

The Back Page



CARNAGE

Head loss as Stones win furious final

- PLUS:** – Craig Fagan takes charge
– MUFC women close in on a treble
– Steve Watt on final day drama
– The Stones Quiz: A Final Day Special

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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The final day of the season



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There was once a manager called Fagan who took over from a club legend and ended up emulating his achievements.

The chances are that you haven't heard of Joe Fagan, as he was the manager of a club called Liverpool and their notoriously self-effacing fans are reluctant to talk about their achievements, but he was the first English manager to win three trophies in a season.

Cue Gabriel Clarke voiceover: "If Craig is even half as successful as Joe was, Maidstone are in for a successful few years ..."

Bath preview: page 20-21.

Absolutely immense

MAIDSTONE UNITED 2
Bramble 30, Kargbo 69
WORTHING 1
Makowski 13
Attendance: 3,383

By Fred Atkins

There was a time when I never thought I'd write the words "Guillem Balague" and "searing insight" in the same sentence, but the perma-grinning Spaniard was bang on earlier this week, when he debunked some of the bullshit narratives currently doing the rounds.

"Football is hard," he pointed out. You wouldn't talk about Roger Federer bottling a Wimbledon final against Rafael Nadal, or Seb Coe bottling the 800 metres against Steve Ovett, so why are all manner of dickheads using this phrase every time any football team involved in a title race drops points?

Worthing could be the next Bromley. They are an exceptional side and to suggest that they "bottled it" on Saturday is selling Maidstone short.

We needed an immense performance to beat them and that was exactly what we produced, staying in the game when we might easily have buckled and then keeping them at bay in a frantic finale.

"We suspected, correctly as it turned out, that anything other than a win would have Shipmanned our play-off prospects ..."

We might have lost this three or four-nil, but we might equally have won by a greater margin at the end, when it did seem like the occasion started to get to them.

It was a smart move to give Worthing the entire Town End, plus the area on the riverside as far as the home dug out.

As well as swelling the gate, it also turbocharged the atmosphere, while avoiding any of the bellendous posturing that's happened whenever segregation has been enforced previously. The result was maybe one of the best atmospheres we've ever had in the ground.



0-1. Holden is beaten by Makowski.

A Worthing victory would have effectively won them the league, regardless of results elsewhere. We suspected, correctly as it turned out, that anything other than a win would have Shipmanned our play-off hopes.

With better finishing Worthing could have unleashed a cascade of piss on our bonfire, but they didn't. They were on top during the opening stages of each half, but never dealt the knock-out blow, and if they do end up in the play-offs they have obvious weak spots.

They were a bit like the Dulwich sides we faced 20 or so years ago: capable of ripping you apart when they went forward, but always giving you a chance.

We actually had the first clear opportunity, when Jamie Yila got round the back and Jephthe Tanga's shot was blocked, but they took the lead when Razzaq Coleman De -Graft ran straight through the heart of our defence. His pass found the ex-Slough man Wiktor Makowski, who rolled it past Lenny Holden.

They'd opened us up with an ease that suggested they might run away with it, but an injury-break with around 25 minutes played changed the momentum.

Christie Pattisson had to go off and Hamzad Kargbo came on, posing an entirely different set of problems for their defence. His mere presence at set pieces makes defenders panic and the



1-1. Bramble equalises.

air of chaos in the Worthing box almost immediately contributed to TJ Bramble's equaliser.

It looked a lot like three of the goals we'd conceded against Hornchurch: Worthing couldn't clear their lines, Bramble took his chance to shoot and, despite the sea of bodies, he found the net.

Worthing were lucky not to be behind at the break, because in stoppage time Riley Court stayed on his feet when he was being impeded and the referee could easily have given a penalty.

That was potentially pivotal because at the start of the second half it looked like a matter of time before Worthing would regain the lead.

Teddy Jenks had a powerful header that Holden just about kept out with his ribs. Remiero Moulton's shot went wide and Lenny Holden made the first of a string of vital saves when he pushed a Coleman De-Graft effort wide.

Makowski then dragged one inches wide before, once again, a break in play came to our rescue. Lexus Beeden, still not back to full fitness, went off for David Sesay after an hour, and Worthing made a double change.

"Anyone who witnessed our coked-up shitheads at Welling will sympathise with how their genuine supporters must be feeling ..."

For the first time in the half we began to threaten and on 69 minutes Yila won a free-kick just outside the box that might have been punished with a red card. Sam Beard was booked, saved perhaps because of the angle of Yila's run.

After a very lengthy delay, the ball ended up in the back of the net, Riley Court's free-kick deflecting in off Kargbo's ribs.

Worthing almost hit back immediately, with Holden making two saves from the sub Bradley Dolaghan, who should have buried at least one of them.

In the closing stages, however, we looked more like getting a



Fans and subs react after the winner deflects in off Kargbo.

third than conceding.

Worthing were beginning to look knackered and both Taylor Foran and John Gilbert had chances to kill them off. Jack Spong was shown a second yellow for a posthumous tackle on Tanga and after seven and a half added minutes the ground erupted, in more than one sense.

There's a tumour in the Worthing fan base, a unit of radicalised shitgibbons who are damaging their reputation. It needs to be surgically removed, but it's also worth remembering that three of our community sides, including our plate-winning women's team, were

applauded by the overwhelming majority of Worthing's fans, when they walked past the Town End at half-time. Anyone who witnessed our coked-up shitheads at Welling will sympathise with how their genuine supporters might be feeling.

Lit pyros were thrown at our players and one was thrown back, which probably wasn't a great idea.

As for the bottling charge: when some of our fans started singing: "Are you Arsenal in disguise?" when it was 2-1, it seemed a bit premature.

We still need them to do us a favour next week, so it's probably a good idea not to piss them off too much.



Taylor Foran, almost making it 3-1.

The Treble is on as Cray are brushed aside

MAIDSTONE UNITED 3
Kelsi Wilkinson 5, Rowsell
49, Ascott 84
CRAY WANDERERS 0

By John Tully

A excellent all-round team performance under the floodlights saw the Stones deservedly achieve the first part of the possible treble by beating Cray in the Kent Women's Plate final.

It was a game where the whole team excelled individually and collectively.

There were so many top performances that it is hard to pick out our top player, but Millie Waud won the KFA player-of-the-match award.

Waud, along with Jaz Etheridge and Georgia Peach, was solid at the back, in front of a very confident keeper in Cara Davies, who dealt with all Cray's efforts imperiously.

The midfield was marshalled by the excellent Neve Platt (who replaced the absent Annie White), aided by Kylie Manktelow and the two Wilkinson sisters, Kelsi and Kady,

White is an important player, but she was not missed on the night as the rest of the team stepped up and delivered a terrific display.

The Stones always looked dangerous up front, with Chi Madamombe leading the attack effectively and Tilly Rowsell and Georgia Culpitt raiding down both wings.

The Stones started brightly and as is their habit they scored early when, in the fifth minute, Kelsi Wilkinson got her head to a Manktelow corner and scored from close range.

The rest of the half was very competitive and end-to-end, making for a spectacular encounter. Cray were always dangerous on the attack but the



1-0: Kelsi Wilkinson's header goes in.

Stones defended magnificently.

Four minutes into the second half Rowsell scored directly from a pinpoint cross. Changes were then made, as the rest of the squad got involved and, in the 84th minute, a terrific cross from Maddie Dale

on the right saw Ascott score her first goal of the season, after a long injury lay-off.

Cray put up a really excellent fight throughout and were unlucky to meet the Stones on such a good day.



Kylie Manktelow with The Plate.



Madamombe wheels away after scoring the winner

One win from the title

TONBRIDGE ANGELS 2
Churchill 13,
Herbert-Smith 36
MAIDSTONE UNITED 3
Culpitt 25, Manktelow 50,
Madamombe 45+2

Chances continued to be created by both sides, with the Stones looking much more likely to add to their score.

The returning Annie White drove the team on from midfield in the way only she can, but Tonbridge continued to press and a series of

free kicks put the Stones' defence under pressure. The defence hung on however and the game ended after a significant amount of added time for injuries.

If Maidstone win at Hollands and Blair in two week's time they will secure both the title, and promotion.

By John Tully

The Stones are one win from the SECWFL Premier Division title after a gripping encounter against an excellent Angels side.

Tonbridge dominated the first half and were slightly unlucky to only be level at half-time - they also lost their first-choice keeper to injury.

The Stones looked a bit leggy in the first half after Thursday night's heroics in the cup, and Tonbridge took the lead twice, only to be pegged back by goals from Georgia Culpitt and Kelsi Wilkinson, who made it 2-2 just before half time.

After the break the Stones looked more positive and tactically sound. The chances came and went and then Chi Madamombe converted a through pass with great aplomb.



One more step ...

Dizzy with vertigo from the moral highground

MAIDSTONE UNITED 2
Kargbo 50, Court 90+8
TONBRIDGE ANGELS 0
Attendance: 1,200

By Fred Atkins

An hour into Wednesday's game, a man rose to his feet in the main stand and shouted: "Shut the fuck up Elokobi. Murderer."

I thought these six words might represent the low-point of the evening. That was naive.

The problem with football is you never, ever want to lose, and you especially don't want to lose when the opposition hate you *this* much.

The authorities did almost everything possible to turn this into a non-event, and yet it still somehow erupted, repeatedly, both on and off the field, including in the Directors' Box, where furious words were exchanged at the end.

No tickets were sold on the day, which must have wiped at least a couple of hundred off the gate and the club's socials said we were "looking ahead to the weekend" before eventually posting something about going to 01634-land.

That suggested admin was playing it for laughs, even if the team wasn't.

The Gillingham paradox, for Maidstone fans, is that everyone says it's a shithole, but it's been the venue for some of the club's greatest days.

The last time we played there, Freddie Mercury was still alive and the worst accusation anyone could have lobbed at the then Prime Minister was that he'd fucked both the railways and Edwina Currie.

Anyone over 45 will tell you the war stories about Mark Beeney's penalty save on Boxing Day 1989 and Lawrence Osborne's



1-0. Kargbo and Foran celebrate the opener.

thunderbastard a few months later. If you're older still you'll remember Frank Ovard lobbing Ron Hillyard to knock them out of the FA Cup in 1980.

It was at Priestfield, during a 1-0 win over Welling in a Kent Senior Cup final, that we learned we'd won the Conference and if you wanted an encouraging omen, the last time we played there in this competition was also in 1990, when we fielded a mixed-strength side because we were five days away from a play-off semi-final ([See edition 16](#)).

The ground has completely shed its skin since those days, but the area around it looks almost exactly the same.

We travelled thinking it would probably be an understrength side, with a few academy kids filling the bench and expectations were low. The line-up, however, was surprisingly strong, with talk of "respecting the occasion". Harness was in for Holden and Boruk and Mbogba were both handed starts, but the other eight names were all regular first-teamers, with Gilbert in as captain.

And the three non-regulars were hardly mugs. Mbogba has seen hardly any action this year but he looked solid enough. Harness only

lost his place through injury and Boruk looked like a real find. He made a number of clever runs and was unlucky not to get a penalty early on when he was taken out by a defender. It looked inside the area, though if Tonbridge got lucky there, the persecution narrative soon kicked in: it won't be the first time a referee's been abused by fans wearing blue at this venue. If you believe the old Gillingham



Mark Boruk impressed on his first start.

fanzine, "Brian Moore's Head," they would have won the European Cup at least five times but for the men in black.

The first half was even, though with a sign of things to come George Elokobi had a wrestle with Alfie Pavey when the ball went out of play near the dug out. "Why's he getting involved?" Pavey asked, a question that would return to haunt him an hour later.

Harness made a great one-handed save to deny Thompson. At the other end Boruk teed one up for Gilbert, who should have hit the target, but shot over from inside the box.

At half-time it was 0-0 and it had been fairly even, but in the second half we went up a level and were in front within five minutes. Foran met Court's corner and Kargbo was the first to react, steering the ball in at the far post to make it 1-0.

"A woman's voice said, loudly, 'try not to run over any Maidstone fans' ..."

The tension ramped up when Harness spilled a shot and scrambled to push the ball away. Tonbridge screamed for a penalty, the referee didn't give it and from then on the atmosphere got increasingly hysterical.

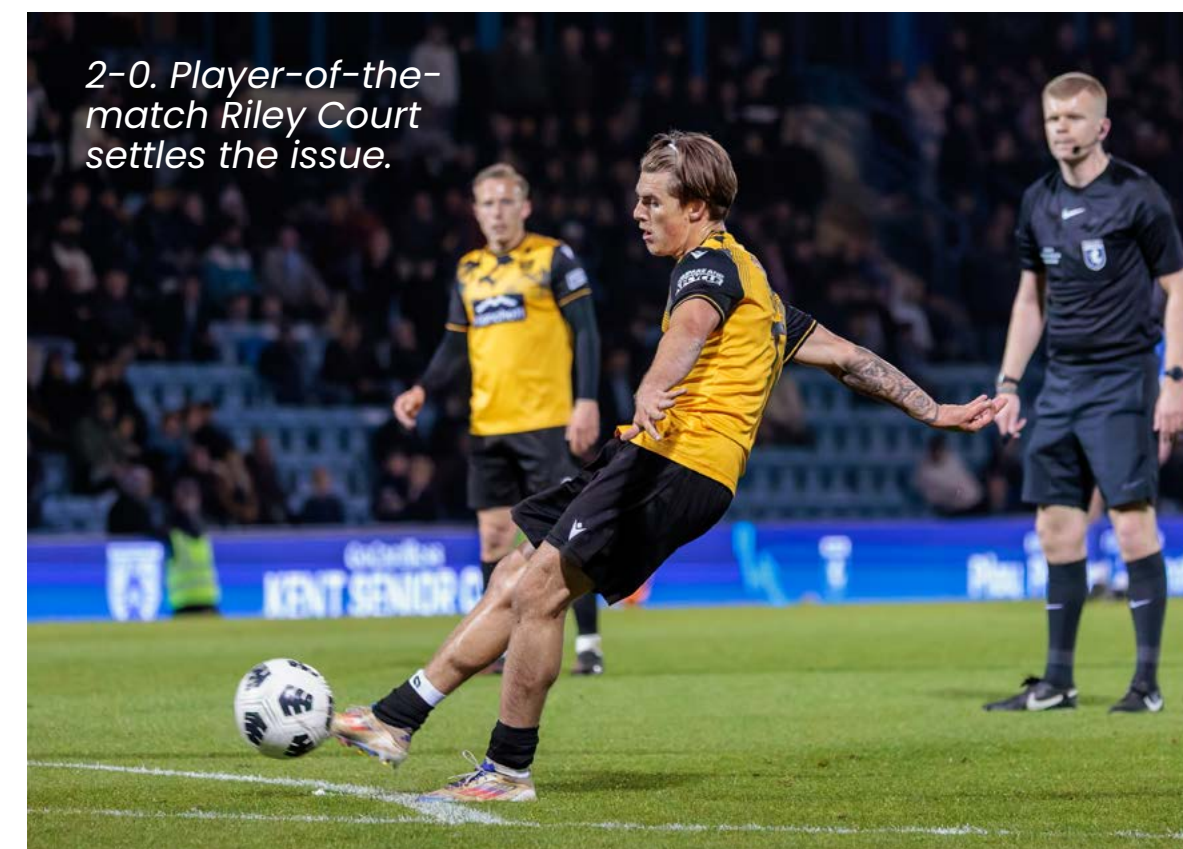
The "murderer" shout didn't just randomly emerge from one moron's mouth. Someone put an idea in his head and rather than dismiss it as grotesque, he chose to believe it, because George Elokobi manages a football team he dislikes. So did dozens if not hundreds of others.

The shift in the atmosphere probably worked in our favour, because any thought of taking it easy with Saturday in mind went out of the window. It's a bigger pitch than we're used to and Court in particular enjoyed the space. He forced Rowley into another good save just after the hour and then put in a cross that Boruk glanced wide.

Kargbo then saw Rowley off his line and tried to lob him from 50 yards. Gilbert did well to hold off a defender before hitting the bar and then the first proper eruption happened when Leo Hamblin was sent off, with ten minutes left, apparently for an off the ball incident.

Tonbridge went all in, leaving huge spaces at the back. Bakrin had their best chance when he headed wide, but Court had two one-on-ones and Yila, astonishingly, rolled the ball wide when he had an empty net to aim at.

It was such a glaring miss you had to wonder if Tonbridge would cash in, but their last real chance came when



2-0. Player-of-the-match Riley Court settles the issue.

Rowley went up for a corner and volleyed wide. Maidstone countered and won a free-kick on the edge of the box. Rather than play for possession, Court "flicked one" in at the near post, cueing "absolute scenes."

What actually happened? Up in the top tier at Gillingham you're a long way from the action and it's unwise to offer fatuous false equivalences, or to leap to conclusions that can make you look like a sanctimonious tosser.

There will undoubtedly be an investigation and it's very likely both clubs will get fined.

The PA man announced that: "In view of the events at the end of the game, it has been decided there will not be a presentation." He sounded like a headmaster announcing a class detention. Tonbridge's fans

and players had gone and the trophy was sitting on its pedestal in front of the 400 Maidstone fans in the Gordon Road stand.

Eventually it was lifted, although by then it was kicking off in the Directors' Box, with accusations flying and the word "wankers" being used with gay abandon. Security staff were still trying to force someone to leave in the lower deck.

Sean Scurr and I were the last to leave the upper tier. He was still wearing his amber suit when we walked past some of Tonbridge's entourage at the car park gates.

A woman's voice said, loudly: "Try not to run over any Maidstone fans."

I'm not sure if she meant us to hear or not, but we did. Maybe it was the vertigo induced by the moral highground.



A standard Wednesday night in Medway.

Upcoming Commentary

Bath City (A) Sat 25 April 2026 @ 1230 – Chris Bechervaise & Fred Atkins

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.

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The Back Page

The logical choice, staying on good terms with clubs and final day play-off equations ... it's **STEVE WATT'S** latest column



Watt's Occurring?

Craig's appointment is the logical choice

I wasn't surprised when the club announced that Craig Fagan would be taking over from George Elokobi.

In the Football League managers and their assistants are usually established partnerships who come and go together, but at this level it's more common for assistants to get an opportunity.

I don't think there's a downside: people could argue that he hasn't managed and therefore doesn't have experience, but he's been on the sidelines, he's been in those training sessions and he was a key part of all the great times you've had at the club with George – it's not as if he's just walked in off a building site, or finished a shift stacking the shelves at Tesco. His whole life has been football.

Now that he's in charge it's all about how he implements the things he wants to do. I've been an assistant in the past and I've taken things from certain managers: there are also things I knew I'd do differently when I was in charge. I'm sure he'll go on and do great

things there.

He was in the building, so the club knew what he was like and that may also have been a factor. In the past they've brought people in from the outside when they've made changes and it hasn't always worked. If there's someone already in the building you respect and like it makes sense to keep them on.

It seems George is leaving on good terms and it's important you leave a club with that level of respect. Football is a small world and it's a short career, both playing-wise and as a manager. You never know when you might need a favour from someone, whether it's for a loan player, or just a bit of advice.

It also means that in the future, every time the job comes up again, his name will be mentioned. This is exactly what happens with Jay Saunders and it'll happen whether he's employed elsewhere or not, although there is an expression in football that you're almost more likely to get a job if you've already got one. >

"It's not as if he's just walked in off a building site, or finished a shift stacking shelves at Tesco. His whole life has been football ..."



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Steve Watt at Salters Lane in 2013 for a friendly. He's now Faversham's assistant manager.

Faversham and Fran have relit my fire

< I'd been out of the game for two years before Frannie asked me to join him at Faversham, but even being there for this short period has rekindled my desire to get back in.

The players are great, there are some real characters in there and it's been a brilliant experience, one that I hope goes on for at least another week.

We're actually in a similar situation to Maidstone this weekend. We need to win at home to Three Bridges, who have already won the title, and hope that VCD can do us a favour and win at Sittingbourne.

Their goal difference is currently

three better than ours, so we might also end up in a situation where we need to chase another goal towards the end of the game. I've been in this situation before:

I was managing Hythe and we were in a three-way race for the final play-off place. Whatever happened, we needed to beat Haywards Heath, but our two rivals, Sheppey and Cray Valley were playing each other. If Cray won we were out regardless, but if they drew we were in. If Sheppey won by a single goal, however, we knew we'd have to win by six to get in.

At half-time we were 1-0 ahead, but so were Sheppey. We went for it and were 4-0 up but it could

have been 8-0. We'd created loads of chances and Fran, of all people, missed a penalty, so I was thinking please God, don't let us miss the play-offs because of that.

When we'd heard Cray had equalised we were in, but on 90 minutes they scored again and suddenly we were out. Four minutes later Sheppey equalised, making it 2-2, but we were following this on our phones and were waiting for what seemed like 25 minutes before we knew we'd got through.

It was one of my best days in football, but my point is that it's *really* important you take care of your result first.

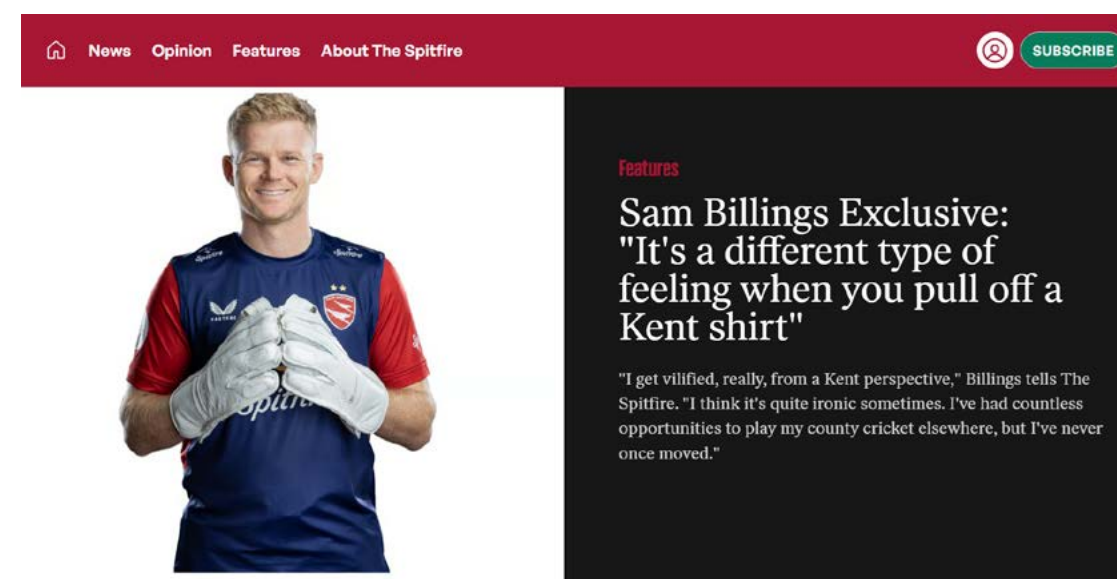


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The moment Riley Court became a top, top player? The goal that buried Bath earlier this season.

Our play-off chances are officially 35 percent

By Tom Rogers

After the cup final-turned-brawl on Wednesday night, George Elokobi will lead his team for possibly the last time in another must-win game on the final day of the season.

We make the long journey down for an early kick off against an already relegated Bath team knowing that a win and a couple of results elsewhere are needed if we are to be involved in next week's playoff eliminators.

We currently sit ninth, on 74 points, with a goal difference of plus 21. Maidenhead sits one place above us on 76, with a GD of 25, whilst Weston, Ebbsfleet and Torquay are all on 77 points and have GDs of 13, 21 and 24 respectively.

All this means we need two of those four sides to lose while winning ourselves at Bath (ideally by four or more goals to ensure a better GD than all of those above us).

Torquay visit Tonbridge, who would presumably rather kick the ball in their

own net than help us, while Ebbsfleet visit Worthing and Maidenhead go to Hornchurch, both of whom will be desperate to win to decide the title.

Weston host Dorking, who still sit third, yet look shot to pieces, with just one win in seven and four consecutive losses, all but eliminating them from title contention on the final day.

They do still need a win to ensure they stay in the play-offs though and get a home semi-final.

I've used a model to work out the probability based on bookmaker odds. It gives us a 35 percent chance of ending up in the playoff positions.

Fortunately for us, we should have the easiest job of all five teams. Bath City are doomed for the Southern League next season, having been in Step Two for fourteen years, they were relegated away to Totton a week and a half ago.

Since then, they won 3-1 away to Dorking and derailed their title challenge, majorly upsetting the odds, but no team has

"An unnamed Maidstone supporter attempted to molest the Bath City mascot, a bloke in a pig costume...."



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scored fewer goals than Bath, who going into Saturday have found the net just 48 times.

Scott Wilson has scored eight times this season, though two of them came for Weston during a mid-season loan there. He has, however, scored five since returning to the Romans in mid-March.

Will Jenkins-Davies began the season as a key figure but has managed just five minutes of football since the start of February, which saw Bath go on a fifteen-game winless run in the league and drop down the table.

On five previous trips to Bath, we've won twice, drawn twice and lost once with the sole defeat coming at the beginning of the 23-24 season, when we fell 3-0 at Twerton Park and Sol Wanjau-Smith missed a penalty.

My most memorable visit to Bath was during a 1-1 draw in late 2019 before COVID, when an unnamed Maidstone supporter attempted to molest the Bath City mascot, which was a bloke in a pig costume.

I pray for the sake of whoever volunteers to do that job there isn't a repeat of such an incident this weekend.

Leo Hamblin's red card from Wednesday night will not prevent him from participating in this game.



George Elokobi during a 1-1 draw with Bath in 2019.

It's likely that Holden, Fowler, Bramble, Tanga and Corne will all come into the side, having rotated the team on Wednesday.

Christie Pattisson, who was absent from the squad against the Angels, should be involved too, assuming he has recovered from the knock

against Worthing.

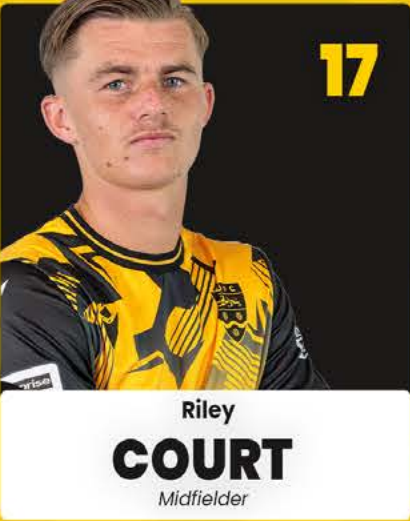
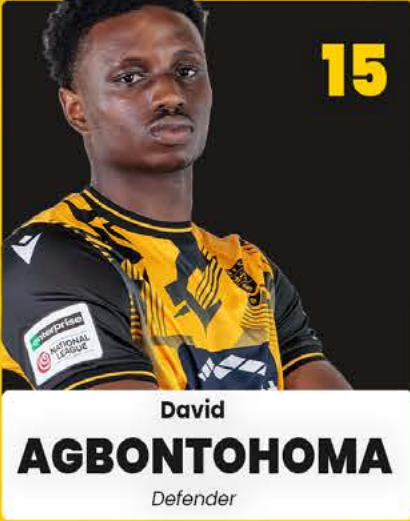
The odds suggest it is improbable we'll find a way into the top seven, but George has beaten far longer odds than this and it feels so typical of him and his tenure that there will be a spectacular ending to this season, one way or another.



Last season at Twerton Park - Sam Corne equalises in stoppage time to earn us a 3-3 draw.

MAIDSTONE UNITED

2025/26 SQUAD



Designed by MAIDSTONE UNITED SUPPORTERS CLUB IN VIETNAM

This is the end ...

This week, it's all about the final day. Coronations, title wins, non-events, disasters and side-splitting fancy-dress costumes. It all happens at the end of the season ...

1) Which team did we beat 6-0 to win the Alliance Premier League in 1984?

2) Our final game at the old London Road ground in 1988 was against Stafford Rangers, but who was our final away game against that season the following week?

3) Who were our last opponents in the GM Vauxhall Conference in May 1989?



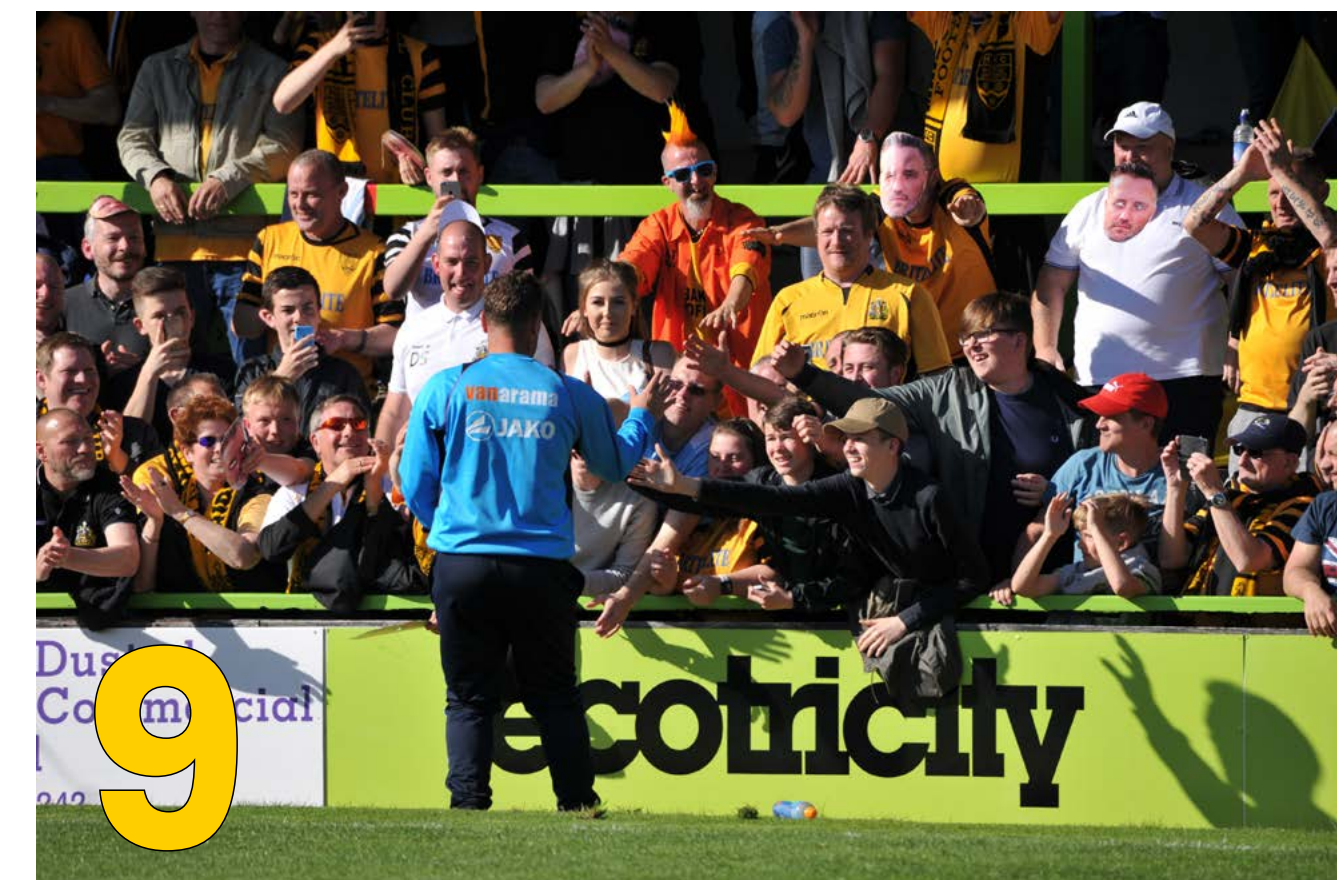
4) And who were our final opponents in Division Four, three years later?

5) Our first game at Sittingbourne was at the end of the 2000-01 season. We were nominally the away team against which South London side, who were reduced to eight men at the end?

6) Who did we beat 3-1 to secure the Kent League title on the final day of the 2001-02 season?

7) And who did we fail to beat on the final day a year later, handing the title to Cray Wanderers?

8) Which side came from 2-0 down to beat us 3-2 in our last game at Bourne Park in 2012?



9) In 2017 a bus load of fans wore Jay Saunders masks? Where were they going?

10) Have we ever been relegated on the final day of a season?



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Answers to Edition 34: George Elokobi Special

1) Where did George make his final appearance for Aldershot in 2019, alongside future Stones Jake Cole, Jake Gallagher, Scott Rendell, Matt McClure and Regan Booty?
The Gallagher Stadium, on April 27th. Aldershot won 2-0.

2) At which away venue did George wade into the crowd to deal with a heckler, while yelling "This is MY town!" in full kit? **Braintree.**

3) Which of his former managers joked that George was his "body double" only to be played by Steve Coogan in a historically fatuous film released this year? **Mick McCarthy.**

4) Against whom did George score his first Maidstone United goal? **Hemel Hempstead, the equaliser in a 1-1 draw, on January 14th, 2020.**

5) And which side agreed to form a guard of honour for him when he was subbed during his final game as a player? **Hampton & Richmond in April 2022. (George scored the winner).**

6) Who were the opposition when he launched a clearance that went viral on social media? **Dulwich Hamlet. He hoofed the ball to Herne Hill.**

7) Who were the opponents and what was the score in George's first game as caretaker manager? **Notts County 2 Maidstone 2, 15th January 2023. We won 6-5 on penalties.**

8) Why did he say: "I want to take my babies home" during the FA Cup run? **He wanted to be drawn away to Wolves.**

9) Which performance prompted George to say that fans who booed were not true Maidstone United supporters? **A 0-0 draw with Hampton in August 2024.**

10) And what was his one-word catchphrase? **#Believe**



The independent source for Maidstone United news: Edition 35 (April 24th 2026)

Keeper smears 'striker's face with blood' shock

STRING HIM UP

The world of football was shaken to its core on Wednesday night when it was revealed that players had “celebrated” after winning a match.

A goalkeeper was accused of smearing a striker's head with his blood after a local cup final.

“It's a disgrace,” one commentator said. “Yes, I know the goalkeeper may have been violently assaulted, but I've never in my life seen anyone taunt an opposition player before.”

In a further shock development, a referee gave decisions supporters disagreed with.

NO EYELIDS BATTED

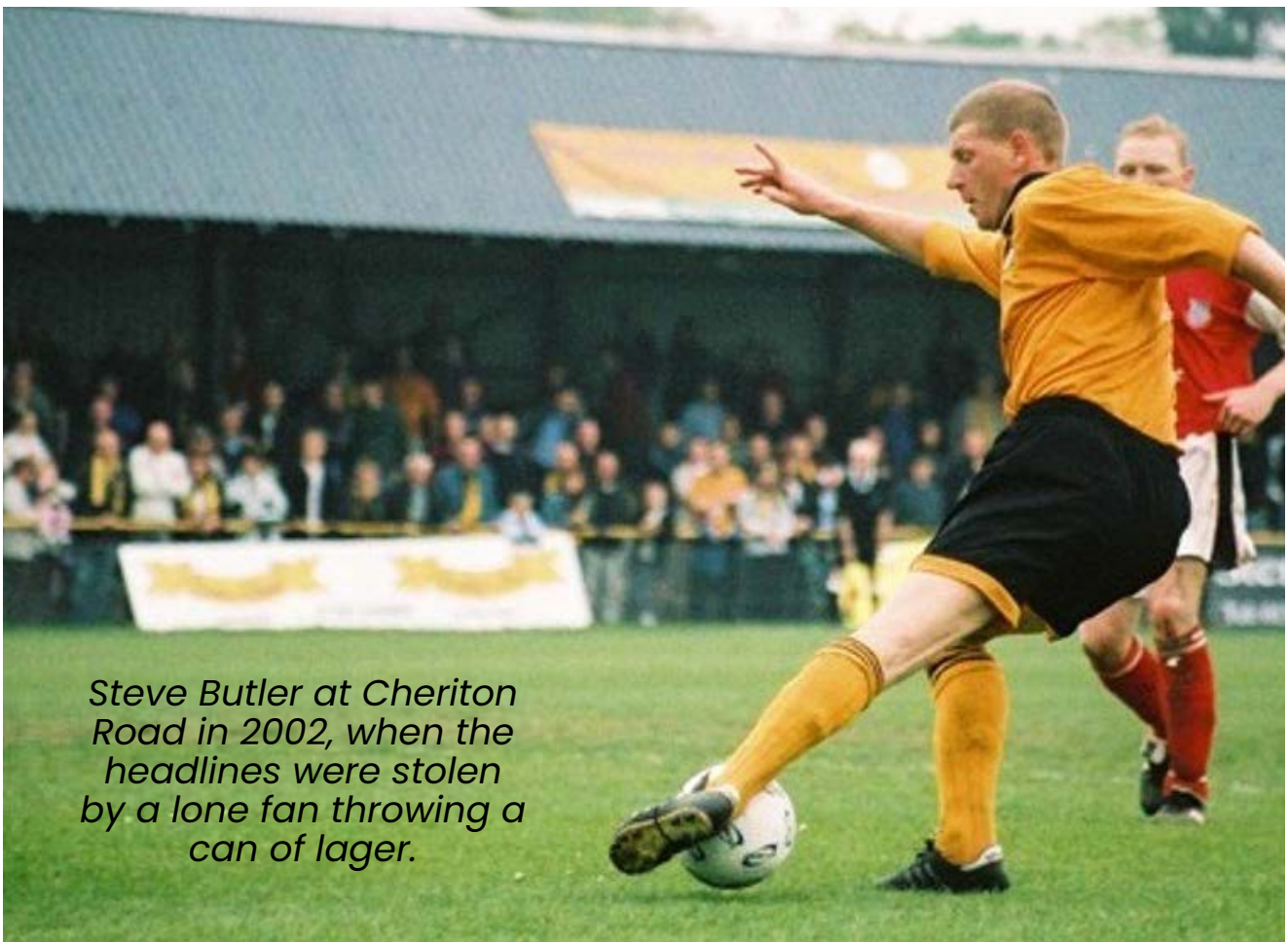
At the end of the 2001-02 season, Maidstone United took on Whitstable Town in the final of the Kent League Cup at Folkestone. We won 2-0 after extra-time, the goals coming from Steve Butler and Richard Sinden.

The attendance was 856 and the crowd was unsegregated. There was almost no trouble at all, but towards the end of the game a solitary moron threw a can of lager in the direction of the Whitstable keeper, Lee Hook.

I didn't think a lot of it at the time, but someone high up at the *Kent Messenger* disagreed and the story was sensationalised.

Fast forward 24 years and 50 Worthing fans are running around outside County Hall looking for a fight before the game and throwing lit pyros at Maidstone players after it.

A day after the game with Worthing, the Gallagher Stadium hosted the Kent Senior Trophy Final between Punjab FC and Whitstable



Steve Butler at Cheriton Road in 2002, when the headlines were stolen by a lone fan throwing a can of lager.

Town. On Monday Punjab posted a statement alleging that they were subjected to verbal and racial abuse.

“The experience has had a significant impact on many of our supporters,” the statement said. “Several have indicated they will not attend matches again and a number of young fans were left visibly distressed by what they witnessed.”

Whitstable's statement said they were unequivocally opposed to racism but added: “Whitstable Town Football Club does not accept that statement as a full and accurate reflection of the events that unfolded.”

And on social media, you can also read comments like this remark, apparently from a Whitstable fan:

“As for racial chanting, the only thing I can think of was you should have stuck to the cricket, which in my eyes is banter, not racism.”

That makes more sense if you translate it into the original Yorkshire.

Do we really have to say that none of this should have happened? Perhaps we do, because the Kent Online report of the final didn't mention it all, (although they were quick enough to jump on Wednesday night's festivities).

NO COMMENT

Standards might have changed, but the law hasn't. We're aware of the news that the former Maidstone player Jack Parkinson went on trial at Woolwich crown court last week.

Parkinson denies rape, sexual assault, three charges of sexual activity with a child and five causes of causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity.

The trial is ongoing, and we would strongly advise anyone thinking of posting anything online to read the Contempt of Court Act from 1981, which prohibits any reporting that creates “a substantial risk of serious prejudice” to the trial.