season, however, we lost in the fourth round at Boreham Wood..

Then came the 2022-23 season – Elokobi's first season in charge. The most memorable part of that campaign was our FA Trophy cup run which saw us reach the quarter-finals.

We had to play Notts County away in the fourth round, a side who were battling with Wrexham for the league title and destined for the football league, while we sat bottom of the National League table. We were huge underdogs, but completed the shock by running out as 6-5 winners in the shootout.

The run would come to an end, however, when we faced Barnet at home and lost 4-3 on penalties.

Overall, though, it's not all doom and gloom. Penalty shootouts have served us well in the past – as well as statistics and probabilities will allow.

This season will certainly be a blip in the history records as far as our conversion rate goes. That's why we love football, however. Because next season we get a chance to re-write our odds.



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Lucky Mark Hughes wins a trip to 01634-land

By Alan Thatcher

Kent clubs **Chatham Town** and **Ebbsfleet United** have landed glamour home ties in the fourth round of the FA Trophy in the New Year.

The Chats face former Division One club **Carlisle United** while the Fleet tackle **Forest Green Rovers**, the all-vegan club from the wilds of Gloucestershire. The ties take place on Saturday January 10.

Both of the big guns are chasing promotion from the National League with Forest Green second and Carlisle third, both level on 46 points with leaders Rochdale.

Carlisle, managed by Mark Hughes, are keen to get back into the Football League at the first attempt. On Saturday **Chatham** won 3-0 against **Plymouth Parkway** with **Ebbsfleet** the first team to win through after beating **Braintree United** 3-1 in the lunchtime kick-off. The attendance? A measly 572.

Dover Athletic lost 4-1 at home to National League South leaders **Hornchurch** and the "crowd" was even smaller, with only 392 at The Crabble (just beaten by the 402 at Chatham).

This season's NLS surprise package **Horsham** celebrated late goals from Jake Elliott and Reece Meekums to win 2-0 at **Hemel Hempstead** to extend their unbeaten run to 17 games. Their reward for reaching the fourth round draw for only the second time was a tie away to Isthmian League side **Leatherhead**, once a famous FA Cup giant-killing club in the 1970s.

We all love the symmetry thrown up by non-league trivia, and here's a gem of a coincidence. When **Leatherhead** reached the fourth round in the 1974-75 season, beating **Brighton** 1-0 at the Goldstone before losing at **Leicester City** after being 2-0 up, **Carlisle United** won their first three games of the same campaign to top the old First Division before being relegated.

Penalties; bloody penalties. The subject has been a constant source of misery for Stones fans this season.

We hoped that the spot kick converted by Antony Papadopoulos against **Bath City** might have changed things



Patrick Casey at AFC Totton, when he came on as a sub, won a penalty and was subbed off again. He's now at Dorking.

but he was the first to miss in the shoot-out at **Yeovil**, with David Sesay following suit with the second.

The only consolation was that **Boreham Wood** missed three spot kicks in their shoot-out defeat to fellow National League side **Brackley Town**.

Brackley led 3-1 before the Wood grabbed a goal back and finally equalised through Erico Sousa in the 94th minute.

Matt Rush entered the fray as a substitute to spark the comeback but when it came to the shoot-out he missed one of the penalties.

Charlton Under 21s striker Patrick Casey has joined National League South side **Dorking Wanderers** on loan for the remainder of the 2025-26 campaign, which explains why he wasn't in the Addicks team who visited the Gallagher in the Kent Senior Cup tie.

The 19-year-old, who spent time on loan with the Stones earlier this season, marked his **Dorking** debut by scoring the opening goal at Meadowbank in a 1-1 draw with **Bath City** in the FA Trophy, and then the first penalty in the shoot-out, which the visitors won 4-2, prompting Wanderers owner Marc White to take to Twitter to demand a return to extra time for Trophy ties.

He posted: "Ten third round ties were settled by penalties after 90 minutes. Extra time was removed during Covid and the FA have simply forgotten to put it back. This is non-league's flagship trophy."

FA Trophy holders **Aldershot** were drawn away to Hampshire rivals **Eas-tleigh** and went out of the competition at the first hurdle, losing 2-1.

Andy Carroll scored the opener as **Dagenham** and **Redbridge** beat **Hanwell Town** 3-1.

Invicta go 11 points clear at the top

Folkestone Invicta made it nine wins in a row in with a 2-1 victory away to **Dartford** in the Isthmian League Premier Division (attendance 1,101). The goals from Joe Pigott and former Darts player Ade Yusuff.

Second-placed Brentwood Town, who trail Folkestone by eight points, won 2-0 at home to Hashtag United.

Lewes enjoyed a 4-1 win at Dulwich Hamlet, a match between two community-owned clubs, in front of a crowd of 2,574 at Champion Hill.

Folkestone extended their lead at the top to 11 points with a 3-0 win over Cray Valley PM on Tuesday night. Pigott scored again while Ibbi Akanbi came on as a sub for Cray.

Chatham Town host Bromley in the Kent Senior Cup on Tuesday December 23. The kick-off is at 7pm and the Chats hope to attract a decent crowd by making the tie free entry to fans.

With Stones through to the semis after beating Charlton Under 21s, and Ebbsfleet winning at VCD, the last match to arrange is between Tonbridge and Gillingham.

FA Trophy Fourth Round draw:

Bath City v Southend United Walton & Hersham v Brackley Town Woking v Macclesfield Yeovil Town v Alvechurch Eastleigh v Southport Marine v Gloucester City Kidderminster Harriers v Morecambe Chatham Town v Carlisle United Wealdstone v Dagenham & Redbridge Hornchurch v AFC Telford United Ebbsfleet United v Forest Green Rovers Hereford v AFC Fylde Tamworth v Rochdale FC Halifax Town v Anstey Nomads Leatherhead v Horsham Scunthorpe United v Clitheroe

Ties take place on Saturday, January 10.

BREAKING: Our FA Cup hero goalkeeper Lucas Covolan has returned to Brazil and signed for fourth tier side Operário Futebol Clube. The name Operário means "factory worker" in Portuguese.

* We've been drawn at home to Gravesend & Northfleet in the semi-finals of the Kent Senior Cup, tie to be played on 20th January.



When a 'Legends Day' goes badly wrong

Welling United planned a programme of festive fun before their Isthmian League Premier Division relegation battle with Potters Bar Town, but they ended up having to postpone the match in controversial circumstances.

Earlier in the day they announced a special reunion of club old boys, posting on Facebook: "We're excited to welcome a host of Wings legends to Park View Road this afternoon, including a number of our 1986 Southern League winning squad."

However, the match was postponed half an hour before kick-off (along with the festivities) after police were called to the ground.

A confrontation between two men left Potters Bar manager Sammy Moore needing hospital treatment for facial injuries.

A Metropolitan Police statement at the weekend revealed: "Police were called to Welling Football Club following reports of an altercation between two men. Officers attended and found a 38-year-old man with injuries to his face.

"A 42-year-old man was arrested on the suspicion of causing grievous bodily harm. He remains in custody."

Bottom of the table Potters Bar said: "The matter has been referred to the relevant authorities, including the league and The FA, and we are seeking formal advice.

"As this is now subject to ongoing

processes, the club will not be making any further comment at this time."

Welling, who are two places above Potters Bar, tried to look on the bright side, saying on their website: "It is alleged that, prior to kick-off, an incident occurred which resulted in the police being called. Following this, and after consulting with the relevant bodies, the referee made the decision to postpone the fixture.

"As this matter is now subject to an ongoing investigation, Welling United will not be making any further comment at this time.

"We would like to thank our supporters for their patience, understanding and continued support. Our dedicated volunteers had worked tirelessly to create a festive atmosphere for the day and we were understandably disappointed that their efforts could not be fully realised.

"Thank you to everyone who remained at the ground and joined us in enjoying festive food, drinks and a real sense of togetherness despite the absence of a fixture.

"We will keep supporters informed of any further developments once we are in a position to do so."

Moore's week didn't get a lot better. On Tuesday night Potters Bar were beaten 3-0 by Chatham at Maidstone Road and they remain anchored to the foot of the table.

twitter Follow @AlanThatcherCS

Upcoming Commentaries

NLS - Hampton & Richmond (A) Sat 20 December 2025 : 1500 - Fred Atkins & Sean Scurr

NLS - Dover Athletic (H) Fri 26 December 2025 : 1500 - Fred Atkins & Sean Scurr

NLS - Hornchurch (A) Tue 30 December 2025 : 1945 - Darren Styles & Sean Scurr

Stones Live! has been providing radio commentaries of Maidstone United matches since the 2008 -09 season, way back when the club was a fraction of the size it is now, playing to crowds of 200 in Sittingbourne. Founded by Stones fan Chris Bechervaise, its audiences grew steadily at first and then rapidly when the club returned home after the end of its 24-year exile in 2012. The Back Page editor, Fred Atkins, is a regular commentator, as are a number of this publication's contributors.

It's run by volunteer supporters who have a background in professional broadcast radio and funded independently from the football club by volunteer donations or through sponsorship and advertising. Stones Live! is a not-for-profit service and any monies raised are put back into the radio station to pay for various broadcast licences and to renew worn or broken equipment. (Such as the laptop Charlie Seaman accidentally smashed last year).



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CORRUPTION, INSANITY AND MIRACLES:
HOW NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL BECAME MASSIVE

By Fred Atkins

[illegible]

The Back Page

We can play 60 times a year, but big clubs can't cope with replays ... it's **Steve Watt's** latest column for The Back Page



Watt's Occurring?

There was no good reason to bin replays

The obvious conclusion from watching the highlights of the Yeovil game is that there weren't any. It looked like a classic cup tie that was 0-0 for a long time, with neither team really looking to open up.

Maidstone seemingly nullified Yeovil and they arguably had the best chance from open play when Hamzad Kargbo had a free-header from a Leo Hamblin cross five minutes from time, but he headed it square instead of across the goal. Yeovil then broke the deadlock, but in previous years Maidstone's reward for an injury-time equaliser would have been a replay.

"Replays have now been abolished altogether because the top clubs say they're playing too much, but at our level you can easily play 60 games in a season..."

I loved a replay. If you remember the first FA Cup tie at Stevenage in 2014, it was relatively even until the closing stages. Frannie Collin had a chance to win it late on, but right at the end it felt like we were boxing against the walls a little bit.



Stevenage would have been favourites if this FA Cup tie had it gone to extra-time or penalties

The rules have changed: we now go straight to shoot-outs in the Trophy, but there were a few years when teams could agree to settle a tie on the day (after extra-time) if they wanted to avoid fixture congestion. Replays have now been abolished altogether because the top clubs say they're playing too much, but at our level you can easily play 60 games in a season.

At the highest level they have top-end sports scientists and nutritionists; they say this workload is too much for their players and then they agree to a Club World Cup competition.

For me part of the beauty of these cups has gone, because when you get drawn away to a higher-level club, part of you is thinking:

"if we can just get these back to our place, we've got a chance." That was certainly how we felt with Stevenage. If that had gone to penalties we'd have been denied that special replay at the Gallagher, a night that people will remember forever.

We might have won, but I firmly believe that a penalty shoot-out is a lottery and that you can practice them as much as you like but it'll never recreate the pressure you feel in a situation like that when the game is on the line. It normally favours the higher-level team, but a full-time side could practice them for two hours a day, five days a week and still lose to a part-time team who don't practice at all.

A lot of this weekend's ties were settled on penalties and Marc White at Dorking said extra-time should have been played after they drew with Bath

and then lost the shoot-out.

What I would say is that it definitely *wouldn't* have helped us if we'd had to play another half-hour at Stevenage, but if you've got to go and play another 30 minutes, you've just got to dig deeper into those reserves. The Maidstone team that I played in had enough players with the kind of drive to find a way. We never played the most attractive football, but we got the job done.

In 2014-15 I pulled my hamstring at Leatherhead before a crucial game against Margate. I'd scored a header but then had to go off and if we'd been playing anyone else the following week I don't think Jay or I would even have considered risking me, but we were locked in a title-race and with the magnitude of the game I thought: 'I can't not play.'

I went in about 11 am, got my leg heavily strapped and passed a fitness test at about 1 o'clock.

I spent the whole of that game making sure I was positionally right so that I wouldn't have to get into a sprint. We were 2-1 up when I cleared one off the line and I managed to get Freddie Ladapo hooked after an hour.

The game felt won at that point, but I got caught a little bit out of position with about 20 minutes to go and Jamie Coyle came on to replace me: we had Shane Huke and Sonny Miles as well so it wasn't as if we were throwing a kid on.

My point is that, as professionals, you find a way to get through in those situations and luckily enough at Stevenage we didn't have to.



The final whistle at Stevenage in 2014: the players celebrate earning a replay

'Be as honest as possible with the listeners'

I enjoyed my Stones Live debut against Charlton and would be happy to do it again.

I'd done some radio work before at Grimsby and then at Dover when I was sidelined by my cruciate: the club liked to keep the injured players active and I commentated alongside Matt Gerrard, a really nice guy who does the Kent Non-League podcast.

I just tried to be as honest as possible with the listeners and not worry about being politically correct.

Roy Keane is my favourite of the current crop of pundits. He does most of his work in the studio but I just love his honesty, he's a breath of fresh air.

His ex-team mate Gary Neville is

another great example. I think a lot of people are too scared to say what they think because of cancel culture, but he doesn't butter it up for you.

I like to hear stuff straight down a barrel. You get others when you can tell they really want to say stuff but they don't and that's why I enjoy Keane and Neville so much.

How many Alans does it take to change a light bulb?

By Tom Rogers

The Stones close out 2025 with a triple header over an eleven-day period. Visits to **Hampton & Richmond** and **Hornchurch** are scheduled either side of a Kent Derby at home to **Dover Athletic** on Boxing Day.

We currently sit three points outside the play-off spots in ninth, but with a solid conclusion to the year we could begin 2026 in the top seven.

Our opponents seemingly get tougher with each game over the Christmas period. **Hampton** are languishing in 20th, but they did pick up a win against Totton under Alan Massey's interim control after Alan Julian was sacked.

They have since re-appointed Alan Dowson, who lost the first game of his second spell to Maidenhead* at the weekend.

"Hampton seriously have had three different blokes called Alan manage them this season ..."

No, that wasn't a typo, they seriously have had three different blokes called Alan manage them this season. Dover are faring okay on their return to the league, sitting one point beneath us at the time of writing.

They've won their four previous league games heading into their clash with Eastbourne on Saturday.

Hornchurch appear to be the strongest test of the three. They lead the league after twenty-one games, despite not being among the pre-season favourites for promotion.

We can expect several familiar faces across the three games. Bivesh Gurung is now at **Dover**, having already beaten us with Folkestone this season. Gurung is usually an option off the bench, but he'll likely feature against us on Boxing Day in some capacity.

While none of the current Hampton side have played for the Stones, Leo Hamblin did have a brief spell there at the back end of the 21-22 season.

He was an unused substitute for the opposition when we lifted the NLS title on the final day in May of 2022.



Sam Corne, pictured during last year's 3-0 win over Hampton & Richmond at The Beveree ground

Josh Hare and Tom Wraight are now playing in East London for the league leaders and both were a part of our 2017-18 squad under Jay Saunders.

Hare went on to bigger things, eventually playing in the EFL for Bristol Rovers, though Wraight never had much of an impact for us, although he did score his only league goal for us at home to Dover on Boxing Day 2017, coincidentally.

Having begun the Yeovil game in a 4-2-3-1, allowing Golding to start up front alone, before switching to a more effective 4-4-2 of sorts later in the game, it's tough to know what system George will go for.

Taylor Foran is fully fit now and was too good in his first five outings to be left out long-term. Corne and Carvalho will both be pushing to start, even if they would struggle to dislodge any of the current midfield.

However, it is the Moore/Kargbo/Golding dilemma which is the biggest headache for George.

We have played a front two on a of occasions this season, but Kargbo and Moore haven't started together on any of those outings.

Despite Golding's work rate and

ability to nick the odd goal, it does feel like starting Moore and Kargbo together off the back of their impact at Yeovil is the best bet to form a frontline which can persistently bother opposition in a way the front two of Wanjau-Smith and Amantchi, then later Faal and Rush did in the 23-24 season.

Anything less than six points will be a disappointing way to finish the year. Hampton and Dover are certainly games we'll go into as favourites and are the sort of games we need to consistently win if we are to drag ourselves back into the play-offs come April.

Hornchurch are a bit of an enigma, clearly punching above their weight but producing impressive results consistently. A draw would be a solid result you'd feel.

The last three games have given reason for optimism though. The Yeovil game was by no means a disaster and we did play quite well against Bath prior to that, so there is every chance we could finish the year on a high.

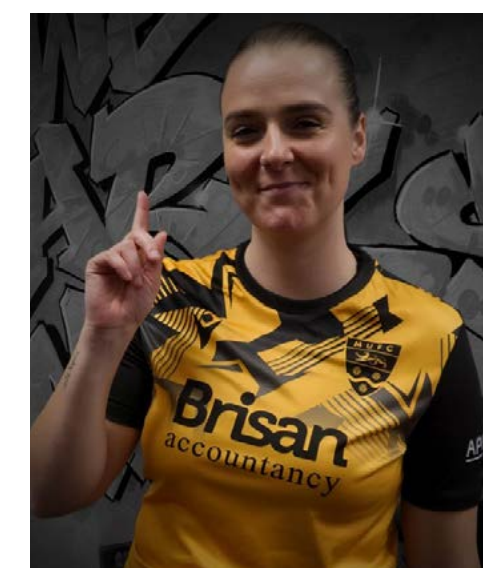
* Who, to continue the theme, were previously managed by former Hampton & Richmond boss Alan Devonshire.

Manktelow hits five as Stones run riot again

By John Tully

Maidstone Women returned to action in fine style at Chislehurst on Sunday, winning this league match by the margin of 12-0.

The Stones hit the ground running after the long three-week break, which says a



Four for Tori ...

great deal for squad fitness and match readiness.

In a very one-sided game, the ladies scored six in each half. Goals came at regular intervals with Kylie Manktelow (3), Tori Campbell (2) and Maddie Dale scoring in the first 45 minutes.

The second half was a repeat of the first with two further goals each from Kylie and Tori. Kady Wilkinson joined the scorers with an assist from sister Kelsi, and the other goal was provided by Summer Ensinger with a header.

The Stones therefore maintained their 100 per cent league record for the season and have games in hand on Tonbridge Angels, who lead the standings.

Up next for the women is a League Cup home tie on January 4 against Kings Hill with a 3.15pm kick-off. This begins a four-match home run at the Gallagher throughout January.

Sadly, looking around the league, several clubs are struggling to find enough players to fulfil their fixture commitments, which is leading to unfortunate gaps in the schedule.



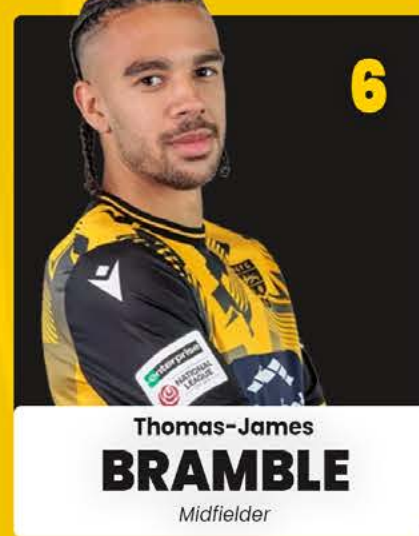
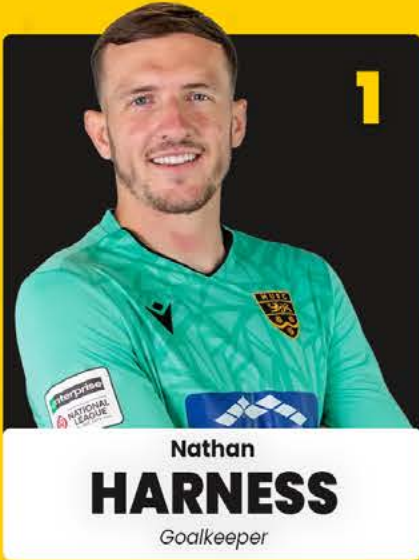
... and five for Kylie Manktelow



A new way of covering county cricket: launching in March 2026

MAIDSTONE UNITED

2025/26 SQUAD



Designed by MAIDSTONE UNITED SUPPORTERS CLUB IN VIETNAM



Join our facebook group

Play-offs, player churn and missed penalties ...

It started under a cloud, as we smarted from the loss of three players on New Year's Eve. It'll end in Hornchurch (lucky us).

For the final Back Page quiz of the year, we're asking: how well do you remember 2025 so far?



1) Who scored the only goal in the 1-0 win over Welling United on New Year's Day?

2) What was unusual about the difference in attendances when Maidstone played Tonbridge in April and when we played them again in November?

3) How many members of the 2024-25 squad were still with the club by August?

4) How many Maidstone players scored penalties for us in 2025, excluding shoot-outs?

5) And how many missed?

6) How many Stones players were sent off in 2025?

7) What was our biggest home crowd of the year?

8) What games were our joint-biggest victories of the year?

9) And what were our joint-biggest defeats?

10) How many times did we play ex-Football League opposition in 2025?



Answers to Edition 18: Yeovil Connections

1) Which striker scored a hat-trick for us in a 5-0 win over Yeovil at Watling Street in 1988-89? He also scored in the 2-1 win over the Glovers in the FA Cup the following season.
Mark Gall.

2) Now 31, he played for Yeovil in 2015-16 in League Two but was loaned to Torquay from February. Also had spells with Aldershot and Wrexham and spent one season with us under John Still in 2019-20. Who is he?
Iffy Allen.

3) Which striker joined us from Yeovil when he was signed by Barry Fry in 1985 and missed a penalty in a 3-0 defeat at Plymouth in the FA Cup?
Colin Barnes.

4) Which high-profile ex Man City and Palace manager was in charge of Yeovil when they lost 4-2 to us at The Athletic Ground in 1981?
Malcolm Allison.

5) Which member of Bill Williams title-winning squad in 1983-84 joined us from Yeovil in 1982?
Clive Green.

6) Which Scottish international winger managed Yeovil when they beat us 1-0 in an FA Cup tie at JWW in 2015?
Paul Sturrock.

7) Which Maidstone striker had a stoppage time equaliser ruled out for offside in the same match, after Yeovil had been reduced to nine men?
Alex Akrofi.

8) Which current member of the Yeovil squad was signed by Jay Saunders in 2018 and subsequently bombed out by Harry Wheeler?
Michee Efete.

9) Which England cricket legend scored against us while playing for Yeovil in a Bob Lord Trophy tie in the 1980s?
Ian Botham.

10) Who scored the first goal of his brief Maidstone career in a 1-1 draw at Huish Park early in the 2023-24 season and who scored Maidstone's goals in the 2-1 win over future NLS champions Yeovil at JWW later that season?
Levi Amantchi.



The new independent source for Maidstone United news: Edition 19 (December 19th 2025)

“Merry Xmas your arse, I pray God it’s *your* last ...”

C-BOMBED IN AN AIRPORT?

Back in 2023, when Wrexham, incredibly, were still with us in the National League, the *Financial Times* carried the following quote from Humphrey Ker, their Executive Director. “I’ve told the guys from the start — there will come a time where we’re in the Championship and we draw three games in a row, and one of you will get called a c*** in Manchester Airport by a Wrexham fan.”

Wrexham are now in the Championship and earlier this season they did indeed draw three in a row, against Leicester, Derby and Birmingham. It seems unlikely anyone c-bombed either Reynolds or McElhenney as a result, but it’s a matter of time.

Even if you take a side from non-league football into the Championship in less than three calendar years (check it, I had to), all it takes is a 2-2 draw at Watford for fans to start throwing words like “gutless” at the players.

WINTER IS COMING

Four levels down the food chain, Farnborough are looking for new “investment”. This week their Chief Executive Officer Rob Prince said: “As 2025 ends, I feel it’s best to give this wonderful club every opportunity to continue its progression.”

This is a slightly more upbeat way of saying what Oliver Ash and Terry Casey have been saying for the last two years.

“I have instructed agencies to look for a buyer for my majority shareholding or suitable investment to take the club to the next level, which I believe we are totally ready for,” Prince wrote.

He might be right as their ground is as good as any in this league, but even surviving at this level now requires more money than sensible people are comfortable losing.

And even if he does find someone to “continue their progression,” there’s still no guarantee he won’t get c-bombed by a Farnborough fan the next time he’s passing through Gatwick.



Farnborough have “instructed agencies” to look for a buyer

(CENSORED)

Around 20 years ago, an erstwhile colleague at a weekly newspaper used to make deadline day interesting by spending half the morning on the phone to his contacts.

As the first print deadline loomed closer and with an empty space on the back page to fill, he’d eventually get off the phone and tell us a fabulous story about a Premier League striker being a “big-time drugs dealer,” or a Football League chairman who was “on the white stuff”.

This was all fascinating, but it was also entirely useless. One anecdote was so libellous it could realistically have got us both sued *and* killed.

We couldn’t print any of it and ended up with a back page along the lines of the “manager wants to win game, and failing that draw it,” standard.

So when the phones lit up with news of what had happened at Welling I had a familiar feeling. The difference between now and two decades ago is that the internet has turned into the wild west. Yet it seemed bad enough in 2005 and that was before Joey Barton got bored of stubbing out lit

cigars in his team mates eyeballs and decided it would be more fun to incite complete strangers online instead.

MERRY XMAS?

This is the last edition of *The Back Page* before we take a short break for the holiday period, so we’d like to wish peace and goodwill to one and all.

We’d *like* to, but sadly, this isn’t possible. If you want the definition of someone genuinely gutless (as opposed to a footballer who isn’t good enough to win at Watford) the game is currently being run by a morally vacuous, servile, spineless sycophant.

Merry Christmas your arse, as Tunbridge Wells’ finest once wrote.

OH ALL RIGHT THEN ...

Ok, we can’t really end the year like that, can we? We’d like to wish our readers, advertisers and sponsors a very Merry Christmas and what the hell, we’ll chuck in a Happy New Year too.

Except Temu, who’ve been spamming the living shit out of the forum all week. Temu can get fucked. Cheers!