

SUSSEX NON LEAGUE

DUGOUT NEWS EXTRA

SPECIAL EDITION

BANK HOLIDAY
BONUS ISSUE

BANK
HOLIDAY
EXTRA

BANK HOLIDAY SPECIAL

RESULTS • REPORTS •
TABLES • FIXTURES

ALL THE BIG GAMES FROM
THE BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND

+ EXTRA COVERAGE
AFTER ISSUE 4

SUSSEX NON LEAGUE

YOUR WEEKEND • YOUR CLUB • YOUR GAME

FEATURED PRODUCT
DUGOUT 90



DUGOUT NEWS 4 EXTRA

The Bank Holiday Special · Tuesday 1 September 2026

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EDITOR'S BRIEF

BANK HOLIDAY CHAOS, GREAT FOOTBALL & ONE VERY UNRELIABLE CHAIR



BY MIKE MCCAFFREY · EDITOR

What a Bank Holiday weekend.

Goals, shocks, tired legs, managers losing their voices and supporters studying league tables like GCSE revision notes. Non-league football rarely disappoints, and once again Sussex gave us plenty to talk about.

That is why we have put together this special DUGOUT EXTRA — a quick round-up of the weekend action, results, tables and what is coming next.

Before anything else, though, I want to say a massive thank you.

More than 1,500 of you have downloaded the last two issues of Dugout News.

That level of support has been brilliant. From all of us involved in Dugout News and Dugout AI, genuinely, thank you.

Every download, share, message and bit of feedback helps us keep building this platform around non-league football.

Our aim with Dugout AI remains simple: support the clubs, players, managers, volunteers, photographers and supporters who make this level of the game what it is.

Whether that is through Dugout News, IN THE DUGOUT, Dugout Data Hub, our podcasts, live shows, match coverage, stats or social media, we want to give Sussex non-league football the platform it deserves.

I also want to give my sincere thanks to everyone at Broadbridge Heath FC for the hospitality shown to our team yesterday for the game against Peacehaven.

We were made to feel incredibly welcome and that is exactly the sort of thing that reminds you what non-league football is all about. Clubs opening their doors, people giving up their time and everyone sharing the same passion for the game. Thank you from all of us.

NOW, ABOUT THAT CHAIR...

Now, unfortunately, there is one other event from the weekend I apparently cannot ignore.

Yes. I fell off my chair during the IBB10 Show.

Slightly embarrassing? Very. Has everybody enjoyed watching it back at my expense? Massively.

But fair play — I have spent long enough taking the mickey out of everybody else, so it is probably about time the shoe was on the other foot. I am glad everyone got a laugh out of it.

The chair, however, remains under investigation.

BACK TO THE FOOTBALL

Results need covering. Clubs need supporting. Stories need telling. And we are going to continue doing everything we can to make Dugout AI a positive part of the non-league football community.

So enjoy this extra edition, have a look at the results, argue about the league tables and start predicting promotion far too early. That is what Bank Holiday football is all about.

And once again, to the 1,500+ of you who have downloaded the last two issues: thank you. It genuinely means a lot to all of us.

MIKE MCCAFFREY · EDITOR · DUGOUT NEWS

Sussex Non League — News. Results. Stats. Stories. Powered by Dugout AI.

See you in the dugout.

■ **DUGOUT NEWS**



BANK HOLIDAY RESULTS

Monday 31 August 2026

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

Boston United

2 - 3

AFC Hornchurch

Carlisle United

4 - 2

Scunthorpe United

Eastleigh

1 - 1

Aldershot Town

Forest Green Rovers

1 - 2

Altrincham

Harrogate Town

2 - 1

Gateshead

Kidderminster Harriers

1 - 1

Barrow

Solihull Moors

1 - 3

AFC Fylde

Sutton United

0 - 2

Wealdstone

Woking

1 - 1

Southend United

Worthing

2 - 3

Boreham Wood

Yeovil Town

3 - 2

Tamworth

HOW THEY STAND

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

	TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Boreham Wood	5	4	1	0	14	7	+7	13
2	Sutton United	5	4	0	1	7	3	+4	12
3	AFC Hornchurch	5	4	0	1	10	7	+3	12
4	Yeovil Town	5	3	2	0	10	5	+5	11
5	Harrogate Town	5	3	1	1	13	9	+4	10
6	AFC Fylde	5	3	1	1	11	7	+4	10
7	Southend United	5	3	1	1	9	6	+3	10
8	Eastleigh	5	3	1	1	7	5	+2	10
9	Carlisle United	5	2	2	1	12	8	+4	8
10	Aldershot Town	5	2	2	1	6	4	+2	8
11	Kidderminster Harriers	5	2	2	1	6	6	0	8
12	Hartlepool United	4	2	0	2	4	3	+1	6
13	Boston United	5	2	0	3	6	6	0	6
14	Worthing	5	2	0	3	9	10	-1	6
15	Altrincham	5	2	0	3	5	7	-2	6
16	Forest Green Rovers	5	2	0	3	6	10	-4	6
17	Wealdstone	5	1	2	2	6	7	-1	5
18	Scunthorpe United	5	1	1	3	8	10	-2	4
19	Tamworth	5	1	1	3	10	14	-4	4
20	Woking	5	1	1	3	4	9	-5	4
21	FC Halifax Town	4	1	0	3	8	9	-1	3
22	Gateshead	5	1	0	4	4	8	-4	3
23	Barrow	5	0	2	3	5	9	-4	2
24	Solihull Moors	5	0	0	5	5	16	-11	0



THE WEEK AHEAD

Tuesday 1 – Sunday 6 September 2026

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Fixtures correct as of 1 September 2026 — check club channels for late changes

TUESDAY 1 SEPTEMBER

FC Halifax Town v Hartlepool United 7.45pm

FRIDAY 4 SEPTEMBER

Altrincham v Eastleigh 7.45pm

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER

Aldershot Town v FC Halifax Town 12.30pm

Southend United v Yeovil Town 12.30pm

AFC Fylde v Worthing 3pm

Barrow v Sutton United 3pm

Gateshead v Solihull Moors 3pm

Hartlepool United v Woking 3pm

AFC Hornchurch v Forest Green Rovers 3pm

Scunthorpe United v Harrogate Town 3pm

Tamworth v Boston United 3pm

Wealdstone v Kidderminster Harriers 3pm

Boreham Wood v Carlisle United 5.30pm

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BANK HOLIDAY RESULTS

Monday 31 August 2026

NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

Braintree Town

0 - 2

Farnborough

Chesham United

2 - 2

Dover Athletic

Dagenham & Redbridge

1 - 0

Slough Town

Dorking Wanderers

1 - 0

Truro City

Farnham Town

2 - 0

Torquay United

Folkestone Invicta

2 - 0

Hemel Hempstead Town

Hampton & Richmond Borough

1 - 4

Maidstone United

Maidenhead United

1 - 1

AFC Totton

Salisbury

1 - 0

Billericay Town

Tonbridge Angels

5 - 1

Walton & Hersham

Weston-super-Mare

1 - 1

Chelmsford City

HOW THEY STAND

NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

	TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Dagenham & Redbridge	6	5	0	1	8	4	+4	15
2	Maidstone United	6	4	1	1	14	7	+7	13
3	Folkestone Invicta	5	3	2	0	11	3	+8	11
4	Weston-super-Mare	6	3	2	1	12	5	+7	11
5	Tonbridge Angels	6	3	1	2	13	7	+6	10
6	Truro City	5	3	1	1	7	1	+6	10
7	Dorking Wanderers	6	3	1	2	10	5	+5	10
8	Farnborough	5	3	1	1	6	4	+2	10
9	Farnham Town	6	3	0	3	8	8	0	9
10	Horsham	5	2	2	1	6	4	+2	8
11	Dover Athletic	6	2	2	2	13	13	0	8
12	Salisbury	5	2	1	2	8	4	+4	7
13	Billerica Town	5	2	1	2	8	6	+2	7
14	Chesham United	6	2	1	3	10	9	+1	7
15	Chelmsford City	5	1	4	0	4	3	+1	7
16	Hemel Hempstead Town	6	2	1	3	6	8	-2	7
17	AFC Totton	5	2	1	2	3	8	-5	7
18	Maidenhead United	6	1	3	2	3	5	-2	6
19	Torquay United	6	1	3	2	4	7	-3	6
20	Braintree Town	5	1	1	3	7	13	-6	4
21	Hampton & Richmond Borough	6	1	1	4	7	18	-11	4
22	Ebbsfleet United	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	Slough Town	5	0	0	5	6	14	-8	0
24	Walton & Hersham	6	0	0	6	3	21	-18	0

Ebbsfleet United are yet to play a league game this season.



THE WEEK AHEAD

Tuesday 1 – Sunday 6 September 2026

NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH

Fixtures correct as of 1 September 2026 — check club channels for late changes

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER – ALL 3PM

AFC Totton v Hampton & Richmond Borough

Billericay Town v Dorking Wanderers

Chelmsford City v Salisbury

Dover Athletic v Maidenhead United

Farnborough v Tonbridge Angels

Hemel Hempstead Town v Farnham Town

Horsham v Dagenham & Redbridge

Maidstone United v Weston-super-Mare

Slough Town v Braintree Town

Torquay United v Folkestone Invicta

Truro City v Chesham United

Walton & Hersham v Ebbsfleet United

“LEAVING ONE ON HIM” – WHEN DOES FOOTBALL CROSS THE LINE?



BY PAUL WISE

An incident in the Dartford v Welling United game at the weekend has got me thinking about something in football that perhaps we don't talk about enough.

Dartford's Joe Tennent suffered serious facial injuries following a challenge and now requires surgery. I've watched the footage, as I'm sure plenty of others have, and it's uncomfortable viewing.

I want to make something absolutely clear from the outset. I don't know what was said before the incident, what instructions were given, what had happened previously in the game or what was going through either player's mind. I've seen suggestions that there may have been an element of retaliation, but I don't know that to be the case and it would be completely wrong of me to speculate about the motives of anyone involved.

What the incident did do was make me think about situations we've all witnessed in football.

A player gets clattered, so somebody decides he'll get one back later. A substitute gets wound up before coming onto the pitch. An opposition player is causing problems, so someone is told to “let him know you're there”.

Or that old football favourite:

“Leave one on him.”

At what point does that stop being football?

I'VE BEEN GUILTY OF IT

I'd be a hypocrite if I sat here pretending I'd never contributed to that culture.

When I was managing, I took pride in having a team that could “make things horrible” for the opposition.

On more than one occasion I've told one of my players to take somebody out of the game. I've encouraged players to get under an opponent's skin and try to provoke a reaction, hoping he'd lash out and get himself sent off.

At the time, I called it game management. I wanted to win. And I demanded that my players followed what I said almost as gospel.

Being away from the dugout has perhaps allowed me to look at some of those instructions differently.

What if one of my players had interpreted “take him out of the game” differently from how I'd intended it?

What if I'd wound a player up, sent him onto the pitch full of aggression and he'd seriously injured somebody?

Could I really have stood there afterwards and said, “Well, I didn't mean that”? I'm not sure I could.

If I'm demanding that players follow my instructions, then I also have to accept responsibility for the tone of those instructions. If a player interpreted something I'd said as an instruction to hurt somebody, ultimately some of that responsibility would have been mine.

That's uncomfortable for me to admit, but it's true.

FOOTBALL HAS TO REMAIN PHYSICAL

None of this means I want tackling taken out of football. Quite the opposite.

There's not much better in football than a perfectly timed, hard tackle. A proper challenge can lift a crowd and change the momentum of a game. Football is a contact sport and it needs to remain one.

If you've got a centre-half who's physically intimidating, use it. If you've got a midfielder who loves a tackle, use it. If your team's strength is being aggressive, competitive and horrible to play against, why wouldn't you use that?

Managers should play to their players' strengths. But perhaps we need to become better at distinguishing between controlled aggression and dangerous aggression.

Make it horrible for them. Just don't make it dangerous for them. Because there is a fine line.

"PART OF THE GAME"

Football has always had its own language for things that, when you actually stop and think about them, sound quite sinister.

"Leave one on him." "Give him one back." "Take the yellow." "Put him in the stand." "Let him know you're there."

We hear those expressions so often that we barely question them.

Usually nothing particularly serious happens. Somebody gets knocked over, there's a bit of pushing and shoving, the referee produces a yellow card and everybody gets on with it.

But occasionally somebody doesn't get up. And that's when the language suddenly feels very different.

A serious injury doesn't automatically mean a challenge was malicious. That's important.

A perfectly fair tackle can unfortunately result in a broken leg. Equally, somebody can make an appalling challenge and the other player can get straight back up. So we can't judge intention purely by the injury that follows.

But surely there is a point where an action is so far removed from genuinely trying to play football that we have to ask whether "part of the game" is still an adequate explanation.

THESE PLAYERS HAVE WORK ON MONDAY

This becomes particularly relevant in non-league football.

For the overwhelming majority of players at this level, football isn't their only livelihood. They've got work on Monday morning. They're builders, electricians, delivery drivers, office workers, teachers and self-employed tradesmen.

A serious injury doesn't just mean missing six Saturdays. It can mean being unable to work. It can mean losing income. It can affect a mortgage, a business and a family.

And when we're talking about serious head or facial injuries, the consequences can potentially be far greater than football or employment.

That's something I'm not convinced I thought about enough when I was standing in a dugout demanding that my players make life horrible for the opposition.

WHERE DOES RESPONSIBILITY END?

We naturally look at the player making the challenge. But what about the manager?

If I tell an aggressive player to go out there and "leave one on" somebody, and he seriously injures that opponent, can I completely absolve myself because I wasn't the person making the tackle? Personally, I don't think I can.

Managers have enormous influence over the mentality of their teams. You can send a player onto a pitch calm and focused. You can also send him onto a pitch absolutely raging.

I've been guilty in the past of wanting that aggression from my players because I believed it gave my team an edge. And to an extent, I still believe that.

I would still want my team to be physical. I'd still want opponents to know they were in a game. I'd still use an intimidating player's physical presence as a strength.

What I'd perhaps think about more now is the responsibility that comes with giving those instructions. Because once you've lit the fuse, you don't necessarily get to decide how far it burns.

WHEN DOES IT BECOME SOMETHING ELSE?

This is ultimately the question I've found myself asking.

Players consent to playing a physical contact sport. They accept tackles, collisions and a degree of risk every time they cross the white line. But they surely don't consent to absolutely everything another player might choose to do to them.

Imagine an act of deliberate physical aggression that happened during a match. Now imagine exactly the same act happening in the tunnel five minutes after the final whistle. Would we judge it differently? What if it happened in the car park? Or in a pub later that evening?

At what point does a football matter stop being solely a football matter?

I'm not suggesting the police should be called every time somebody makes a bad tackle. That would be ridiculous.

Football happens at speed. Tackles are mistimed. Players make poor decisions in fractions of a second. Emotions run high and accidents happen. That's football.

But deliberate retaliation, intentionally trying to hurt an opponent and challenges with no genuine footballing purpose surely occupy a different

territory.

And perhaps football occasionally gives people protection from asking difficult questions simply because something happened between two white lines.

MAYBE I'VE CHANGED MY VIEW

Perhaps being away from management has changed my perspective.

I loved having a team that was horrible to play against. I still would.

But looking back, I'm not sure I always considered the potential consequences of the language I used or the aggression I encouraged. Thankfully, I never had to deal with the worst possible consequences of that. But seeing incidents like the one at Dartford makes you think.

We should never remove physicality from football. We shouldn't discourage hard tackling, aggression or intimidating opponents within the Laws of the Game. They're part of what makes football competitive.

But managers and players perhaps need to understand the responsibility that comes with that aggression.

Because "leave one on him" sounds harmless when you're standing in a dugout trying to win three points. It sounds very different when somebody is lying in a hospital bed.

And maybe the question football needs to ask itself is a simple one:

**Where does "part of the game" end –
and something much more serious
begin?**

■ **DUGOUT NEWS**



BANK HOLIDAY RESULTS

Monday 31 August 2026

ISTHMIAN PREMIER DIVISION

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

Cheshunt

1 - 1

St Albans City

Cray Wanderers

4 - 1

Welling United

Dartford

1 - 0

Chatham Town

Leatherhead

2 - 3

Dulwich Hamlet

Lewes

1 - 0

Eastbourne Borough

Ramsgate

5 - 1

Whyteleafe

Stanway Rovers

0 - 2

Aveley

Three Bridges

3 - 2

Carshalton Athletic

Whitehawk

1 - 1

Burgess Hill Town

Wingate & Finchley

1 - 4

Enfield Town

Postponed: Brentwood Town v Maldon & Tiptree

HOW THEY STAND

ISTHMIAN PREMIER DIVISION

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

	TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Enfield Town	6	5	0	1	20	7	+13	15
2	Carshalton Athletic	6	5	0	1	12	5	+7	15
3	Lewes	6	4	1	1	8	5	+3	13
4	Welling United	6	4	0	2	12	8	+4	12
5	Dartford	6	4	0	2	8	8	0	12
6	Dulwich Hamlet	6	3	1	2	14	8	+6	10
7	Aveley	6	3	1	2	12	8	+4	10
8	Leatherhead	6	3	1	2	12	11	+1	10
9	St Albans City	6	3	1	2	10	10	0	10
10	Ramsgate	6	3	0	3	15	8	+7	9
11	Chatham Town	6	3	0	3	12	9	+3	9
12	Burgess Hill Town	6	2	3	1	9	7	+2	9
13	Cray Wanderers	5	2	2	1	8	5	+3	8
14	Wingate & Finchley	6	2	2	2	8	11	-3	8
15	Eastbourne Borough	6	2	1	3	9	10	-1	7
16	Maldon & Tiptree	4	2	0	2	6	9	-3	6
17	Cheshunt	6	0	5	1	4	6	-2	5
18	Three Bridges	6	1	1	4	11	18	-7	4
19	Brentwood Town	5	1	0	4	5	9	-4	3
20	Whitehawk	6	0	2	4	4	14	-10	2
21	Whyteleafe	6	0	2	4	6	17	-11	2
22	Stanway Rovers	6	0	1	5	3	15	-12	1



THE WEEK AHEAD

Tuesday 1 – Sunday 6 September 2026

ISTHMIAN PREMIER DIVISION

Fixtures correct as of 1 September 2026 — check club channels for late changes

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER – EMIRATES FA CUP, FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Aveley	✓	Cheshunt	
Whitehawk	✓	Eastbourne Borough	
Lewes	✓	Cray Wanderers	3pm
Cambridge City	✓	Maldon & Tiptree	
Chertsey Town	✓	Carshalton Athletic	
Concord Rangers	✓	Brentwood Town	
Crowborough Athletic	✓	Whyteleafe	
Dulwich Hamlet	✓	East Grinstead Town	
Egham Town	✓	Chatham Town	
Faversham Town	✓	Welling United	3pm
Frenford	✓	Enfield Town	3pm
Leatherhead	✓	AFC Croydon Athletic	
Ramsgate	✓	Bracknell Town	
St Albans City	✓	Hashtag United	
Stanway Rovers	✓	Needham Market	
Three Bridges	✓	Kingstonian	
Westfield	✓	Dartford	3pm
Wingate & Finchley	✓	Felixstowe & Walton United	

No league fixtures this week — all 22 clubs are on FA Cup duty. Next league round: Saturday 12 September.

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BANK HOLIDAY RESULTS

Monday 31 August 2026

ISTHMIAN SOUTH EAST DIVISION

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

AFC Croydon Athletic

2 - 0

Cray Valley PM

Sittingbourne

3 - 2

Ashford United

Broadbridge Heath

3 - 0

Peacehaven & Telscombe

Hastings United

4 - 3

Crowborough Athletic

Deal Town

1 - 3

Herne Bay

Eastbourne Town

0 - 1

Steyping Town

Erith Town

5 - 1

Punjab United

Faversham Town

3 - 2

Sheppey United

South Park Reigate

1 - 2

Horley Town

Whitstable Town

0 - 3

Margate

Sevenoaks Town

1 - 1

Merstham

HOW THEY STAND

ISTHMIAN SOUTH EAST DIVISION

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

	TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Hastings United	4	4	0	0	11	5	+6	12
2	Margate	4	3	1	0	6	1	+5	10
3	Sittingbourne	4	3	1	0	8	5	+3	10
4	Erith Town	3	3	0	0	11	1	+10	9
5	Broadbridge Heath	3	2	1	0	9	3	+6	7
6	Faversham Town	3	2	1	0	9	6	+3	7
7	Herne Bay	2	2	0	0	6	1	+5	6
8	AFC Croydon Athletic	4	2	0	2	6	5	+1	6
9	Merstham	3	1	2	0	7	5	+2	5
10	Eastbourne Town	4	1	1	2	6	4	+2	4
11	South Park Reigate	3	1	1	1	5	4	+1	4
12	Peacehaven & Telscombe	4	1	1	2	7	11	-4	4
13	Sheppey United	4	1	0	3	6	7	-1	3
14	Ashford United	3	1	0	2	5	6	-1	3
15	Cray Valley PM	4	0	3	1	3	5	-2	3
16	Crowborough Athletic	4	1	0	3	5	8	-3	3
17	Steyning Town	4	1	0	3	2	6	-4	3
18	Whitstable Town	4	1	0	3	4	10	-6	3
19	Horley Town	4	1	0	3	3	11	-8	3
20	Punjab United	3	0	2	1	4	8	-4	2
21	Sevenoaks Town	4	0	2	2	4	9	-5	2
22	Deal Town	3	0	0	3	4	10	-6	0



THE WEEK AHEAD

Tuesday 1 – Sunday 6 September 2026

ISTHMIAN SOUTH EAST DIVISION

Fixtures correct as of 1 September 2026 — check club channels for late changes

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER – LEAGUE, ALL 3PM

Ashford United v Eastbourne Town

Broadbridge Heath v Merstham

Cray Valley PM v Sevenoaks Town

Horley Town v Hastings United

Peacehaven & Telscombe v Deal Town

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER – EMIRATES FA CUP, FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Crowborough Athletic v Whyteleafe

Faversham Town v Welling United 3pm

SE Dons v Erith Town

Leatherhead v AFC Croydon Athletic

Margate v Snodland Town

Sittingbourne v AFC Greenwich Borough

Redhill v Sheppey United

Hanworth Villa v Whitstable Town

No fixture this week: Herne Bay, Steyning Town, Punjab United, South Park Reigate.

WHY NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL MEANS SO MUCH TO ME

**BY LEE PENN**

I've been a football fan since I was five years old. Like so many others, I grew up watching the Premier League, following the big clubs and dreaming about the game.

But many, many years later, I discovered something that completely changed the way I looked at football: non-league football. And honestly, I haven't looked back since.

Yes, I'm a Shoreham boy, so plenty of people already know which team I support — Shoreham, obviously! Shock, I know.

But for me, non-league football has never just been about the 90 minutes on a Saturday. It's about the whole experience.

**It's waking up on a Saturday morning
and thinking: "Where am I going
today?"**

You can head to a different ground every week, meet new people, watch different teams and experience something completely different each time. But one thing that always stands out to me is that wherever you go, you feel welcome.

That is what makes non-league football so special.

People get to know you. You get to know the supporters, the players, the managers and the people behind the clubs. Over time, those small conversations turn into friendships, and those friendships become relationships that stretch across the whole non-league community.

For me, that's the feeling you want from football. It's about belonging.

Over the years, my love for non-league football has also taken me on a journey I never expected. I now have my own non-league football YouTube channel, an award-winning podcast and the opportunity to share my experiences with even more people.

What started with simply loving football has grown into something much bigger.

And now, being sponsored by Padel King is another huge milestone in that journey. To have a brand believe in what I'm doing and want to be part of it means a lot.

When I look back at being that five-year-old football fan, I never could have imagined where the game would take me.

From watching the Premier League as a kid, to discovering the incredible world of non-league football, to creating content, meeting amazing people and building relationships throughout the game — it has been some journey.

And the best thing? I'm still loving every minute of it.

So, wherever I end up on a Saturday, whatever ground I'm visiting and whoever I'm watching, I'll always have the same feeling:

This is why I love football.

■ **DUGOUT NEWS**



BANK HOLIDAY RESULTS

Monday 31 August 2026

ISTHMIAN SOUTH CENTRAL DIVISION

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

Ascot United

1 - 3

Windsor & Eton

Binfield

0 - 1

Hartley Wintney

Bognor Regis Town

2 - 1

Moneyfields

Hayes & Yeading United

4 - 3

Harrow Borough

Hendon

3 - 3

Southall

Kingstonian

4 - 2

Raynes Park Vale

Jersey Bulls

2 - 1

Ashford Town (Middlesex)

Bedfont Sports

1 - 0

Cobham

Westfield

4 - 0

Egham Town

HOW THEY STAND

ISTHMIAN SOUTH CENTRAL DIVISION

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

	TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Hendon	4	3	1	0	14	5	+9	10
2	Bognor Regis Town	4	3	1	0	7	3	+4	10
3	Winchester City	3	3	0	0	13	1	+12	9
4	Westfield	4	2	1	1	8	6	+2	7
5	Jersey Bulls	3	2	1	0	4	2	+2	7
6	Bedfont Sports	4	2	1	1	5	4	+1	7
7	Southall	4	1	3	0	10	8	+2	6
8	Windsor & Eton	3	2	0	1	6	5	+1	6
9	Raynes Park Vale	4	2	0	2	6	12	-6	6
10	Kingstonian	3	1	2	0	7	5	+2	5
11	Ascot United	4	1	1	2	9	8	+1	4
12	Hayes & Yeading United	3	1	1	1	6	7	-1	4
13	Ashford Town (Middlesex)	3	1	0	2	7	5	+2	3
14	AFC Portchester	3	0	3	0	1	1	0	3
15	Cobham	3	1	0	2	3	4	-1	3
16	Hartley Wintney	2	1	0	1	1	2	-1	3
17	Egham Town	3	1	0	2	2	9	-7	3
18	Moneyfields	4	0	2	2	5	7	-2	2
19	Harrow Borough	3	0	1	2	5	7	-2	1
20	AFC Stoneham	1	0	0	1	1	4	-3	0
21	Littlehampton Town	3	0	0	3	2	7	-5	0
22	Binfield	4	0	0	4	2	12	-10	0



THE WEEK AHEAD

Tuesday 1 – Sunday 6 September 2026

ISTHMIAN SOUTH CENTRAL DIVISION

Fixtures correct as of 1 September 2026 — check club channels for late changes

TUESDAY 1 SEPTEMBER – LEAGUE, 7.45PM

AFC Portchester v AFC Stoneham

Littlehampton Town v Winchester City

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER – LEAGUE, ALL 3PM

Harrow Borough v Littlehampton Town

Raynes Park Vale v Bognor Regis Town

Winchester City v Bedfont Sports

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER – EMIRATES FA CUP, FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

AFC Portchester v Portland United 3pm

Ascot United v Pagham

Basingstoke Town v AFC Stoneham 3pm

Burgess Hill Town v Jersey Bulls

Egham Town v Chatham Town

Hayes & Yeading United v Camberley Town

Hendon v Hullbridge Sports

Petts Wood & Holmesdale v Windsor & Eton

Southall v Cobham

Three Bridges v Kingstonian

Westfield v Dartford 3pm

Postponed due to FA Cup involvement: Ashford Town (Middlesex) v Westfield, Moneyfields v AFC Portchester.

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BANK HOLIDAY RESULTS

Monday 31 August 2026

SCFL PREMIER DIVISION

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

AFC Varndeanians

0 - 0

Hassocks

Billingshurst

1 - 1

Crawley Down Gatwick

East Grinstead Town

3 - 1

Forest Row

Eastbourne United

8 - 2

Bexhill United

Little Common

3 - 1

Seaford Town

Midhurst & Easebourne

3 - 2

Lancing

Newhaven

1 - 5

Haywards Heath Town

Pagham

3 - 0

Wick

Roffey

4 - 1

Horsham YMCA

HOW THEY STAND

SCFL PREMIER DIVISION

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

	TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Eastbourne United	7	5	1	1	26	10	+16	16
2	Haywards Heath Town	6	5	1	0	13	4	+9	16
3	Pagham	5	4	0	1	17	7	+10	12
4	Guernsey	5	3	2	0	9	4	+5	11
5	AFC Varndeanians	6	3	2	1	7	5	+2	11
6	Roffey	6	3	1	2	17	9	+8	10
7	Midhurst & Easebourne	5	3	1	1	12	6	+6	10
8	Newhaven	5	3	1	1	7	8	-1	10
9	Crawley Down Gatwick	7	2	3	2	11	10	+1	9
10	Hassocks	5	2	2	1	13	8	+5	8
11	East Grinstead Town	6	2	2	2	10	8	+2	8
12	Lingfield	5	2	1	2	11	12	-1	7
13	Bexhill United	5	2	1	2	8	12	-4	7
14	Seaford Town	5	2	0	3	8	9	-1	6
15	Billingshurst	7	1	2	4	14	18	-4	5
16	Horsham YMCA	6	1	1	4	8	13	-5	4
17	Lancing	6	1	0	5	7	16	-9	3
18	Little Common	5	1	0	4	5	17	-12	3
19	Wick	5	1	0	4	5	17	-12	3
20	Forest Row	7	0	1	6	7	22	-15	1



THE WEEK AHEAD

Tuesday 1 – Sunday 6 September 2026

SCFL PREMIER DIVISION

Fixtures correct as of 1 September 2026 — check club channels for late changes

WEDNESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER – LEAGUE, 8PM

Lingfield v Guernsey

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER – LEAGUE

Guernsey v Eastbourne United 1.30pm

Forest Row v Seaford Town 3pm

Hassocks v Billingshurst 3pm

Horsham YMCA v Lingfield 3pm

Lancing v Newhaven 3pm

Midhurst & Easebourne v Bexhill United 3pm

Wick v AFC Varndeanians 3pm

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER – EMIRATES FA CUP, FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Uxbridge v Haywards Heath Town

Ascot United v Pagham

Dulwich Hamlet v East Grinstead Town

No fixture this week: Roffey, Crawley Down Gatwick, Little Common. FA Vase Second Qualifying Round ties follow on 12 September.

LANCING 1-3 EASTBOURNE UNITED: LEAGUE LEADERS CLAIM THE POINTS



BY BRANDON WRIGHT · X: @BRANDONWRIGHT5

Eastbourne United maintained their position at the top of the Southern Combination Football League Premier Division with a 3–1 victory over Lancing on a wet and windy Saturday afternoon.

Lancing made the perfect start by taking the lead inside the opening minute. Daniel Bull was penalised for handball inside the area, allowing captain Scott Packer to convert the resulting penalty and put the home side 1–0 ahead.

Eastbourne responded impressively and equalised in the seventh minute. Samuel Scott delivered a dangerous cross into the box, and James Hull headed the ball in off the crossbar to bring the visitors level.

The match remained open as both teams searched for the next goal. Lancing were awarded a free-kick in a promising position after Dylan Hurst was fouled, but Eastbourne goalkeeper Alieu Secka produced a fine save to preserve the 1–1 scoreline.

Eastbourne then began to apply more pressure, although Lancing continued to defend well. At the other end, Antoine Sharpe tested Secka with an effort that the goalkeeper pushed away.

The visitors completed the turnaround in the 39th minute. A pass from Samuel Scott released Callum Barlow, who cut inside from the byline and finished beyond Lancing goalkeeper Callum Monks to give Eastbourne a 2–1 lead at the interval.

Lancing started the second half positively and won an early corner. Ryan Plummer's delivery eventually fell to Mo Khedidji, but the Eastbourne defence reacted quickly to clear the danger.

The visitors continued to threaten. Monks made a comfortable save following an Eastbourne break before Plummer blocked another effort and conceded a corner. The ball bounced around inside the penalty area, but Monks eventually gathered it safely.

After 65 minutes, Rhyle Ovenden came close to scoring directly from a corner when his delivery struck the crossbar. Charlie Ball then forced an excellent save from Monks as Eastbourne looked to extend their advantage.

Lancing continued to compete and created an opportunity on the break, but the resulting effort sailed over the crossbar. Eastbourne also threatened from a series of late corners without initially finding a decisive third goal.

The key moment arrived during the closing stages when Callum Barlow made an excellent run into the penalty area and was brought down by Packer. The Lancing captain received his second yellow card and was sent off, leaving Lancing with 10 men.

James Hull converted the resulting penalty in the 88th minute, scoring his second goal of the afternoon to make it 3–1 and secure all three points for the league leaders.

Lancing defended several further corners during the closing stages, but there was no way back for the hosts. Eastbourne United left with a deserved victory and retained their place at the top of the SCFL Premier Division.

FULL-TIME: LANCING 1-3 EASTBOURNE UNITED

LANCING

Callum Monks, Isac Brown, Ryan Plummer, Scott Packer (goal 2, sent off 88), Alfie Knight, Matthew Simpson, Emmanuel N'Cho, Dylan Hurst (Dyan Walter 68), Antoine Sharpe (Rob Deda 84), Mo Khedidji (Alex Lang 68).

Unused substitutes: Denzel Dube, Samuel-Elie N'Cho.

EASTBOURNE UNITED

Alieu Secka, Callum Barlow (goal 39; Baran Kartal 81), Charlie Ball (Charlie Purvis 90), Alfie Gander (Oliver Hull 67), Daniel Hull, James Hull (goals 7, 88; Teddy Loft 90), Jorge Nones, Rhyle Ovenden, Joseph Overy (James Stone 67), Brett Patton, Sam Scott.

Attendance: 174

■ **DUGOUT NEWS**

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BANK HOLIDAY RESULTS

Monday 31 August 2026

SCFL DIVISION ONE

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

AFC Walcountians

0 - 0

Dial Square

Clanfield

3 - 0

Selsey

East Preston

4 - 0

Shoreham

Guildford City

1 - 1

Loxwood

Hailsham Town

1 - 1

Saltdean United

Infinity

3 - 0

Arundel

Mile Oak

1 - 1

Worthing United

Oakwood

1 - 2

Jarvis Brook

Reigate Priory

4 - 1

Dorking Wanderers B

Ringmer AFC

1 - 1

Westfield

HOW THEY STAND

SCFL DIVISION ONE

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

	TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	AFC Walcountians	5	4	1	0	13	2	+11	13
2	Infinity	5	4	0	1	12	5	+7	12
3	Guildford City	5	3	2	0	15	2	+13	11
4	Worthing United	4	3	1	0	19	2	+17	10
5	Arundel	6	3	1	2	12	13	-1	10
6	Westfield	5	2	2	1	8	5	+3	8
7	Hailsham Town	5	2	1	2	11	7	+4	7
8	East Preston	4	2	1	1	7	3	+4	7
9	Saltdean United	3	2	1	0	7	4	+3	7
10	Mile Oak	5	2	1	2	9	8	+1	7
11	Jarvis Brook	5	2	1	2	6	6	0	7
12	Dial Square	5	2	1	2	5	6	-1	7
13	Reigate Priory	5	2	0	3	12	9	+3	6
14	Selsey	5	2	0	3	5	12	-7	6
15	Loxwood	4	1	1	2	6	7	-1	4
16	Clanfield	4	1	0	3	4	7	-3	3
17	Shoreham	5	1	0	4	3	16	-13	3
18	Oakwood	5	1	0	4	3	18	-15	3
19	Ringmer AFC	5	0	2	3	3	14	-11	2
20	Dorking Wanderers B	6	0	2	4	6	20	-14	2



THE WEEK AHEAD

Tuesday 1 – Sunday 6 September 2026

SCFL DIVISION ONE

Fixtures correct as of 1 September 2026 — check club channels for late changes

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER – LEAGUE, ALL 3PM

Dial Square v Mile Oak

Dorking Wanderers B v Ringmer AFC

East Preston v Arundel

Guildford City v Infinity

Jarvis Brook v Hailsham Town

Saltdean United v Oakwood

Selsey v AFC Walcountians

Shoreham v Loxwood

Westfield v Reigate Priory

Worthing United v Clanfield

RINGMER AFC 1-1 WESTFIELD



BY JACK STAPLEY

Westfield travelled to Ringmer on Bank Holiday Monday looking to build on the back of a brilliant home victory over Mile Oak.

Wearing their striking new away kit, the Westies made two changes to the starting XI, with Josh Pickering and Dan Tewkesbury coming into the side in place of George Murphy and the injured Tommy Buckley.

From the off, Westfield looked lethargic, and the opening stages were characterised by mistakes from both sides as tired legs appeared to take their toll.

Ringmer took the lead after just four minutes. A corner caused problems inside the Westfield six-yard box, with a Ringmer player left with a free header from close range. Westfield will rue the poor defending that allowed the opportunity to arise.

The setback did, however, kick Westfield into life, and within a minute they were level.

Austin Kent broke down the right before slipping the ball into Dan Tewkesbury. His initial effort was saved by the Ringmer goalkeeper, but Tewkesbury reacted quickest to the rebound, calmly burying the ball with his left foot to restore parity.

Much of the remainder of the half was played out in midfield, with both sides enjoying spells of possession but neither able to produce the quality needed in the final third.

On 27 minutes, Westfield thought they had completed the comeback. Josh Pickering brilliantly hooked the ball home over his head, only for the

goal to be ruled out after he was harshly penalised for a foul in the build-up.

HALF TIME: RINGMER AFC 1-1 WESTFIELD

The second half followed a similar pattern to the first, with both teams guilty of mistakes and the final ball regularly lacking the required quality.

Westfield, though, began to take command of the chances.

Ward fired wide from the edge of the box, before Austin Kent twice came close with long-range efforts, both narrowly missing the crossbar.

The golden opportunity to put Westfield ahead arrived on 65 minutes.

Captain Pritchard won the ball on the halfway line and drove forward, carrying the ball into the Ringmer penalty area. He turned inside brilliantly before unleashing an effort that crashed back off the post, agonisingly close to putting the visitors in front.

Ringmer began to grow into the second half and probed for an opening, although they struggled to seriously test Robertshaw in the Westfield goal.

The Westies almost snatched all three points late on when some neat interplay involving Ward created a glorious opportunity for Rwabigwi. Finding himself in space on the penalty spot, Rwabigwi looked destined to win it, but Ringmer goalkeeper Mizon produced a smart save with his feet to keep the scores level.

There was still time for one final major talking point.

Westfield believed they should have been awarded a penalty when Willetts' effort appeared to be heading towards goal before striking a Ringmer defender's arm and preventing the ball from continuing towards the target. The referee, however, was unable to see the incident clearly and waved away Westfield's appeals.

The final whistle soon followed, leaving the Westies to settle for a point.

FULL TIME: RINGMER AFC 1-1 WESTFIELD

Westfield will undoubtedly feel that this was two points dropped, particularly after creating the better chances in the second half. However, a win at home

and a draw away from home is never a bad return, and the result extends Westfield's unbeaten run to four games.

With five matches played, the point sees the Westies sitting nicely in 6th position and building some positive momentum.

Attention now turns to next Saturday, when Westfield face a Reigate side who have hit some good form over the Bank Holiday weekend.

Another big test awaits, but the Westies will head into it unbeaten in four and looking to continue their strong start to the campaign.

■ **DUGOUT NEWS**

JARVIS BROOK 3-1 INFINITY



BY CHARLIE BONE

FIRST HALF

Early in the first half, Charlie Baitup scored for Jarvis Brook. Infinity were pummelling up the wing, but nothing was getting through — the Jarvis Brook defence was strong.

Zack Willett had a great chance for the first goal with a header, but the keeper got his hands to it. Another chance fell to Infinity, but the keeper claimed it safely. Infinity once again tried to work it up to goal without succeeding.

Then, just before half time, Ben Connolly scored for Jarvis Brook.

SECOND HALF

Infinity came back out creating positive chances, but the defence was once again strong. Many more chances were pushed into the box, but the keeper wasn't having it — getting to them every time.

Then, out of nowhere, Tommy Tierney — in the box and meaning to cross — saw the ball fly into the top-left corner for a goal.

Not even two minutes later, with 12 minutes to go, Will Street went and scored another for Jarvis Brook to make it 3–1. Massive credit to their keeper — he deserved his Man of the Match.

FULL TIME: JARVIS BROOK 3–1 INFINITY

■ DUGOUT NEWS



BANK HOLIDAY RESULTS

Monday 31 August 2026

SCFL DIVISION TWO

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

Alfold

1 - 1

Rudgwick

ASC Brighton Rangers

1 - 1

Brighton Electricity

Bosham

1 - 4

Chichester City B

Copthorne

0 - 4

Southwater

Ferring

4 - 3

Rustington

TD Shipley

6 - 1

Storrington Community

Upper Beeding

1 - 2

Hurstpierpoint

HOW THEY STAND

SCFL DIVISION TWO

Verified from official league sources on 1 September 2026

	TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Chichester City B	4	4	0	0	30	2	+28	12
2	TD Shipley	4	4	0	0	15	3	+12	12
3	Ferring	4	3	1	0	12	4	+8	10
4	Hurstpierpoint	3	3	0	0	13	1	+12	9
5	Rustington	4	3	0	1	15	4	+11	9
6	Southwater	4	2	1	1	11	6	+5	7
7	Upper Beeding	4	2	0	2	7	5	+2	6
8	Alfold	4	1	1	2	3	9	-6	4
9	Bosham	4	1	0	3	6	8	-2	3
10	Brighton Electricity	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	2
11	ASC Brighton Rangers	4	0	2	2	5	14	-9	2
12	Rudgwick	3	0	1	2	2	7	-5	1
13	Storrington Community	3	0	0	3	2	14	-12	0
14	Copthorne	4	0	0	4	1	22	-21	0
15	Worthing Town	3	0	0	3	2	25	-23	0



THE WEEK AHEAD

Tuesday 1 – Sunday 6 September 2026

SCFL DIVISION TWO

Fixtures correct as of 1 September 2026 — check club channels for late changes

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER – LEAGUE, ALL 3PM

Bosham v Alfold

Brighton Electricity v TD Shipley

Copthorne v Rudgwick

Rustington v Upper Beeding

Southwater v Chichester City B

Storrington Community v Hurstpierpoint

Worthing Town v ASC Brighton Rangers

Ferring have no fixture this week (15-club division).

THE BRIGHTEST MINDS IN THE SOUTHERN COMBINATION LEAGUE – AND WHAT COULD MAKE OR BREAK THEM



BY INSIDE KNOWLEDGE

Managing at Steps 5 and 6 is one of football's most misunderstood jobs.

There are no million-pound transfer budgets or full-time analysis departments. Managers must recruit players without contracts, compete with wealthier clubs, accommodate work commitments and somehow maintain standards on cold Tuesday evenings when half the squad has spent the day on a building site or behind a desk.

The opening weeks of 2026/27 have already offered some clues. Eastbourne United, Guernsey and Haywards Heath Town have started strongly in the Premier Division, while AFC Walcountians, Infinity, Guildford City and Worthing United have established early momentum in Division One.

However, these remain tiny samples rather than final judgements. Other teams will come good and show how talented they are.

The following names are not necessarily attached to the league's wealthiest clubs. They are the coaches displaying the clearest combination of ideas, leadership, recruitment and potential in the early season.

PREMIER DIVISION

KEVIN GREEN — HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN

Kevin Green remains the managerial benchmark.

Green led Steyning Town to the 2023/24 Premier Division championship and the highest level in the club's history. A UEFA B-qualified coach with professional scouting experience, he has already demonstrated that detailed coaching can be converted into promotion.

His teams are organised, physically prepared and usually clear in possession. More importantly, he understands the type of player required to win this league. That knowledge eliminates many of the recruitment mistakes that can destroy a season.

Green should ultimately succeed because he has already completed the journey. His danger is expectation. Haywards Heath are expected to challenge, meaning anything short of promotion may be considered failure.

Verdict: The most proven manager in the competition, but also the one carrying the greatest pressure!

TONY VANCE — GUERNSEY

Tony Vance is more than Guernsey's manager; he has become part of the club's identity.

He has led the Green Lions since their formation in 2011, overseeing promotions, relegation and the development of generations of island players.

Guernsey reached the 2025/26 play-off final after finishing third and producing an exceptional attacking campaign.

Vance possesses something other managers cannot replicate: complete institutional knowledge. He understands the island, the player pool and the demands created by regular travel.

His biggest obstacles are structural. Availability, travel and restricted recruitment options make it difficult to replace injured or unavailable players.

Verdict: Vance will continue producing competitive, entertaining teams. Whether that becomes promotion depends on overcoming challenges no other manager faces.

ANTHONY STOREY — EASTBOURNE UNITED

Anthony Storey's Eastbourne United have made an impressive attacking start.

Storey brings experience from the professional and non-league games, giving him credibility with senior players and the knowledge to develop younger ones. His side appears prepared to play positively and commit numbers forward.

Eastbourne can challenge if Storey establishes a settled core. The danger is player turnover. No matter how talented a squad is, it cannot become a great team if partnerships are constantly being rebuilt.

Verdict: Storey has the coaching pedigree to produce a promotion contender. Consistency of selection will determine whether the talent becomes a coherent team.

SEAN BREACH — NEWHAVEN

Sean Breach may be the Premier Division's quietest high achiever.

Newhaven described themselves as "punching above our weight" during an impressive 2025/26 campaign. Doing that repeatedly is rarely accidental. It points towards sensible recruitment, honest communication and a manager who extracts the maximum from his players.

Breach's strength is knowing exactly what Newhaven are. He does not appear interested in imitating clubs operating with different resources.

The potential weakness is depth. A committed core can outperform expectations, but injuries, suspensions and approaches from wealthier clubs test every smaller squad.

Verdict: Breach will continue to overachieve. Promotion depends on whether Newhaven's squad can survive the decisive winter months.

NAIM ROUANE — ROFFEY

Roffey's appointment of Naim Rouane was one of the most fascinating moves of the summer.

Rouane has a reputation for demanding standards and producing attractive football. He previously led Lancing during their excellent curtailed 2019/20 campaign and later assembled a strong Haywards Heath side.

More significantly, Roffey recruited him as part of a wider project. The club is ground sharing at Horsham and has plans for a future stadium. Rouane said the project aligned with his ambitions and would give him the opportunity to implement his footballing ideas.

That alignment between manager and board is critical. Roffey are not asking an ambitious manager to operate inside a survival mentality; publicly, at least, they are attempting to move forward together.

The risk is attempting too much too quickly. New players, new standards and a change of home environment can take time to settle. Roffey must also ensure the proposed off-field development becomes reality.

Verdict: Rouane and Roffey could be an excellent match. Success depends on the club delivering the infrastructure and support discussed when he was appointed.

CONNOR HOARE — MIDHURST & EASEBOURNE

Midhurst have become one of the Premier Division's most intriguing projects under Connor Hoare.

Hoare was appointed in February 2026 following the departure of Tylan Borachan. The club's subsequent recruitment and early results suggest a desire to move beyond simple consolidation.

The addition of experienced players has attracted attention and raised expectations. Hoare now has personalities who understand higher-level football and should bring greater professionalism to the group.

His challenge is converting an impressive collection of names into a functioning team. Experienced players still require balance, fitness, tactical discipline and a willingness to perform the less glamorous work.

There is also a sustainability question. Ambitious recruitment can transform a club, but only if the finances and off-field operation can support it.

Verdict: Midhurst have the potential to become the league's major disruptors. Hoare will succeed if he creates a team rather than simply assembling talent.

DIVISION ONE

DECLAN SEIDEN — INFINITY

Declan Seiden is one of Division One's most interesting emerging managers.

Seiden was appointed for the remainder of the 2025/26 season after Infinity made a managerial change in January. Having helped stabilise the team, he has continued into 2026/27 and overseen a perfect opening to the league campaign. Infinity's current coverage identifies Seiden as the manager, including his post-match reaction following their opening victory.

His major advantage is his understanding of the dressing room. Seiden remains registered as a player, meaning he knows the personalities, standards and capabilities of the group from the inside. That familiarity has allowed him to make the transition into management without needing months to establish credibility.

There is also an appealing directness about Infinity. They look energetic, confident and comfortable attacking matches. Seiden has inherited ability, but added class too and he deserves credit for turning that ability into early results.

The challenge will arrive when momentum slows. This is Seiden's first sustained period in senior management, and he must demonstrate that he can manage setbacks, difficult selection decisions and changing expectations. If he continues playing, he must also maintain the separation between being a teammate and being the person ultimately responsible for decisions.

Infinity's other potential limitation remains structural. The club has experienced relocation and ground-related uncertainty in its recent history. Seiden can build a promotion-winning team, but long-term progress will also require stability and suitable facilities away from the pitch. Player budget does not seem to be an issue though...

Verdict: Seiden is one of the division's brightest new managers. His knowledge of the group and impressive start make Infinity genuine promotion contenders. His ultimate success will depend on converting an immediate impact into season-long authority and consistency.

LUKE SIMMONDS — GUILDFORD CITY

Luke Simmonds is one of the division's most compelling young appointments.

Simmonds arrived after an impressive first managerial season with Keens Park Rangers, having previously captained the club to two championships. Guildford have therefore appointed someone accustomed to setting standards from inside the dressing room.

Guildford's strong opening suggests his message has been accepted quickly. A relegated club can either carry damage from the previous season or use the disappointment as motivation.

His challenge will be adapting when matches become less technical. Division One is often decided on difficult pitches by second balls, set pieces and resilience.

Verdict: Simmonds has the leadership qualities to succeed. How quickly he adapts to the league's less glamorous demands will determine whether Guildford challenge immediately.

MATT SCOLA — AFC WALCOUNTIANS

AFC Walcountians' rise has been built organically, and Matt Scola represents that continuity.

The club has progressed from park football into the National League System in little more than a decade. Its excellent opening to 2026/27 suggests Walcountians are not merely enjoying the experience — they intend to compete.

Scola's greatest asset is his understanding of the players and club culture. That shared identity can be more powerful than recruiting a collection of bigger names.

His defining decisions will come when loyalty and evolution collide. The players who carried the club upwards deserve opportunities, but every level requires improvements.

Verdict: Scola can succeed because Walcountians' progress is based on culture rather than short-term spending. He must know when to preserve his core and when to upgrade it.

LAWRENCE EDWARDS — SALTDEAN UNITED

Lawrence Edwards is building through development rather than short-term recruitment.

Saltdean's structure places considerable emphasis on moving players through its under-18 and under-23 pathway. That gives Edwards an opportunity to create something sustainable.

Young players provide energy, fearlessness and improvement. They also provide inconsistency. Edwards must balance development with the immediate requirement to win.

With a special new ground and first-class pitch, Edwards will want to play attractive, free-flowing football, but with a team who has a physical edge, much like he had as a player.

Verdict: Saltdean could develop one of Division One's most sustainable teams. The project will only succeed if the club remains patient during the inevitable fluctuations but they will certainly be there or thereabouts this season.

GLENN SOUTER, MARK CURRAM AND CRAIG NAGLE — WORTHING UNITED

Worthing United operate through a management team rather than relying on one dominant personality.

Co-managers Glenn Souter and Mark Curram are supported by head coach Craig Nagle and coach Jack Willis. It gives United a combination of recruitment, man-management, technical coaching and knowledge of the local scene.

The model produced a fourth-place finish and a Sussex Principal RUR Charity Cup final last season. That run included a victory away to Premier Division opposition at Steyning Town.

United have begun 2026/27 with genuine attacking momentum. Their combination of physicality, energy and forward options should make them one of the division's strongest promotion candidates.

The potential issue with collective management is clarity. Different opinions are healthy, but the players must always know who makes the final decision. United must also avoid allowing last season's near miss to become impatience. Always the bridesmaids??

Verdict: Worthing possess one of Division One's most complete management teams. If responsibilities remain clear and performance replaces expectation, they should challenge seriously for promotion.

AMBITIOUS YOUNG COACHES – WHEN THE MANAGER OUTGROWS THE CLUB

One of the greatest problems in non-league football is not a lack of talented coaches. It is the difference between the speed at which an ambitious coach wants to progress and the speed at which his club is prepared — or financially able — to follow.

Committees understandably think about sustainability, facilities and survival. Young coaches think about improvement, standards, promotion and their next opportunity. Neither side is automatically wrong, but the relationship becomes dangerous when those ambitions are no longer aligned.

ARCHIE CRAMER — HORSHAM YMCA

Archie Cramer is one of the most remarkable young coaches operating anywhere in Sussex football.

Still only in his teens, he has already gained experience within the Horsham YMCA first-team environment while working in youth football and establishing his own coaching operation. Having stood in for the vacating Liam Giles, Archie took YM to their first league win over Forest Row, demonstrating his pedigree.

Cramer's greatest strengths are his appetite to learn and the lack of fear that comes with youth. He belongs to a generation raised on analysis, individual development and tactical detail rather than simply repeating what previous managers did.

But Horsham YMCA must decide how seriously it wants to harness that ambition. Giving a young coach a place in the dugout is one thing; giving him meaningful responsibility, resources and a genuine pathway is another.

YM are a proud and historic club, but history can sometimes create comfort. If the club's priority becomes maintaining its position rather than aggressively progressing, an ambitious coach like Cramer may eventually conclude that his future lies elsewhere.

That would not necessarily represent failure by either party. It would represent a difference in pace. Cramer may want to climb rapidly, while the club may prefer gradual, financially cautious development.

Verdict: Cramer has the potential to progress far beyond the SCFL. Horsham YMCA must either grow with him or accept that it may eventually become part of his education rather than his destination.

DALE HURLEY — LANCING

Dale Hurley is further along the same journey.

A UEFA B-qualified coach who works full-time in player development, Hurley spent eight successful years with Lewes, winning youth competitions and helping players progress into professional football. He returned to Lancing in October 2025 with the club winless and helped oversee a turnaround that ultimately preserved its Premier Division status, albeit by a reprieve from the FA.

Hurley has now stepped away from his Lewes youth role to concentrate on senior management at Lancing. That decision demonstrates commitment, but it also places responsibility on the club.

Lancing cannot expect a highly qualified, ambitious coach to be permanently satisfied with survival. Hurley will want stronger recruitment, higher standards, a defined playing identity and evidence that the club intends to progress.

The danger is that Lancing's definition of success becomes simply remaining at Step 5, while Hurley's definition is building towards Step 4. If that happens, frustration is inevitable.

The issue is not necessarily spending recklessly. Ambition can be demonstrated through better organisation, commercial activity, training provision, player development and a clear multi-year plan. However, a manager cannot continually drive standards upwards if the rest of the club is standing still. Three relegations in three seasons (with one reprieve) is also not good enough for a potential sleeping giant.

Verdict: Hurley has the knowledge and coaching record to build a progressive senior side. Whether he succeeds at Lancing depends on the club matching his ambition rather than merely relying on it to keep them out of trouble.

THE UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH

The brightest managers will not always succeed at their current clubs.

Some will be defeated by expectations. Others will be restricted by finance, facilities or player availability. A few may simply develop more quickly than the organisation employing them.

Roffey appear to understand the importance of aligning Naim Rouane's ambitions with a wider club project. Infinity have shown faith in the emerging Declan Seiden and have been rewarded with an outstanding start. Worthing United have assembled a broad management team, while Midhurst have backed Connor Hoare with eye-catching recruitment.

Horsham YMCA and Lancing face a different question: are they prepared to move at the same speed as their most ambitious young coaches?

A talented manager can improve training, recruitment and results. What he cannot do alone is create facilities, commercial income or a club-wide appetite for advancement.

**The clubs that ultimately succeed
will not simply employ the brightest
coaches. They will give those
coaches a reason to stay.**

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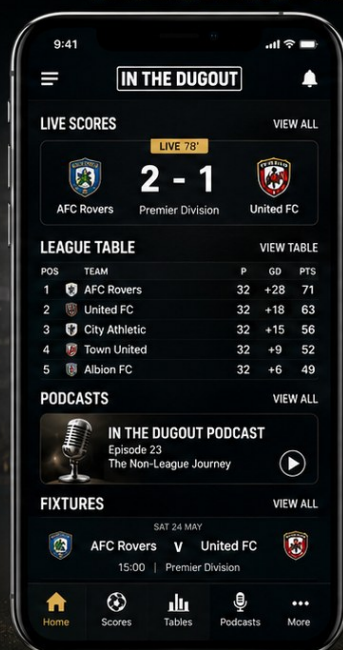


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**COULD YOUR CLUB UNLOCK
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*Build new revenue. Grow your community.
Think beyond matchday.*

10%

10% PROFIT SHARE

- ◆ Zero-investment partnership route
- ◆ Padel Kings builds and operates the venue
- ◆ Potential passive income for the club



50/50 PARTNERSHIP

- ◆ Premium shared venue model
- ◆ Long-term revenue potential
- ◆ Designed for ambitious clubs

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A fresh opportunity for Sussex non-league clubs

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New income. New audiences. New energy
for football clubs across Sussex.



1. YEAR-ROUND REVENUE

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2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It brings in new users, families, casual players and sponsors, helping clubs become busier community hubs.



3. LOWER BARRIER PARTNERSHIP OPTIONS

Padel Kings offers partnership models that can help clubs explore venue growth without carrying the full burden alone.



4. HEALTH, FITNESS & SOCIAL BENEFITS

Padel is active, social, easy to pick up and can support player wellbeing, recovery and wider participation.



5. COMMERCIAL GROWTH

A successful padel venue can boost visibility, sponsorship opportunities and long-term club sustainability.

TWO PARTNERSHIP ROUTES



10% PROFIT SHARE

Zero-investment style venue partnership with Padel Kings delivering and operating the venue, subject to planning and suitability.



50/50 VENUE PARTNERSHIP

Shared premium venue model with long-term revenue potential.



For Sussex non-league clubs,
padel is more than a trend —
it could be a fresh route to growth.



DUGOUT NEWS

ISSUE 5

THE HOTTEST 50 PLAYERS IN SUSSEX NON-LEAGUE

*So far this season... and yes,
it will divide opinion.*



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