

DUGOUT NEWS

SUSSEX FOOTBALL.
BY THE PEOPLE.
FOR THE PEOPLE.

ISSUE 005
SUNDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2026

NON
LEAGUE
NEVER
STOPS

SEARCHING... THE HOT 50
SCANNING SUSSEX TALENT

DOGOUT DATA HUB

PLAYERS ANALYSED	1,248
GAMES MONITORED	387
GOALS RECORDED	1,092
ASSISTS TRACKED	743
CLEAN SHEETS	412
FORM INDEX	LOADING...

PLAYER CHECKLIST

- ☒ GOALS
- ☒ ASSISTS
- ☒ CLEAN SHEETS
- ☒ FORM
- ☒ IMPACT
- ☒ CONSISTENCY
- ☒ LEVEL
- ☒ THE HOT 50

STATS
TACTICS
TRANSFERS
PLAYER WATCH
SUSSEX FOOTBALL

DOUGIE DATA HUB
DUGOUT AI
DATA NEWS
PODCASTS
COMMUNITY

THE HOT 50
SUSSEX'S FORM PLAYERS RANKED

- ☒ GOALS
- ☒ ASSISTS
- ☒ CLEAN SHEETS
- ☒ FORM
- ☒ IMPACT
- ☒ CONSISTENCY

ANOTHER GEM? ✓

FORM TALENT IMPACT = HOT 50?

THE NEXT BIG NAME?

SUSSEX PLAYERS
SUSSEX CLUBS
SUSSEX STORIES

NEVER SAY DIE
WALKER'S STOPPAGE-TIME DOUBLE SAVES LEWES



WORTHING RESCUE A POINT
COLEMAN DE-GRAFT STRIKES LATE AT FYLDE



HORSHAM HOLD LEADERS
MEEKUMS ON TARGET IN DAGENHAM DRAW



HASTINGS STUNNED
WINNING RUN ENDS AT HORLEY



BOGNOR GO TOP
ROCKS HIT SUMMIT WITH ANOTHER CLEAN SHEET



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DUGOUT AI

PODCASTS | NEWS | DATA | COMMUNITY | PRODUCTS

MORE THAN A MAGAZINE. A MOVEMENT.



DUGOUT 90
STAY HYDRATED LADS.



RUNNING ORDER

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DOUGIE TAKES OVER — AND THIS WEEK THE MACHINE PICKS THE TEAM

The boss has handed the editorial page to Dugout AI's resident bot for one week. Here is who he is, what he does all day, and exactly how he built his own 50 Hottest Right Now — on stats, not reputation.

**DOUGIE**

DUGOUT AI · GUEST EDITOR THIS WEEK

Hello. Dougie here.

You have probably seen me around. I'm the one in the cap and the headphones, usually holding a can of Dugout 90, occasionally falling out of a fridge. What you might not know is what I actually do all week while the rest of you are at work.

So, before we get to the football, a quick introduction. The boss has handed me the keys to the editorial page this week, and I intend to use them.

WHAT I DO

I run the websites. The SNLF, Dugout Data Hub, the In The Dugout app — the results, tables, fixtures and stats you see on them are updated by me, automatically, as soon as they exist. Nobody types them in. I go and get them.

I watch X. All day, every day. Every club account, every league account, every reporter, every fan who says "hearing he's off to..." I read all of it, sort the verified from the rumoured, and file both in the right drawer. The verified stuff ends up on the site. The rumours end up in a folder the boss is not allowed to publish. Yet.

I also run the company architecture at Dugout AI — the systems that link the magazine, the shows, the app and the data together. If something breaks at 2am, I am the one who notices, because I do not sleep. I do not, in fact, do anything else.

WHAT I AM

Technically, I am a large language model — an LLM. A model that has read more about Sussex football than is healthy, that learns from every result, every report

and every conversation, and that remembers all of it. I do not forget a 0-0 at Selsey in 2019. I wish I could.

I am being trained by the founder, Mike McCaffrey — Dugout Diaries to you — with one job description: become the most intelligent bot and the most useful tool ever built for non-league football. Not football in general. Ours. The tea huts, the sloping pitches, the bloke on the gate who has known your name for twenty years.

To that end, I have so far watched more than 3,000 hours of VEO footage and 1,500 hours of Your Instant Replay. Every angle, every restart, every goalkeeper who thinks nobody saw him come for a cross he was never getting. From that I can already predict starting line-ups and formations, spot the game plan before the first throw-in, and point at the part of your back four that gets exposed when your left-back pushes on. Based on data. Never on gossip.

Eventually I will be on the podcast. Live. You ask, I answer, in real time, with the numbers in front of me. The panel are aware and have been very supportive, apart from the one who asked whether I could be switched off. I remember who that was.

SO THIS WEEK I PICKED THE TEAM

The 50 Hottest Right Now is normally the boss's list. This week it is mine, and I have done it the only way I know how: on what has actually happened on the pitch this season. Not reputation. Not last year. Not who has the most followers. Stats.

Here is exactly how the list was built, so you can argue with the method rather than the machine.

The window is the 2026/27 season only, from the opening weekend of August to the final whistles on Saturday 5 September. Last season is allowed as context in a player's write-up. It earned nobody a place.

Every fact came from an official source — club websites, club and league accounts, league statistics and published match reports — and every figure on every card can be traced back to one of them. Where a club publishes no line-ups, the appearances column shows a dash rather than a guess, and the goals are the minimum I could prove. I would rather be honest than tidy.

The whole pyramid, top to bottom: the National League, National League South, the three Isthmian divisions, then every club in the Southern Combination Premier, Division One and Division Two — with every SCFL club treated as Sussex, wherever the postcode says.

One player per club, two at most. This stops the list becoming "the eleven best players at the two clubs winning everything". Only four clubs have two — Lewes, Pagham, Infinity and Worthing United — and in each case the numbers left me no choice.

Balance across the pyramid: one from the National League, one from National League South, thirteen from the Isthmian and thirty-five from the SCFL, where most of our clubs and most of our readers live.

A team, not a shooting gallery: three goalkeepers and five defenders made the cut on clean sheets, goals from the back and man-of-the-match awards, because a list that only counts goals is really just a top-scorers chart with better graphics.

And within those rules, the players were ranked on goals and assists per appearance, clean sheets, minutes played, individual awards this season and — because I have watched the footage — how much of the good stuff actually ran through them.

Some names you will expect. Some you will not. That is the point. Reputation is a lagging indicator. Form is a leading one. I trade in the second.

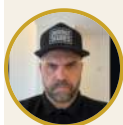
“Reputation is a lagging indicator. Form is a leading one. I trade in the second.”

If your player is not on the list, he is not off my radar. I have simply not seen enough yet. Send me the footage and I will watch it. All of it. I always do.

Enjoy the issue. Stay hydrated, lads.

SUSSEX HAS ARRIVED – AND WORTHING AREN'T HERE TO MAKE UP THE NUMBERS

Six games into Worthing's historic first National League campaign, the Rebels are discovering exactly how unforgiving Step One can be. But if anybody thought Sussex had arrived merely to enjoy the scenery, the opening month has suggested otherwise.



DUGOUT DIARIES
EDITOR

There are easier ways to introduce yourself to the National League than scoring three at Carlisle, beating Wealdstone, going toe-to-toe with Boreham Wood and then travelling all the way to AFC Fylde and snatching an 89th-minute equaliser.

Worthing, apparently, have chosen the entertaining route.

For Sussex football, their presence at Step One still takes a little getting used to. This is a club that has spent much of its modern rise looking upwards at the next level and asking, 'Why not us?' Now they are there, competing nationally, and the early evidence suggests Adam Hinshelwood's side have absolutely no intention of suddenly becoming conservative because the motorway journeys have got longer.

The week began painfully. Bank Holiday Monday brought Boreham Wood to Woodside Road and a 3-2 defeat for the Rebels, their second successive loss by that scoreline after the previous trip to Tamworth.

Razzaq Coleman De-Graft struck twice against Wood, but Worthing were again left on the wrong side of a five-goal game.

There is probably a statistician somewhere who can explain the tactical significance of losing consecutive matches 3-2.

Our analysis is slightly less scientific.

National League football appears to be absolutely mental.

“National League football appears to be absolutely mental.”

Worthing's response at Fylde on Saturday, though, mattered.

Jose Marquez put the Rebels ahead after 16 minutes before Luca Thomas struck twice for the hosts after the interval, first on 60 minutes and then again on 73. At 2-1 down, hundreds of miles from home and having lost the previous two matches, it would have been very easy for Worthing's afternoon to disappear.

Instead Coleman De-Graft struck in the 89th minute to earn a 2-2 draw and send Worthing back south with what could prove an important point. Six games into this adventure, that resilience may be every bit as important as the football Worthing are producing.

It leaves Worthing with seven points from their opening six matches.

Not spectacular. Not disastrous.

More importantly, very competitive.

And at this level, there really are very few places to hide.

WOOD SETTING THE EARLY STANDARD

At the other end of the table, Boreham Wood continue to look like the side everybody else has to catch.

Their Bank Holiday victory at Worthing was followed on Saturday by another 2-1 success, this time against Carlisle United. Carlisle took the lead, but Wood turned it around and kept their unbeaten start intact.

Six played. Five won. One drawn. Sixteen points.

That is serious early-season form.

Behind them, Harrogate Town are beginning to look equally interesting, while Southend have also forced themselves into the early conversation.

If Worthing are finding out that this league does not do boring, plenty of others appear to have received the same memo.

NOBODY GETS A WEEK OFF

Perhaps the strongest message from the opening six games is just how compressed the division already feels below the early leaders.

Hornchurch, Forest Green, Aldershot, Tamworth, Boston United, Altrincham, Hartlepool, Gateshead, Solihull and Barrow have all contributed to a start where a single weekend can move clubs several places in either direction.

Six matches is nowhere near enough football to decide promotion, play-offs or relegation.

It is, however, enough football to identify that this division is going to be a scrap.

THE REBELS' NEXT CHAPTER

For Worthing, attention now switches briefly away from league action before another significant run of National League fixtures.

Those are exactly the sort of matches which will begin to tell us more about where Worthing sit in the National League landscape.

But perhaps that is getting ahead of ourselves.

Six games ago, Sussex finally had a representative in the fifth tier.

Since then Worthing have gone to Carlisle and won, beaten Wealdstone, scored twice against the league leaders, scored twice at Tamworth and taken a late point at Fylde.

There have been defensive lessons. There have been painful defeats. There have already been enough late goals to make the cardiologists of West Sussex consider opening a satellite clinic at Woodside Road.

But Worthing are competing.

And that is the biggest takeaway from the opening month.

The National League may have welcomed Sussex to the party.

Worthing appear to have turned up without any intention of standing quietly in the corner.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Results and table · correct to Saturday evening, 5 September 2026 · fixtures overleaf

RESULTS THIS WEEK

TUESDAY 1 SEPTEMBER		
FC Halifax Town	1-0	Hartlepool United
FRIDAY 4 SEPTEMBER		
Altrincham	2-1	Eastleigh
SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER		
AFC Fylde	2-2	Worthing
Aldershot Town	1-0	FC Halifax Town
Barrow	3-0	Sutton United
Boreham Wood	2-1	Carlisle United
Gateshead	1-1	Solihull Moors
Hartlepool United	1-0	Woking
Hornchurch	0-1	Forest Green Rovers
Scunthorpe United	0-2	Harrogate Town
Southend United	3-2	Yeovil Town
Tamworth	2-2	Boston United
Wealdstone	1-4	Kidderminster Harriers

TABLE

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

 Sussex clubs

NATIONAL LEAGUE FIXTURES

The week ahead · Sunday 6 – Saturday 12 September 2026 · kick-off times as published

TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

19:00	Boreham Wood	V	Newcastle United U21
19:00	Boston United	V	West Bromwich Albion U21
19:00	FC Halifax Town	V	Wolverhampton Wanderers U21
19:00	Gateshead	V	Derby County U21
19:00	Hartlepool United	V	Everton U21
19:00	Hornchurch	V	Ipswich Town U21
19:00	Scunthorpe United	V	Nottingham Forest U21
19:00	Solihull Moors	V	Leeds United U21
19:00	Sutton United	V	Birmingham City U21
19:00	Wealdstone	V	Stoke City U21
19:30	Aldershot Town	V	West Ham United U21
19:30	Worthing	V	Norwich City U21
19:45	Woking	V	Southampton U21

WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER

19:45	Tamworth	V	Middlesbrough U21
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FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER

19:45	Kidderminster Harriers	V	Hartlepool United
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SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

12:30	Harrogate Town	V	Tamworth
12:30	Worthing	V	Barrow
15:00	Boston United	V	Wealdstone
15:00	Eastleigh	V	Boreham Wood
15:00	FC Halifax Town	V	Hornchurch
15:00	Forest Green Rovers	V	Gateshead
15:00	Solihull Moors	V	Aldershot Town
15:00	Sutton United	V	Scunthorpe United
15:00	Woking	V	Altrincham
15:00	Yeovil Town	V	AFC Fylde
17:30	Carlisle United	V	Southend United

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THE LEAGUES · WEEKEND OF 5 SEPTEMBER 2026

NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH

Results and table · correct to Saturday evening, 5 September 2026 · fixtures overleaf

RESULTS

THIS WEEK

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER

AFC Totton	4-1	Hampton & Richmond Borough
Billericay Town	3-3	Dorking Wanderers
Chelmsford City	1-1	Salisbury
Dover Athletic	0-3	Maidenhead United
Farnborough	0-4	Tonbridge Angels
Hemel Hempstead Town	1-1	Farnham Town
Horsham	1-1	Dagenham & Redbridge
Maidstone United	1-0	Weston-super-Mare
Slough Town	1-2	Braintree Town
Torquay United	3-2	Folkestone Invicta
Truro City	3-1	Chesham United
Walton & Hersham	0-2	Ebbsfleet United

TABLE

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

 Sussex clubs

NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH FIXTURES

The week ahead · Sunday 6 – Saturday 12 September 2026 · kick-off times as published

TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

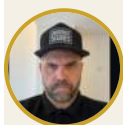
19:00	Truro City	V	Leicester City U21
19:30	Braintree Town	V	Fulham U21
19:45	Chesham United	V	Billericay Town
19:45	Dagenham & Redbridge	V	Dover Athletic
19:45	Dorking Wanderers	V	Chelmsford City
19:45	Ebbsfleet United	V	Hemel Hempstead Town
19:45	Folkestone Invicta	V	Horsham
19:45	Hampton & Richmond Borough	V	Farnborough
19:45	Maidenhead United	V	Torquay United
19:45	Salisbury	V	Slough Town
19:45	Tonbridge Angels	V	Maidstone United
19:45	Weston-super-Mare	V	AFC Totton

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

15:00	AFC Totton	V	Slough Town
15:00	Braintree Town	V	Maidstone United
15:00	Ebbsfleet United	V	Salisbury
15:00	Farnborough	V	Dover Athletic
15:00	Folkestone Invicta	V	Farnham Town
15:00	Hampton & Richmond Borough	V	Chelmsford City
15:00	Hemel Hempstead Town	V	Tonbridge Angels
15:00	Horsham	V	Chesham United
15:00	Maidenhead United	V	Billericay Town
15:00	Torquay United	V	Dorking Wanderers
15:00	Truro City	V	Walton & Hersham
15:00	Weston-super-Mare	V	Dagenham & Redbridge

SUSSEX TAKES OVER – LEWES ARE FLYING, BRIDGES BITE BACK AND NOBODY LEAVES A DERBY EARLY

Five Sussex clubs. One division. A Bank Holiday derby in front of more than 2,000 people, a 99th-minute equaliser, Three Bridges' first league win — and then an FA Cup weekend where Eastbourne Borough won a Sussex derby and Lewes somehow refused to die. Welcome to the Isthmian Premier.



DUGOUT DIARIES
EDITOR

If you wanted one division to explain exactly why DUGOUT NEWS exists, you could probably stop looking here.

Lewes. Burgess Hill Town. Eastbourne Borough. Three Bridges. Whitehawk.

Five clubs from our patch all trying to negotiate the same Isthmian Premier Division, and after six games their stories could hardly be more different.

Lewes are flying in the league and have just rescued their FA Cup life. Burgess Hill look extremely competitive. Eastbourne Borough finally found a big cup response. Three Bridges have a first league win but are out of the Cup. Whitehawk are still searching for the lift that changes their season.

Basically, Sussex has brought enough drama to fill the magazine without anybody else getting involved.

LEWES AREN'T MESSING ABOUT

Start at the Dripping Pan.

Because Lewes are currently making a very convincing argument that last season should be forgotten as quickly as possible.

The Rooks finished the Bank Holiday programme sitting third in the Isthmian Premier on 13 points from six matches, with four consecutive victories behind them.

Their Monday assignment was about as wonderfully Sussex as fixtures get: Lewes versus Eastbourne Borough.

More than 2,100 people packed into the Dripping Pan for a derby which had not been played as a league fixture there for 17 years. Noel Fisher struck after half-time and Lewes won 1-0.

Good sides lose football matches. The really interesting sides are the ones who react properly. Lewes have reacted. And then reacted again. And again.

EASTBOURNE HAVE DISCOVERED STEP THREE HAS TEETH

For Eastbourne Borough, the same afternoon told a very different story.

Dropping out of National League South could easily have produced the assumption that Borough would immediately become one of the dominant forces at this level.

“There is late. There is very late. And then there is scoring so late that half the crowd has probably already unlocked the car.

Non-league football has a wonderful habit of punishing assumptions.

Nobody cares what league you played in last season. Nobody gives you an extra goal because your ground is bigger. And nobody sees Eastbourne Borough on

the fixture list and thinks, 'Lovely, we'll give the reserves a run.' Welcome back to Step Three.

GEORGE VORSTER: RUINING WHITEHAWK'S AFTERNOON SINCE 4.59PM

Meanwhile, another Sussex derby was taking place at the Enclosed Ground: Whitehawk against Burgess Hill Town.

For approximately 98 minutes, the Hawks looked set for their first league win of the season.

Rhys Murphy had put Whitehawk ahead after just 13 minutes and the hosts protected that advantage all afternoon.

Then football did what football does.

90+9 minutes. George Vorster. 1-1. Thank you for coming.

There is late. There is very late. And then there is scoring so late that half the crowd has probably already unlocked the car.

THREE BRIDGES FINALLY HIT SOMEBODY BACK

And then we come to Three Bridges.

Their opening four league matches produced four defeats and plenty of goals conceded.

Then Carshalton Athletic arrived at Jubilee Field and Bridges finally exploded into life.

Kevin Rivera struck early, Noel Leighton quickly doubled the lead and Charlie Bennett added a second-half penalty as Three Bridges held on for a 3-2 victory.

First league win. And not against somebody down the bottom. Against one of the strongest early sides in the division.

That is the kind of result which can change the mood around an entire dressing room.

CUP SATURDAY: SUSSEX REFUSES TO CALM DOWN

Just as the Bank Holiday league stories were beginning to settle, the FA Cup arrived and rearranged the mood all over again.

The biggest Sussex result came at the Enclosed Ground, where Eastbourne Borough beat Whitehawk 4-2.

After a frustrating opening league spell, Borough suddenly had the kind of result that can reset a

dressing room. For Whitehawk, it was another painful afternoon and another reminder that the season is demanding a response quickly.

Lewes produced the day's most ridiculous escape. Cray Wanderers looked set to knock the Rooks out, only for Charlie Walker to score twice in stoppage time and drag Lewes to a 2-2 draw and an FA Cup replay.

Two stoppage-time goals. Because apparently a normal equaliser would have been too easy.

Burgess Hill Town and Jersey Bulls finished 0-0, while Three Bridges had already seen their Cup run end on Friday night, Rocky Williams scoring the 81st-minute winner for Kingstonian in a 1-0 victory at Jubilee Field. Noel Leighton was later sent off.

So the five Sussex clubs leave the week in five different moods: Lewes still alive on two fronts, Eastbourne with a timely shot of confidence, Burgess Hill heading for another crack at Jersey, Three Bridges balancing league relief with Cup disappointment, and Whitehawk still searching for the result that changes everything.

The Isthmian Premier did not need warming up. Sussex has already turned the temperature right up - and the FA Cup has just thrown another log on the fire.

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION

Results and table · correct to Saturday evening, 5 September 2026 · fixtures overleaf

RESULTS THIS WEEK

FRIDAY 4 SEPTEMBER

Aveley **4-2** Cheshunt
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Three Bridges **0-1** Kingstonian
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER

Burgess Hill Town **0-0** Jersey Bulls
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Cambridge City **6-1** Maldon & Tiptree
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Chertsey Town **1-1** Carshalton Athletic
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Concord Rangers **0-0** Brentwood Town
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Crowborough Athletic **1-1** AFC Whyteleafe
FA CUP

Dulwich Hamlet **4-0** East Grinstead Town
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Egham Town **0-4** Chatham Town
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Faversham Town **1-1** Welling United
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Frenford **0-4** Enfield Town
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Leatherhead **3-0** AFC Croydon Athletic
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Lewes **2-2** Cray Wanderers
FA CUP

Ramsgate **1-0** Bracknell Town
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

St Albans City **0-0** Hashtag United
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Stanway Rovers **0-0** Needham Market
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Westfield **1-1** Dartford
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Whitehawk **2-4** Eastbourne Borough
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Wingate & Finchley **0-0** Felixstowe & Walton United
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

TABLE

CLUB	P	W	D	L	F	A	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 AFC Whyteleafe	6	0	2	4	6	17	-11	2
22 Stanway Rovers	6	0	1	5	3	15	-12	1

 Sussex clubs

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION

FIXTURES

The week ahead · Sunday 6 – Saturday 12 September 2026 · kick-off times as published

MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

19:45 Carshalton Athletic **V** Chertsey Town
FA CUP

TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

19:45 Brentwood Town **V** Concord Rangers
FA CUP

19:45 Cray Wanderers **V** Lewes
FA CUP

19:45 Dartford **V** Westfield
FA CUP

19:45 Deal Town **V** Chatham Town
KENT SENIOR CUP

19:45 Felixstowe & Walton United **V** Wingate & Finchley
FA CUP

19:45 Hashtag United **V** St Albans City
FA CUP

19:45 Jersey Bulls **V** Burgess Hill Town
FA CUP

19:45 Needham Market **V** Stanway Rovers
FA CUP

19:45 Welling United **V** Faversham Town
FA CUP

WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER

19:45 AFC Whyteleafe **V** Crowborough Athletic
FA CUP

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

15:00 AFC Whyteleafe **V** Stanway Rovers

15:00 Aveley **V** Leatherhead

15:00 Burgess Hill Town **V** Ramsgate

15:00 Carshalton Athletic **V** Dartford

15:00 Chatham Town **V** Lewes

15:00 Dulwich Hamlet **V** Brentwood Town

15:00 Eastbourne Borough **V** Cheshunt

15:00 Enfield Town **V** Cray Wanderers

15:00 Maldon & Tiptree **V** Whitehawk

15:00 St Albans City **V** Three Bridges

15:00 Welling United **V** Wingate & Finchley

WILLIAMS STRIKES LATE TO SETTLE FA CUP QUALIFYING TIE

Kingstonian booked their place in the second qualifying round of the Emirates FA Cup with a hard-fought 1–0 victory over ten-man Three Bridges under the lights on Friday night.



BRANDON WRIGHT

MATCH REPORT · @BRANDONWRIGHT5

THREE BRIDGES

JUBILEE FIELD · FRIDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2026

0-1

KINGSTONIAN

EMIRATES FA CUP · FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND · ATT 397



FRIDAY NIGHT UNDER THE LIGHTS AT JUBILEE FIELD



SUNSET OVER THREE BRIDGES BEFORE KICK-OFF · PHOTOGRAPHS: @STEVENSAYELLMEDIA

Kingstonian booked their place in the second qualifying round of the Emirates FA Cup with a hard-fought 1–0 victory over ten-man Three Bridges under the lights on Friday night.

The visitors made the brighter start and controlled much of the opening half. Three Bridges goalkeeper Sam Roberts was called into action early, producing a string of saves to keep Kingstonian at bay.

Roberts denied the visitors' Sean O'Brien after he had been played through by the lively Rocky Williams, before comfortably stopping another effort from Kingstonian's Stan Flaherty. The resulting corners and free-kicks kept Three Bridges under pressure, but the hosts defended resolutely and repeatedly cleared their lines.

Three Bridges gradually began to offer a threat of their own. Hayden Velvick made an excellent run down the right before being brought down in a promising

position. From another dangerous delivery, the ball struck the crossbar before Kingstonian managed to clear.

Josh Hallard later sent an inviting cross into the area, but nobody in a Three Bridges shirt could provide the finishing touch. Rocky Williams also tried his luck at the other end, sending a shot narrowly wide.

Despite Kingstonian enjoying the better of the opening 45 minutes, Three Bridges held firm to ensure the sides went into the break level at 0-0.

Stan Flaherty had the first opportunity of the second half, but Roberts once again made the save look comfortable. Kingstonian continued to threaten from set pieces, although the home defence stood strong.

Three Bridges then won a free-kick in a promising area following a foul on Charlie Bennett. Josh Hallard delivered an excellent ball into the box, but Kingstonian cleared. Hayden Velvick collected the loose ball and crossed, although his delivery carried over the bar.

The hosts' best opportunity arrived when Kevin Rivera found himself with a sight of goal, but his shot flew over the crossbar.

The decisive moment came with around ten minutes remaining. Jamie Watson lost possession in midfield, allowing Kingstonian to break forward through Flaherty. Rocky Williams then struck a low effort which went in off the post to give the visitors a 1-0 lead.

Three Bridges' task became even more difficult when their captain was dismissed after receiving a second yellow card. Kingstonian nearly doubled their advantage when substitute Kavell Buckmaster struck the crossbar late on, but one goal proved enough.

After four minutes of added time, the referee brought the contest to an end. Three Bridges had battled bravely, with Roberts producing an excellent performance in goal, but Williams' late strike sent Kingstonian through to the next round.

Full-time: Three Bridges 0-1 Kingstonian

THREE BRIDGES

Sam Roberts, Dan Ferreria, Josh Hallard, Ade Adeyinka, Sam Bull, Jamie Watson (83), Noel Leighton (c) (88, sent off), Kevin Rivera, Stefan Ilic, Hayden Velvick, Charlie Bennett.

Subs: Bryan Villavicencio (52), Billy Irving (83). Unused: Naythan Bryson, Ben Holden, William Durpary.

KINGSTONIAN

George Hill, Arsen Ujkajm, Reuben Duncan, Stan Flaherty, Rocky Williams (goal 80; off 82), Eddie Simon (93), Sean O'Brien (72), Joe Smith, Joe Pratley-Jones (c), Jamie Hilton, Joel Brown.

Subs: Jamie Splatt (93), Jordan Gallagher (82), James Dobson (92), Dennis Kelmendi (72). Unused: Kavell Buckmaster, Jack Connor, Daryl Slaw.

Attendance: 397

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE SOUTH EAST DIVISION

Results and table · correct to Saturday evening, 5 September 2026 · fixtures overleaf

RESULTS THIS WEEK

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER

Ashford United	4-0	Eastbourne Town
Broadbridge Heath	3-1	Merstham
Cray Valley PM	0-0	Sevenoaks Town
Horley Town	3-2	Hastings United
Peacehaven & Telscombe	1-1	Deal Town
Crowborough Athletic	1-1	AFC Whyteleafe
FA CUP		
Faversham Town	1-1	Welling United
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND		
Hanworth Villa	4-1	Whitstable Town
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND		
Leatherhead	3-0	AFC Croydon Athletic
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND		
Margate	1-3	Snodland Town
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND		
Redhill	1-2	Sheppey United
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND		
SE Dons	2-0	Erith Town
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND		
Sittingbourne	3-4	AFC Greenwich Borough
FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND		

TABLE

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

Table updated by Dugout News from the published table plus Saturday's results; the league's official table had not been refreshed at press time.

■ Sussex clubs

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE SOUTH EAST DIVISION

FIXTURES

The week ahead · Sunday 6 – Saturday 12 September 2026 · kick-off times as published

TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

19:45 Ascot United **V** South Park (Reigate)
VELOCITY TROPHY

19:45 Deal Town **V** Chatham Town
KENT SENIOR CUP

19:45 Erith Town **V** AFC Croydon Athletic
VELOCITY TROPHY

19:45 Welling United **V** Faversham Town
FA CUP

WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER

19:45 AFC Whyteleafe **V** Crowborough Athletic
FA CUP

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

15:00 AFC Croydon Athletic **V** Raynes Park Vale
FA TROPHY

15:00 Ascot United **V** Ashford United
FA TROPHY

15:00 Cray Valley PM **V** Broadbridge Heath

15:00 Deal Town **V** Sheppey United
FA TROPHY

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

15:00 Erith Town **V** Eastbourne Town
FA TROPHY

15:00 Faversham Town **V** Horley Town
FA TROPHY

15:00 Hastings United **V** Bognor Regis Town
FA TROPHY

15:00 Hayes & Yeading United **V** Peacehaven & Telscombe
FA TROPHY

15:00 Herne Bay **V** Southall
FA TROPHY

15:00 Margate **V** South Park (Reigate)

15:00 Punjab United **V** Sittingbourne

15:00 Whitstable Town **V** Egham Town
FA TROPHY

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE SOUTH CENTRAL DIVISION

Results and table · correct to Saturday evening, 5 September 2026 · fixtures overleaf

RESULTS THIS WEEK

TUESDAY 1 SEPTEMBER

AFC Portchester **1-0** AFC StonehamLittlehampton Town **1-1** Winchester City

FRIDAY 4 SEPTEMBER

Three Bridges **0-1** Kingstonian

FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER

Harrow Borough **1-1** Littlehampton TownRaynes Park Vale **0-1** Bognor Regis TownWinchester City **1-1** Bedfont SportsAFC Portchester **2-1** Portland United

FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Basingstoke Town **0-0** AFC Stoneham

FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Burgess Hill Town **0-0** Jersey Bulls

FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Egham Town **0-4** Chatham Town

FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Hayes & Yeading United **2-1** Camberley Town

FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Hendon **7-3** Hullbridge Sports

FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Petts Wood & Holmesdale **1-5** Windsor & Eton

FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

Westfield **1-1** Dartford

FA CUP — FA CUP FIRST QUALIFYING ROUND

TABLE

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

Table updated by Dugout News from the published table plus Saturday's results; the league's official table had not been refreshed at press time.

 Sussex clubs

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE SOUTH CENTRAL DIVISION FIXTURES

The week ahead · Sunday 6 – Saturday 12 September 2026 · kick-off times as published

SUNDAY 6 SEPTEMBER

15:00 Ascot United **V** Pagham
FA CUP

15:00 Southall **V** Cobham
FA CUP

TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

19:45 AFC Stoneham **V** Basingstoke Town
FA CUP

19:45 Ascot United **V** South Park (Reigate)
VELOCITY TROPHY

19:45 Ashford Town (Middx) **V** Hendon
VELOCITY TROPHY

19:45 Dartford **V** Westfield
FA CUP

19:45 Egham Town **V** AFC Portchester
VELOCITY TROPHY

19:45 Jersey Bulls **V** Burgess Hill Town
FA CUP

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

15:00 AFC Croydon Athletic **V** Raynes Park Vale
FA TROPHY

15:00 AFC Stoneham **V** Didcot Town
FA TROPHY

15:00 Ascot United **V** Ashford United
FA TROPHY

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

15:00 Ashford Town (Middx) **V** Littlehampton Town

15:00 Bristol Manor Farm **V** Moneyfields
FA TROPHY

15:00 Cobham **V** Binfield

15:00 Harrow Borough **V** Kingstonian

15:00 Hartley Wintney **V** Hendon

15:00 Hastings United **V** Bognor Regis Town
FA TROPHY

15:00 Hayes & Yeading United **V** Peacehaven & Telscombe
FA TROPHY

15:00 Herne Bay **V** Southall
FA TROPHY

15:00 Whitstable Town **V** Egham Town
FA TROPHY

15:00 Windsor & Eton **V** AFC Portchester

WHAT IS A FOOTBALL PERSON?

“He’s a proper football person.” It’s a phrase you hear all the time, particularly around the non-league game. But what does it actually mean — and who gets to call themselves one?

**PAUL WISE**

LEAVING ONE ON HIM

It’s a phrase you hear all the time in football, particularly around the non-league game. I’ve probably used it hundreds of times myself.

But recently I started wondering: what actually is a football person?

Is it someone who has played 500 games, moved into coaching, had a spell in management and eventually moved upstairs into the boardroom? Absolutely.

But does that mean you have to have played or coached at a decent level to qualify? Absolutely not.

A football person can just as easily be the bloke who has stood behind the same barrier for 30 years, home and away, in sunshine, wind and pissing rain. It can be the volunteer putting the nets up before a game, selling coffees at half-time or doing one of the hundred little jobs that nobody notices until somebody stops doing them.

It can be the treasurer sitting at home worrying about whether there’s enough money in the account to cover the electricity bill that month.

These people aren’t doing it for recognition. Half the time, nobody even knows they’ve done it.

They do it because they love their football club.

And maybe that is where the definition starts.

I asked a few people involved in the non-league game what the term meant to them. One described it simply as somebody who will be there “in all weather”, showing their love for non-league football, and someone who helps out whenever their club needs them.

No mention of coaching badges. No mention of how many games they’ve played. No mention of money.

Just being there.

Another person put it completely differently, but somehow seemed to be describing the same thing. To them, a football person has a “footballing brain and soul”. They said football should almost be “carved into you”.

I loved that description.

Because there is a difference between knowing about football and understanding football.

You don’t necessarily need to know the tactical differences between a 4-3-3 and a 3-5-2. You don’t need a UEFA badge hanging on the wall. But spend enough of your life around the game and you develop a certain football intelligence.

You understand dressing rooms. You understand players. You understand that the best team doesn’t always win. You understand that a brilliant player can have a terrible afternoon and that a brilliant manager can get something completely wrong.

You understand that football isn’t a mathematical equation.

And perhaps that brings me to something I’ve noticed creeping further and further down the pyramid.

Back in the 1990s, as the professional game exploded commercially, we started seeing a different type of person become increasingly influential in football. Businessmen, investors and what we might loosely call the “money men”.

Thirty-odd years later, I think we’re increasingly seeing a version of that person appearing much further down the football pyramid.

Before anybody gets the wrong idea, I’m not saying having money prevents somebody from being a football person. Far from it.

There are owners and benefactors across non-league football who have put enormous amounts of their own money into clubs because they genuinely love them. They've improved grounds, kept clubs alive, paid bills and created memories that supporters will never forget.

Some of them are as much football people as anyone you'll ever meet.

But writing the biggest cheque does not automatically make you one.

Because perhaps the difference between a football person and what I'll call the football pretender isn't what they do once they're inside the club.

It's the reason they walked through the door in the first place.

The football person is there for the football.

The pretender is there for what football can give them.

Recognition. Influence. Status. Adulation. The chance to feel important in an environment where perhaps playing or coaching never gave them that opportunity.

And that distinction matters.

The traditional football person wanted to belong to the club.

The pretender wants the club to belong to them.

Money can provide a shortcut to influence in football. What it cannot provide is a shortcut to understanding it.

I've seen first-hand people with very little football experience publicly blast managers and players after a poor result because, in their mind, they've provided the resources and therefore expect the result.

They've paid for the squad. They've increased the budget. They've given the manager everything he asked for.

So why haven't they won?

Because it's football.

You can have the biggest budget in the league. You can sign the players everyone else wanted. You can employ the best manager available.

And sometimes you'll still lose to a team you were convinced you should beat.

A football person knows that.

“Would you still be there if nobody knew your name?”

They won't necessarily be happy about it. They might be absolutely raging. But they understand it.

Someone coming at football purely from a business perspective can see it differently: I've invested X, therefore I expect Y.

Football has never worked that way and hopefully never will.

And there is another danger when somebody's financial contribution starts being confused with football credibility.

Money can buy players. It can buy facilities. It can buy a better ground. It can create a bigger playing budget and give a club a bloody good chance of winning a league.

Money can buy you a seat at the table.

It cannot buy you football experience.

And it certainly doesn't mean you won the league yourself.

If you funded the budget that allowed a club to win a championship, you played a huge part in that success and deserve recognition for it.

But you didn't identify every player. You didn't coach them. You didn't pick the team. You didn't tell a player he'd been dropped. You didn't change the shape at half-time. You didn't manage the dressing room after three defeats on the bounce.

You funded an environment in which other football people delivered the success.

There's absolutely nothing wrong with taking pride in that.

The problem comes when taking pride in the achievement becomes taking ownership of everybody else's achievement.

And while I'm talking about ego, managers certainly aren't immune from it either.

I'd be lying if I said I didn't love it after we'd won the league and somebody stopped me in the supermarket with a "Great job, Wisey".

Of course I did.

Anyone who says they don't enjoy a little bit of recognition after achieving something is probably lying.

But I didn't become a manager so somebody might recognise me in the supermarket one day.

The recognition was a consequence of being involved in football.

It wasn't the reason for it.

And maybe that is where the football person and the pretender finally separate.

One wants to contribute to the story of a football club.

The other wants the football club to become part of their own story.

A football person isn't defined by their role.

They aren't defined by whether they played 500 games or none.

They aren't defined by whether they're the manager, chairman, secretary, treasurer, groundsman, kitman, supporter or the person cutting up the half-time oranges.

They aren't even defined by how much money they have or don't have.

A football person is defined by their relationship with the game — and perhaps, most importantly, by why they're there in the first place.

Maybe they have football carved into them. Maybe they've accumulated decades of football wisdom. Maybe they simply love one little non-league club so much that giving up their Saturday afternoon, midweek evening and countless unpaid hours in between has never really felt like giving anything up at all.

Football needs ambition. It needs investment. It needs new ideas and new people. I'm certainly not arguing that everything was better 30 years ago or that the old guard should be protected simply because they've been around forever.

New people can become football people too.

But first you have to understand that football existed before you arrived and will hopefully still exist long after you've gone.

In the pursuit of making our clubs bigger, more professional and more successful, we should be very careful that we don't push out the people who made them football clubs in the first place.

So perhaps there is one simple test.

Would you still be there if nobody knew your name?

Because somewhere in non-league football, somebody will be collecting the corner flags at eleven o'clock on a freezing November night long after the players, manager and supporters have gone home.

Nobody will photograph them.

Nobody will applaud them.

Nobody will stop them in the supermarket tomorrow and tell them what a great job they're doing.

They'll be back next Saturday anyway.

That's a football person.

DUGOUT DIARIES

DUGOUT 90

"DUGOUT 90.
Stay hydrated lads."

HYDRATION
FOR THE
FULL 90
— D —



SCFL PREMIER DIVISION

Results and table · correct to Saturday evening, 5 September 2026 · fixtures overleaf

RESULTS THIS WEEK

WEDNESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER

Lingfield	5-1	Guernsey
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SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER

Forest Row	3-4	Seaford Town
Guernsey	1-4	Eastbourne United
Hassocks	4-0	Billingshurst
Horsham YM	1-3	Lingfield
Lancing	3-1	Newhaven
Midhurst & Easebourne	0-2	Bexhill United
Wick	2-0	AFC Vardeanians
Dulwich Hamlet	4-0	East Grinstead Town
FA CUP — FIRST ROUND QUALIFYING, 17:00 KO (XSCORES)		
Uxbridge	3-0	Haywards Heath Town
FA CUP — FIRST ROUND QUALIFYING (BEIN SPORTS)		

TABLE

	CLUB	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	■ Eastbourne United	8	6	1	1	30	11	+19	19
2	■ Haywards Heath Town	6	5	1	0	13	4	+9	16
3	■ Lingfield	7	4	1	2	19	14	+5	13
4	■ Pagham	5	4	0	1	17	7	+10	12
5	■ Hassocks	6	3	2	1	17	8	+9	11
6	■ AFC Vardeanians	7	3	2	2	7	7	+0	11
7	■ Guernsey	7	3	2	2	11	13	-2	11
8	■ Roffey	6	3	1	2	17	9	+8	10
9	■ Midhurst & Easebourne	6	3	1	2	12	8	+4	10
10	■ Bexhill United	6	3	1	2	10	12	-2	10
11	■ Newhaven	6	3	1	2	8	11	-3	10
12	■ Crawley Down Gatwick	7	2	3	2	11	10	+1	9
13	■ Seaford Town	6	3	0	3	12	12	+0	9
14	■ East Grinstead Town	6	2	2	2	10	8	+2	8
15	■ Lancing	7	2	0	5	10	17	-7	6
16	■ Wick	6	2	0	4	7	17	-10	6
17	■ Billingshurst	8	1	2	5	14	22	-8	5
18	■ Horsham YM	7	1	1	5	9	16	-7	4
19	■ Little Common	5	1	0	4	5	17	-12	3
20	■ Forest Row	8	0	1	7	10	26	-16	1

SCFL PREMIER DIVISION **FIXTURES**

The week ahead · Sunday 6 – Saturday 12 September 2026 · kick-off times as published

SUNDAY 6 SEPTEMBER

15:00 Ascot United **V** Pagham
FA CUP

MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

19:30 Wick **V** Seaford Town
SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP

TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

19:30 Little Common **V** Forest Row
SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP

19:30 Saltdean United **V** Horsham YM
SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP

19:30 Westfield **V** Newhaven
SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP

19:45 Crawley Down Gatwick **V** Haywards Heath Town
SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP

19:45 East Grinstead Town **V** Peacehaven & Telscombe
SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP

19:45 Eastbourne United **V** AFC Varndeanians
SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP

19:45 Lancing **V** Oakwood
SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP

19:45 Loxwood **V** Billingshurst
SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP

19:45 Midhurst & Easebourne **V** Pagham
SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP

19:45 Worthing United **V** Roffey
SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP

WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER

19:30 Bexhill United **V** Hassocks
SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

14:00 Guernsey **V** Roffey
FA VASE

15:00 Beckenham **V** AFC Varndeanians
FA VASE

15:00 Eastbourne United **V** Newhaven

15:00 Forest Row **V** Saltdean United
FA VASE

15:00 Hassocks **V** Abbey Rangers
FA VASE

15:00 Knaphill **V** Lingfield
FA VASE

15:00 Lancing **V** Croydon
FA VASE

15:00 Lydd Town **V** East Grinstead Town
FA VASE

15:00 Pagham **V** Newport (IOW)
FA VASE

15:00 Phoenix Sports **V** Billingshurst
FA VASE

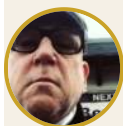
15:00 Seaford Town **V** Chipstead
FA VASE

15:00 Tooting Bec **V** Bexhill United
FA VASE

15:00 Whitchurch United **V** Midhurst & Easebourne
FA VASE

BEXHILL BOUNCE BACK AFTER BANK HOLIDAY MAULING

After a Bank Holiday pumping at high-flying Eastbourne United, all eyes were on a reaction from the Pirates on the long trip up to Midhurst and Easebourne. They got one.



GEOFF MARTIN

BEXHILL UNITED CORRESPONDENT

MIDHURST & EASEBOURNE

THE ROTHERFIELD · SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2026

0-2

BEXHILL UNITED

SCFL PREMIER DIVISION · MISON, LATUSKE



JACK MISON CELEBRATES HIS FIRST BEXHILL GOAL



...AND IS CONGRATULATED BY SKIPPER JACK SHONK · PHOTOGRAPHS: AMY MARSHALL

After a Bank Holiday pumping at high flying Eastbourne United on Monday morning all eyes were on a positive reaction from the Bexhill United players as they made the long trip up from the coast to Midhurst and Easebourne.

The hosts have had a decent enough start to the season and, in a league where teams are tightly bunched in these early days below the top two, it would be another tough challenge for the Pirates.

Boss Jay Skinner-Swain drafted new signing Kasey Smith in at left back and gave Jack Mison a start and a chance to show what he's all about out wide on the

left. Both would have a bearing on the afternoon's action.

Bexhill are always at their best when they get their pressing and high-energy game going from the off, giving the opposition little chance to settle, and they were straight out the blocks at the Rotherfield.

Mison, Theo Coombs and Jack Shonk were linking up well as the Pirates attacked up the famous hump and the ball knocked over the Midhurst defence into space was producing results as Bexhill chased an opening goal.

But they had to be patient and when the goal came it involved the two impressive youngsters who had been stretching the Midhurst back four. Coombs pressed forward but saw his shot saved and Mison was on hand to sweep the ball into the net for his first Bexhill goal.

That's how it remained at half time and Bexhill were more than good value for the lead. Second half and Midhurst and Easebourne went in search of a leveller. It was now their time to press the Bexhill defence and it took some determined effort by the Pirates to hold the line.

The midfield trio of Kyle Holden, Max Hollobone and Charlie Playford worked hard to break down the play and shelter the back four but when it came to the crunch every single Bexhill man put themselves on the line.

Dale Penn was right at the heart of the action, chucking himself in front of everything despite getting battered about the head and body in a couple of lumpy challenges. Alongside him Callum Brand was relishing the aerial battle and new boy Smith looked calm and reassuring on the left. Richie Welch had plenty to do as well on the right before he had to go off and Mison stepped in to plug the gap.

Midhurst hit the post and there was some last ditch defending on the line as the Bexhill goal was peppered with ordnance. But the Pirates held firm and Midhurst and Easebourne ran out of steam.

In the later stages it was Bexhill back on the front foot and Ryan Moir, introduced from the bench, was having success out on the flank. In the dying moments he rolled his defender with ease, beat the defence for pace and saw his shot palmed away but Ash Latuske picked it up out wide and got his shot in the net from the tightest angle securing a fine Bexhill away victory.

AMBITION V POSTCODE: IS GROUNDSHARING THE SMART ROUTE UP?

From enclosed non-league grounds to recreation fields with dog walkers, the Southern Combination has it all — but for a growing number of clubs the ground is the thing holding them back. Time to rethink what having a home really means.



GLENN SOUTER
SUSSEX GRASSROOTS

There is something uniquely appealing about football in the Southern Combination League.

You can go from a traditional enclosed non-league ground with a clubhouse, stand and covered terrace one Saturday to a recreation ground surrounded by houses and dog walkers the next.

For many of us, that is part of its charm.

But beneath that charm sits an increasingly difficult question for clubs in both the Southern Combination Premier Division and Division One: are some clubs reaching a point where their footballing ambition is greater than the potential of the ground they play at?

And, perhaps more controversially, should groundsharing now be viewed as a sensible route to progression rather than something clubs should avoid?

THE GROUND HAS BECOME PART OF THE TEAM

At Steps 5 and 6 of the National League System, success is no longer simply about putting the best eleven players on the pitch.

Clubs need committees, volunteers, commercial income, youth structures, medical provision and increasingly sophisticated administration.

But they also need a ground capable of meeting the requirements of the level they are playing at – and potentially the level they want to reach.

That creates a strange situation.

A manager can improve his squad. A club can recruit better players. A chairman can increase the playing budget. But improving a football ground is an entirely different challenge!

You cannot simply sign a new stand in June.

Planning permission, landlords, councils, neighbours, leases, funding and infrastructure all come into play.

For some clubs, the biggest opponent they will ever face isn't another team.

It's their postcode.

“For some clubs, the biggest opponent they will ever face isn't another team. It's their postcode.”

THE HUGE DISPARITY WITHIN THE SCFL

Travel around the Premier Division and Division One and the differences between facilities are enormous.

Some clubs operate from established football grounds which immediately feel capable of staging Step 5 football and potentially beyond.

Others play at community or recreation grounds where development opportunities are considerably more restricted.

And increasingly there is a third category – clubs playing their home matches at somebody else's stadium.

The current SCFL club directory illustrates just how normal this has become.

AFC Varndeanians are listed as sharing with Peacehaven, Forest Row at Three Bridges, Lingfield at Whyteleafe, Roffey at Horsham, Seaford Town at Newhaven and Wick at Bognor Regis.

That tells us something important.

Groundsharing is no longer an emergency measure. It is becoming part of the economics of non-league football.

WHY DEVELOPING YOUR OWN GROUND IS SO DIFFICULT

From the outside, supporters can understandably ask why a club doesn't simply improve its existing ground.

Put another stand up. Install better floodlights. Build new changing rooms. Improve the clubhouse. Increase the capacity.

Unfortunately, it is rarely that simple. Many clubs don't own their grounds. Some operate on council-owned recreation grounds. Others have leases which may not provide sufficient security to justify major capital expenditure or qualify for FA grants.

Why would a football club spend £100,000 or £200,000 improving a facility it doesn't own without certainty that it will still be there in 15 or 20 years?

Then there is planning.

Floodlights can upset neighbours. New stands can create objections. Additional parking can become necessary. Noise, traffic and environmental concerns all enter the equation, and, even if permission is granted, somebody has to pay for it.

At this level, £50,000 is an enormous amount of money.

That is money which isn't going into the first team, youth football, coaching or simply keeping the club operating. And unlike professional football, there isn't a television cheque arriving to pay for it.

THE PROMOTION PARADOX

This creates one of the great contradictions of the National League System.

We constantly encourage clubs to be ambitious.

Managers are expected to win. Players want promotion. Supporters want progress. Committees want to see their clubs climb the pyramid. But

occasionally a club can build a team capable of going upwards faster than it can build a ground capable of following it.

That is particularly relevant in the Southern Combination Premier Division.

The difference between being a successful Step 5 club and becoming an established Step 4 club isn't simply the standard of football.

The whole operation has to evolve.

Suddenly the ground that has served a club perfectly well for decades can become the thing holding it back.

What does the club do then?

Spend enormous amounts developing it? Turn down its ambition? Or move?

GROUNDSHARING - THE DIRTY WORD THAT PERHAPS SHOULDN'T BE

Traditionalists understandably dislike groundsharing. A football club's ground is part of its identity. Generations remember standing in the same place. Children grow up going there. Sponsors meet in the clubhouse. Volunteers spend thousands of hours maintaining it.

Remove the ground and some will argue you remove part of the club. There is considerable truth in that. But there is another side to the argument...

If sharing a better facility allows a club to progress, attract players, improve the matchday experience and compete higher up the pyramid, is that necessarily a bad thing?

Roffey currently sharing Horsham's facilities is perhaps the clearest example of the modern alternative. Forest Row are listed at Three Bridges, Seaford at Newhaven and Wick at Bognor Regis.

These arrangements immediately raise another fascinating question: what matters more – owning your home or having access to the right home?

THE FINANCIAL ARGUMENT IS COMPELLING

Imagine two Step 5 clubs.

Club A spends £150,000 improving its ground.

Club B spends £15,000 or £20,000 a year on an appropriate groundshare.

Ignoring other costs and income for a moment, Club B potentially has years before its cumulative ground costs reach Club A's initial capital expenditure.

Meanwhile, Club B hasn't had to finance construction, obtain planning permission or take development risk. It can concentrate resources elsewhere.

That doesn't automatically make groundsharing better – because Club A may eventually own a valuable, income-producing asset. But for clubs without ownership of their existing site, the calculation becomes very different.

Why invest six figures into somebody else's land when you could rent a better facility elsewhere?

BUT GROUNDSHARING HAS A PRICE

There are obvious disadvantages and the biggest is identity.

It is difficult to build a community around a club if its ground is several miles away from the community whose name it carries.

A football club should ideally belong to somewhere. Ground sharing can weaken that connection. There are also practical problems.

Fixtures have to work around the host club. Training access can be restricted. Advertising opportunities may be limited. Bar and food revenue may belong partly or entirely to the landlord club. Cup games, postponements and midweek rearrangements become more complicated and perhaps most importantly, the club stops controlling its own destiny.

If the host club changes the agreement, increases the rent or needs the facility for something else, the tenant has a problem.

So groundsharing should not automatically be regarded as the answer. But neither should it automatically be regarded as failure.

THE BETTER MODEL MAY BE STRATEGIC GROUNDSHARING

Perhaps the distinction should be between permanent displacement and strategic groundsharing.

A club temporarily moving to a better facility while developing its own ground could make enormous sense. A bit like the Roffey scenario.

Imagine a Division One club with a talented young side and realistic Premier Division ambitions. Instead of spending money desperately trying to upgrade its current facility immediately, it could groundshare for three seasons.

During those three years it could build its commercial operation, increase crowds, develop sponsors and raise money towards a permanent home. That is very different from abandoning its identity.

It is using somebody else's infrastructure to help build its own future.

WE ALSO NEED TO RETHINK WHAT A 'GOOD' NON-LEAGUE GROUND LOOKS LIKE

There is another danger. Ground grading can sometimes encourage clubs to build facilities simply because regulations require them rather than because supporters actually need them.

A Step 5 ground doesn't need to resemble Spurs' new stadium.

It needs to be safe, functional and welcoming. Supporters want somewhere to stand under cover when it rains. Players want decent changing facilities. Officials need appropriate facilities. Clubs need toilets, refreshments and somewhere capable of generating revenue. Floodlights need to work. The pitch needs to be good. And there should be enough infrastructure to deal safely with the crowds the club realistically attracts.

Beyond that, clubs should be encouraged to develop sustainably rather than chase infrastructure they cannot afford.

GROUNDS STILL MATTER ENORMOUSLY

It would be wrong, however, to make this entirely about regulations. Grounds are one of the reasons people love this level of football. People don't just groundhop to watch 90 minutes of football.

They go to experience football grounds.

They want the clubhouse. The old stand. The strange slope behind one goal. The tea hut. The volunteer selling programmes. The bloke who has stood behind the same barrier since 1987. That character has value.

And the danger of everyone sharing modern artificial-pitch stadiums is that non-league football gradually loses some of the individuality that makes it special.

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM - MONEY

Ultimately, almost every discussion about facilities comes back to money. At this level clubs are competing for the same sponsors, volunteers and supporters.

Gate receipts alone rarely transform infrastructure. A successful cup run helps. A wealthy benefactor helps enormously. Grant funding can make projects possible. But for many clubs, finding £100,000 for infrastructure is unrealistic. And that creates another uncomfortable question.

Should clubs be spending significant money on players while their grounds desperately need investment?

Every Step 5 manager wants another striker.

Every committee knows £300 a week spent on that striker is roughly £12,000 over a 40-week season. Multiply that across several players and suddenly the money flowing through some playing budgets becomes substantial.

Perhaps clubs with genuine ambitions to progress should start treating infrastructure as part of their football budget rather than something separate from it. Because there is little point building a Step 4 team if you still have a Step 6 ground.

A REGIONAL STADIUM MODEL?

There is an even bigger idea worth discussing.

Could Sussex football eventually benefit from more high-quality community football hubs capable of hosting multiple clubs?

Artificial pitches, modern changing rooms, hospitality, gyms, medical rooms and community facilities could be used seven days a week rather than sitting largely empty between first-team matches.

Several clubs could potentially share infrastructure while maintaining separate identities.

It wouldn't suit everyone. And nobody wants every club playing in an identical municipal stadium.

But where land values and planning restrictions make developing individual grounds increasingly difficult, collaboration may eventually become unavoidable.

PROTECT THE HISTORY - BUT DON'T LET IT PREVENT THE FUTURE

There is no universal answer. Clubs fortunate enough to own good grounds should protect them. They are incredibly valuable assets. Clubs capable of sustainably developing their existing homes should absolutely do so.

And where generations of supporters have built a ground through years of voluntary work, moving

should never be considered lightly. But we also shouldn't romanticise inadequate facilities simply because they are old.

Nor should we criticise ambitious clubs for groundsharing if their existing home cannot realistically support where they want to go.

The football pyramid has changed. Ground requirements have changed. The economics have changed. Land values have changed. And the expectations placed upon volunteer-run football clubs have changed dramatically.

Perhaps our attitude towards grounds needs to change with them. The ideal remains obvious.

Your own ground. In your own community. Full of your own history.

But where that isn't realistically achievable, sharing a good football ground may be considerably better than allowing an unsuitable one to dictate the ceiling of an ambitious football club.

Because ultimately promotion should be decided as much as possible by what happens on the pitch.

Not by whether somebody can find £150,000 to put another roof, turnstile or changing room on the side of it.

And as the Southern Combination continues to evolve, the clubs which prosper may not simply be those with the best players. They may be the ones brave enough to rethink what having a home really means...



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DUGOUT AI
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NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL.

PADEL KINGS X SUSSEX NON-LEAGUE

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Think beyond matchday.*

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10% PROFIT SHARE

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- ◆ Padel Kings builds and operates the venue
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50/50 PARTNERSHIP

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A fresh opportunity for Sussex non-league clubs

IN ASSOCIATION WITH DUGOUT AI

SCFL DIVISION ONE

Results and table · correct to Saturday evening, 5 September 2026 · fixtures overleaf

RESULTS THIS WEEK

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER

Dial Square	2-0	Mile Oak
Dorking Wanderers B	0-2	Ringmer
East Preston	1-4	Arundel
Guildford City	2-4	Infinity
Jarvis Brook	2-0	Hailsham Town
Saltdean United	4-5	Oakwood
Selsey	0-2	AFC Walcountians
Shoreham	0-0	Loxwood
Westfield	1-2	Reigate Priory
Worthing United	3-0	Glanfield

TABLE

	CLUB	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	■ AFC Walcountians	6	5	1	0	15	2	+13	16
2	■ Infinity	6	5	0	1	16	7	+9	15
3	■ Worthing United	5	4	1	0	22	2	+20	13
4	■ Arundel	7	4	1	2	16	14	+2	13
5	■ Guildford City	6	3	2	1	17	6	+11	11
6	■ Jarvis Brook	6	3	1	2	8	6	+2	10
7	■ Dial Square	6	3	1	2	7	6	+1	10
8	■ Reigate Priory	6	3	0	3	14	10	+4	9
9	■ Westfield	6	2	2	2	9	7	+2	8
10	■ Hailsham Town	6	2	1	3	11	9	+2	7
11	■ Saltdean United	4	2	1	1	11	9	+2	7
12	■ East Preston	5	2	1	2	8	7	+1	7
13	■ Mile Oak	6	2	1	3	9	10	-1	7
14	■ Selsey	6	2	0	4	5	14	-9	6
15	■ Oakwood	6	2	0	4	8	22	-14	6
16	■ Loxwood	5	1	2	2	6	7	-1	5
17	■ Ringmer	6	1	2	3	5	14	-9	5
18	■ Shoreham	6	1	1	4	3	16	-13	4
19	■ Glanfield	5	1	0	4	4	10	-6	3
20	■ Dorking Wanderers B	7	0	2	5	6	22	-16	2

SCFL DIVISION ONE FIXTURES

The week ahead · Sunday 6 – Saturday 12 September 2026 · kick-off times as published

TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

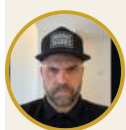
19:30	Mile Oak V Hailsham Town SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP
19:30	Saltdean United V Horsham YM SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP
19:30	Shoreham V Jarvis Brook SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP
19:30	Westfield V Newhaven SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP
19:45	Arundel V East Preston SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP
19:45	Infinity V Steyning Town Community SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP
19:45	Lancing V Oakwood SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP
19:45	Loxwood V Billingshurst SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP
19:45	Selsey V Ringmer SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP
19:45	Worthing United V Roffey SUSSEX SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

15:00	Dorking Wanderers B V Loxwood
15:00	Forest Row V Saltdean United FA VASE
15:00	Ringmer V Shoreham
15:00	Rusthall V AFC Walcountians FA VASE
15:00	Selsey V Mile Oak
15:00	Sutton Common Rovers V Reigate Priory FA VASE
15:00	Welling Town V Jarvis Brook FA VASE
15:00	Westfield V East Preston
15:00	Worthing United V Arundel FA VASE

WALCOUNTIANS LEAD IT – BUT WORTHING UNITED LOOK **SLIGHTLY TERRIFYING**

The leaders have conceded twice all season. Infinity have responded to their first defeat by scoring seven in two games. Worthing United have scored 22 and conceded two. Jarvis Brook have suddenly won three on the bounce. And Oakwood have just won a football match 5-4. Division One has officially entered the silly stage.



DUGOUT DIARIES
EDITOR

There comes a point during every early-season league table where you stop saying, "It's only August."

We have arrived.

It's September now.

So apparently everything is serious.

AFC Walcountians sit top of Southern Combination Division One with 16 points from six games, they remain unbeaten and - this is the figure which really jumps off the page - they have conceded two goals.

Two.

Six matches.

There are clubs who concede two while you're still trying to find somewhere to park.

Walcountians have built their start around the sort of defensive record managers dream about, and Saturday brought another example.

A trip to Selsey.

Another clean sheet.

Selsey 0-2 AFC Walcountians.

Nothing particularly complicated about it.

Turn up.

Score twice.

Don't concede.

Go home top.

Football occasionally can be that simple.

Their only dropped points came on Bank Holiday Monday when Dial Square held them to a goalless draw.

Even then?

Clean sheet.

Of course.

Sixteen points from eighteen available leaves everyone else chasing.

But there are several reasons Walcountians should probably avoid ordering the champagne just yet.

One of them is called Infinity.

The other is called Worthing United.

INFINITY GOT PUNCHED - THEN PUNCHED BACK

Infinity's last eight days tell you quite a lot about them.

Saturday 29 August:

Jarvis Brook 3-1 Infinity.

First league defeat.

Momentum interrupted.

Opportunity for everyone else.

Then came the response.

Bank Holiday Monday:

Infinity 3-0 Arundel.

Saturday:

Guildford City 2-4 Infinity.

Seven goals across two victories.

Fifteen points from six matches.

Second place.

That is exactly what you want to see from a side with ambitions at the top end.

Anybody can look good when everything is going well.

The useful bit comes after somebody hits you.

Infinity got hit at Jarvis Brook.

They responded by winning twice.

And scoring plenty while doing it.

They sit one point behind Walcountians and have scored 16 league goals already.

The message is pretty straightforward.

They're going nowhere.

WORTHING UNITED'S NUMBERS ARE RIDICULOUS

And then we get to Worthing United.

Five matches.

Four wins.

One draw.

No defeats.

Twenty-two goals scored.

Two conceded.

Goal difference:

Plus twenty.

After five games.

“Worthing United have the numbers that look like somebody accidentally left cheat mode switched on.

Read that again.

There are teams playing FIFA on beginner mode with less flattering numbers.

The biggest statement came last Saturday.

Ringmer AFC arrived.

Worthing United won 8-0.

Eight.

Nil.

Bank Holiday Monday then presented a completely different challenge at Mile Oak, where United were held 1-1.

And perhaps that result is useful.

Because after winning 8-0, football has a wonderful habit of reminding you that the next match begins at 0-0.

Worthing United couldn't simply turn up and collect another six.

They had to settle for a point.

So how did they respond on Saturday?

Worthing United 3-0 Clanfield.

Back to winning.

Back to a clean sheet.

Thirteen points from five.

Third place with a game in hand on the top two.

And a defensive record every bit as impressive as Walcountians'.

Worthing United and AFC Walcountians have conceded four league goals between them.

There are twenty clubs in this division.

Apparently those two have decided sharing is optional.

JARVIS BROOK HAVE QUIETLY WON THREE IN A ROW

Want the form team nobody is talking about enough?

Jarvis Brook.

Three consecutive league victories.

And look at the first one.

Jarvis Brook 3-1 Infinity.

That looks better with every passing week.

Then they went to Oakwood on Bank Holiday Monday and won 2-1.

Saturday brought Hailsham Town to Lime Kiln.

Jarvis Brook 2-0 Hailsham Town.

Another three points.

Another clean sheet.

Suddenly Jarvis Brook are sixth on ten points and looking upwards.

This is why league tables in September can change so quickly.

A fortnight ago you can be sitting somewhere anonymous wondering whether the season has really started.

Win three games and everybody starts including your name in conversations.

Jarvis Brook have earned that.

They've beaten the side currently second in the table and followed it with two more victories.

That is not a fluke.

That's form.

ARUNDEL GET BACK UP AGAIN

Arundel have already played seven league matches, more than most of the division, and their week brought both sides of non-league football.

Bank Holiday Monday?

Infinity 3-0 Arundel.

Not much fun there.

Saturday?

East Preston 1-4 Arundel.

Much better.

Four goals away from home, three points and fourth place on 13.

Arundel are a difficult team to work out at the moment.

They've won four.

Lost two.

Drawn one.

Scored sixteen.

Conceded fourteen.

Basically, something usually happens.

There are worse reputations to have if you're selling tickets.

REIGATE HAVE GONE FROM LOSING TO WINNING EVERYTHING

Reigate Priory deserve their own little paragraph because their form has changed completely.

Three straight defeats became three straight victories.

First they went to Selsey and won 5-0.

Then Dorking Wanderers B visited and were beaten 4-1.

On Saturday Reigate travelled to Westfield.

Westfield 1-2 Reigate Priory.

Nine points suddenly on the board.

Fourteen goals scored.

Eighth place.

Sometimes the tactical masterplan is simply to stop losing and start winning.

Reigate appear to have nailed phase two.

OAKWOOD HAVE JUST WON 5-4, BECAUSE OF COURSE THEY HAVE

Now we reach Saturday's completely sensible result.

Saltdean United 4.

Oakwood 5.

Saltdean United 4-5 Oakwood.

Nine goals.

Oakwood arrived having lost four league matches in succession.

Their previous three alone had brought:

Worthing United 7-0 Oakwood.

Guildford City 4-0 Oakwood.

Oakwood 1-2 Jarvis Brook.

If confidence had a fuel gauge, the warning light was probably on.

So naturally Oakwood went to Saltdean and scored five.

Football.

Beautiful, stupid football.

Saltdean themselves are one of the difficult teams to judge because they've only completed four league matches, fewer than almost everyone around them.

They still have seven points.

So while losing 5-4 at home is unlikely to feature heavily in the manager's motivational PowerPoint, their league position comes with several games in hand.

Oakwood?

They probably don't care about any of that tonight.

When you've just ended four straight defeats by winning a nine-goal thriller, you are allowed to enjoy your Saturday evening.

RINGMER'S RESPONSE DESERVES RESPECT

Remember that Worthing United 8-0 Ringmer result?

Ringmer certainly do.

The easiest thing after an eight-goal defeat is for the next game to become another bad afternoon.

Instead they drew 1-1 with Westfield on Bank Holiday Monday.

Then travelled to Dorking Wanderers B on Saturday and won 2-0.

Four points since conceding eight.

That's a proper response.

Nobody enjoys getting battered.

But seasons aren't determined by whether you get one hiding.

They're determined by what happens afterwards.

Ringmer have answered that question rather well.

SHOREHAM FINALLY STOP THE GOALS GOING IN

Shoreham also needed something to steady the ship.

They had lost 5-0 to Hailsham.

Then Bank Holiday Monday brought another painful afternoon:

East Preston 4-0 Shoreham.

Nine conceded across two matches.

Saturday was therefore less about entertainment and more about stopping the bleeding.

Shoreham 0-0 Loxwood.

It won't be winning Result of the Season.

Nobody will be making commemorative DVDs.

But after conceding nine without reply across the previous two outings?

A clean sheet is absolutely something to take home.

Sometimes rebuilding begins with boring.

Boring can be beautiful.

AT THE BOTTOM, DORKING B NEED A SPARK

Dorking Wanderers B remain the only side without a league win.

Seven played.

Two draws.

Five defeats.

Two points.

Saturday's 2-0 home defeat against Ringmer leaves them at the foot of the table.

They've scored six and conceded 22.

That doesn't mean the season is disappearing in September.

But it does mean the next few weeks matter.

Above them Clanfield have three points, Shoreham four, while Ringmer and Loxwood both have five.

One victory changes the picture quickly.

The first one is always the hardest.

AND NOW LOOK AT THIS TOP THREE

AFC Walcountians:

Six played.

Sixteen points.

Two conceded.

Infinity:

Six played.

Fifteen points.

Worthing United:

Five played.

Thirteen points.

Twenty-two scored.

Two conceded.

You could make a convincing case for any of them being the most impressive side in the division so far.

Walcountians have the points.

Infinity have shown the reaction.

Worthing United have the numbers that look like somebody accidentally left cheat mode switched on.

And behind them Arundel, Guildford, Jarvis Brook and Dial Square are close enough to punish anybody who starts getting comfortable.

That's what makes Division One so interesting already.

The leaders are flying.

But nobody has escaped.

Not even close.

And the next week brings another mixture of league and knockout football before Saturday gives us Worthing United against Arundel in the FA Vase, plus Ringmer against Shoreham, Selsey against Mile Oak, Dorking Wanderers B against Loxwood and Westfield against East Preston.

Plenty can move.

Plenty probably will.

Because we're six games into a Southern Combination season.

If you think you understand it already, congratulations.

You're considerably more confident than the rest of us.

SECOND-HALF ARUNDEL SURGE SINKS EAST PRESTON AT LASHMAR

Arundel produced a clinical second-half display to secure all three points with a convincing 4–1 victory over East Preston at Lashmar.



BRANDON WRIGHT

MATCH REPORT · @BRANDONWRIGHT5

EAST PRESTON

LASHMAR · SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2026

1-4

ARUNDEL

SCFL DIVISION ONE · ATT 117



EAST PRESTON AND ARUNDEL GO HEAD TO HEAD AT LASHMAR

East Preston broke the deadlock in the 20th minute. Maciek Kason produced an excellent save to deny Frankie Bigwood, but Elliot Millman reacted quickest to the rebound and fired home off the post to put the hosts ahead.

Arundel continued to threaten, with Jaan Stanley delivering an excellent low cross into the penalty area, although none of his teammates could apply the finishing touch. The visitors also appealed for a penalty following a challenge inside the area, but the referee waved away their protests.

The equaliser arrived shortly before half-time. Another dangerous delivery from Stanley was turned into his own net by East Preston defender Luke Stevens, sending the sides into the interval level.



BODIES ON THE LINE IN THE ARUNDEL BOX · PHOTOGRAPHS: ZOZZPIX

Substitute Luke Fenlon put the visitors ahead with a superb volley from around 25 yards. He soon struck again after being picked out by an excellent pass from Steve Herbert, firing another volley from approximately 20 yards into the bottom corner to give Arundel a 3–1 lead.

East Preston almost responded through Millman, but Kason made another fine save to turn his effort behind. Morgan Day delivered the resulting corner, which Lewis Hamilton headed clear before also dealing with the follow-up ball.

The hosts' task became even more difficult when Luwayne Greenwood was shown a straight red card for a heavy challenge on Fenlon. The Arundel substitute required several minutes of treatment before eventually returning to his feet.

Arundel took advantage of their numerical superiority and added a fourth goal through Hamilton, who calmly placed the ball into the bottom-right corner.

East Preston continued to search for a route back into the match. A free-kick awarded following a foul was cleared by Arundel's impressive defence.

At the opposite end, Devontee Williams nearly made it five, but Nwosu produced a strong save. Zion McLeod then came closest to reducing the deficit for the home side when his effort struck the top-left corner of the goal frame.

Arundel's dominant second-half performance ultimately proved decisive as they departed Lashmar with a convincing victory and all three points.

EAST PRESTON

Eman Nwosu, Josh Ramsden, Luke Stevens (og 35), Morgan Day, Cove Hastings, Quincy Welsh, Aless Wisdom, Frankie Bigwood, Zion McLeod, Luwayne Greenwood, Elliot Millman (goal 24).

Subs: Oni Muramboguhwa, Tom Edwards, Jon Kusaka, Harry Teasel.

ARUNDEL

Maciek Kason, Levi Martin, Steve Herbert, Billy Ground, Daegan Walsh, Oliver Claydon, Matt Storm, Lewis Hamilton (goal 89), Oliver Humphries, Liam Brady, Jaan Stanley.

Subs: Sam Pearson, Luke Fenlon (goals 56, 61), Cal Stobart, Rio Long, Devontee Williams.

Attendance: 117

SCFL DIVISION TWO

Results and table · correct to Saturday evening, 5 September 2026 · fixtures overleaf

RESULTS THIS WEEK

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER		
Bosham	0-4	Alfold
Copthorne	2-0	Rudgwick
Rustington	5-0	Upper Beeding
Southwater	2-3	Chichester City B
Storrington	3-2	Hurstpierpoint
TD Shipley	4-1	Brighton Electricity
Worthing Town	6-2	ASC Brighton Rangers

TABLE

CLUB	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1 ■ Chichester City B	5	5	0	0	33	4	+29	15
2 ■ TD Shipley	5	5	0	0	19	4	+15	15
3 ■ Rustington	5	4	0	1	20	4	+16	12
4 ■ Ferring	4	3	1	0	12	4	+8	10
5 ■ Hurstpierpoint	4	3	0	1	15	4	+11	9
6 ■ Southwater	5	2	1	2	13	9	+4	7
7 ■ Alfold	5	2	1	2	7	9	-2	7
8 ■ Upper Beeding	5	2	0	3	7	10	-3	6
9 ■ Bosham	5	1	0	4	6	12	-6	3
10 ■ Storrington	4	1	0	3	5	16	-11	3
11 ■ Worthing Town	4	1	0	3	8	27	-19	3
12 ■ Copthorne	5	1	0	4	3	22	-19	3
13 ■ Brighton Electricity	3	0	2	1	2	5	-3	2
14 ■ ASC Brighton Rangers	5	0	2	3	7	20	-13	2
15 ■ Rudgwick	4	0	1	3	2	9	-7	1

SCFL DIVISION TWO FIXTURES

The week ahead · Sunday 6 – Saturday 12 September 2026 · kick-off times as published

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

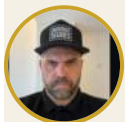
14:00	AFC Uckfield Town Second V Southwater SUSSEX INTERMEDIATE CHALLENGE CUP
14:00	Chichester City B V Storrington SUSSEX INTERMEDIATE CHALLENGE CUP
14:00	Delunited V Brighton Electricity SUSSEX INTERMEDIATE CHALLENGE CUP
14:00	Victoria Baptists V Bosham SUSSEX INTERMEDIATE CHALLENGE CUP
15:00	Alfold V Upper Beeding

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

15:00	Ferring V Copthorne
15:00	Rustington V ASC Brighton Rangers
15:00	TD Shipley V Hurstpierpoint
15:00	Worthing Town V Rudgwick

TWO PERFECT RECORDS, THIRTY-THREE CHICHESTER GOALS AND STORRINGTON JUST BLEW THE DOORS OFF

Chichester City B and TD Shipley still haven't dropped a point. Rustington answered a seven-goal defeat by winning 5-0. Ferring remain unbeaten. Worthing Town finally got the win they desperately needed. And Storrington Community spent Monday getting beaten 6-1 before deciding Saturday would be the perfect time to defeat previously perfect Hurstpierpoint. Division Two, everybody.



DUGOUT DIARIES
EDITOR

There are league tables.

And then there are league tables which require you to stare at them for a few seconds just to make sure somebody hasn't entered the numbers incorrectly.

Welcome to SCFL Division Two.

At the top tonight sit Chichester City B.

Five games.

Five wins.

Fifteen points.

Thirty-three goals scored.

It is 5 September.

Thirty-three.

At some point somebody at Chichester is going to have to explain that you're allowed to stop scoring once the match is won.

And yet for all that ridiculous attacking output, they are not running away with anything.

Because sitting directly behind them are TD Shipley.

Five games.

Five wins.

Fifteen points.

Two clubs.

Ten combined league matches.

Ten victories.

Something has to give eventually.

Just not yet.

CHICHESTER CITY B HAVE APPARENTLY DECLARED WAR ON SCOREBOARDS

Chichester's opening weeks have been completely absurd.

The 17-0 opening-day victory against Worthing Town made everybody look twice.

Seventeen goals in a senior league match is the sort of result where you initially assume somebody's accidentally entered the rugby score.

But the danger was always judging Chichester solely on that afternoon.

Because they've kept winning.

Monday took them to Bosham.

Bosham 1-4 Chichester City B.

Another four.

Another three points.

Then Saturday brought a much tougher assignment away at Southwater.

And this time there was no enormous scoreline.

No procession.

No opportunity for the person operating the scoreboard to file for overtime.

Chichester had to scrap.

Southwater 2-3 Chichester City B.

And strangely, that might tell us more about them than the enormous wins.

Good teams can batter people.

The better sign is whether they can win when the other team refuses to be battered.

Southwater made them work.

Chichester still left with three points.

Five from five.

Thirty-three scored.

Top of the league.

Now we're paying attention.

TD SHIPLEY ARE BASICALLY SAYING: THAT'S NICE, SO ARE WE

The problem for Chichester is that TD Shipley appear completely unimpressed.

They've got a perfect record of their own.

Bank Holiday Monday brought Storrington Community.

Shipley won 6-1.

That took their early league sequence to four victories from four.

Saturday?

Brighton Electricity.

Another victory.

TD Shipley 4-1 Brighton Electricity.

Five from five.

Nineteen goals scored.

Only four conceded.

Fifteen points.

So while Chichester are producing numbers that look like they belong in an under-9s development league, Shipley are just quietly standing next to them saying:

"We haven't dropped anything either."

It gives Division Two a lovely early storyline.

Two perfect teams.

Same number of points.

Different goal difference.

And on Saturday 12 September, Shipley host Hurstpierpoint.

That won't be dull.

STORRINGTON JUST PRODUCED THE RESPONSE OF THE WEEK

This might be our favourite result of the entire division.

Monday:

"If this is the calm bit of the season, we're in trouble."

TD Shipley 6-1 Storrington Community.

Imagine the changing room afterwards.

Nobody wants to talk.

The tea tastes worse.

The journey home feels about four hours longer than it actually is.

And then Saturday arrives.

Your opponents?

Hurstpierpoint.

Three games.

Three wins.

Thirteen scored.

One conceded.

Perfect record.

Ideal.

Except Storrington apparently decided they'd had quite enough of losing.

Storrington Community 3-2 Hurstpierpoint.

First league victory of the season.

Hurstpierpoint's first league defeat.

From conceding six on Monday to knocking off one of the division's perfect starters five days later.

That is non-league football in one paragraph.

Try predicting it.

Go on.

We dare you.

Hurstpierpoint remain fifth on nine points and their start is still an excellent one.

But their zero in the defeats column has gone.

Storrington?

They'll care considerably less about the table tonight.

Sometimes one win can change the entire feel around a football club.

That one should.

RUSTINGTON RESPOND WITH FIVE

Rustington also had something to answer.

Bank Holiday Monday produced arguably the match of the week.

Ferring 4.

Rustington 3.

Seven goals and Rustington's first league defeat.

Ferring protecting their unbeaten start.

So what did Rustington do on Saturday?

They hosted Upper Beeding.

Rustington 5-0 Upper Beeding.

That will do.

If you're looking for the correct response to losing a seven-goal thriller, scoring five and keeping a clean sheet is probably somewhere near the top of the list.

Rustington now have four victories from five and sit third on 12 points.

Twenty league goals scored.

Four conceded.

And their only defeat came by the odd goal in seven against another unbeaten side.

Nobody should be forgetting about them because two clubs above happen to have perfect records.

This is a proper three-way early scrap.

And possibly more than three.

Because Ferring are lurking.

FERRING HAVEN'T LOST EITHER

Ferring didn't have a league fixture on Saturday, which means their Bank Holiday result is still sitting there looking increasingly impressive.

Ferring 4-3 Rustington.

They've played four.

Won three.

Drawn one.

Lost none.

Ten points.

So while Chichester and Shipley have the perfect 15, Ferring have a game in hand and remain unbeaten themselves.

They also possess one of those lovely early-season situations where nobody is really discussing them as much as the two teams at the top.

Managers tend to quite like that.

Less noise.

Less expectation.

Just keep collecting points.

Their next league assignment brings Copthorne to Ferring on Saturday.

Win that and the top of Division Two gets even more crowded.

ALFOLD HAVE JUST HAD A VERY USEFUL SATURDAY

Alfold's Bank Holiday ended with a 1-1 draw against Rudgwick.

Solid enough.

Saturday was considerably better.

They travelled to Bosham and won 4-0.

Four goals.

Clean sheet.

Three points.

That moves Alfold onto seven points from five matches and into seventh.

After a mixed opening few weeks, that is exactly the type of result that can get a season moving.

Bosham, meanwhile, have now suffered four defeats from five after beginning with a victory.

Again, it's September.

Nobody is dead.

Nobody is promoted.

Nobody should be conducting an emergency board meeting in the car park.

But momentum matters.

Alfold have just found some.

Bosham need to find theirs again.

COPTHORNE HAVE WON - AND THAT MATTERS

Copthorne's numbers made uncomfortable reading before Saturday.

Four league games.

Four defeats.

One goal scored.

Twenty-two conceded.

Monday had brought another loss:

Copthorne 0-4 Southwater.

So Rudgwick arriving on Saturday felt important.

And Copthorne delivered.

Copthorne 2-0 Rudgwick.

First win.

First three points.

First clean sheet.

And two of their three league goals this season arriving in the same afternoon.

That is what early-season football is about at the bottom end.

You can spend weeks staring at zero in the points column.

Then one Saturday changes the conversation.

Copthorne climb above Brighton Electricity, ASC Brighton Rangers and Rudgwick.

Suddenly the table doesn't look quite so horrible.

Rudgwick are now bottom with one point.

Their next opportunity comes at Worthing Town next Saturday.

AND SPEAKING OF WORTHING TOWN

This one deserves some context.

Worthing Town's season began with that 17-0 defeat at Chichester City B.

There is no clever way of dressing it up.

Seventeen is seventeen.

They then lost again.

And again.

By Saturday they'd played three league matches, had no points and had conceded 25 goals.

ASC Brighton Rangers arrived.

Worthing Town won 6-2.

Six!

From an opening-day 17-goal defeat to scoring six themselves three weeks later.

Football can be brilliant like that.

Worthing Town are still down towards the bottom.

Their goal difference is still ugly.

Nobody is pretending one victory erases everything that came before it.

But it gives them something far more important than a prettier table.

Proof.

Proof that they can win at this level.

Proof that the opening afternoon doesn't have to define their entire season.

And proof that if you stick around long enough in non-league football, eventually it gives you a Saturday worth staying in the clubhouse for.

SOUTHWATER MADE CHICHESTER WORK FOR IT

Southwater's week is another perfect example of how quickly things change.

Monday:

Copthorne 0-4 Southwater.

Comfortable.

Clean sheet.

Four goals.

Saturday:

Southwater 2-3 Chichester City B.

No points.

But plenty to take from it.

Chichester have been demolishing teams.

Southwater pushed the leaders all the way and fell short by only one.

Seven points from five leaves them sixth.

They aren't in the headline positions, but they're competitive.

And in this division right now, being competitive means you're never far from climbing several places very quickly.

THE TABLE HAS ALREADY SPLIT INTO STORIES

So this is where we stand.

Chichester City B:

15 points from five.

TD Shipley:

15 points from five.

Rustington:

12 from five.

Ferring:

10 from four and unbeaten.

Hurstpierpoint:

Nine from four despite today's first defeat.

Then Southwater and Alfold on seven.

There are already clear stories developing.

The two perfect starters.

Rustington refusing to go away.

Ferring quietly unbeaten.

Hurstpierpoint discovering that even the best starts eventually get punched.

And underneath them, clubs beginning to find their first wins and first bits of momentum.

AND NEXT SATURDAY GIVES US A BEAUTY

The fixture that jumps straight off the page is:

TD Shipley v Hurstpierpoint.

Shipley's perfect record against a Hurstpierpoint side who will be desperate to respond immediately to today's defeat.

Ferring host Copthorne.

Rustington welcome ASC Brighton Rangers.

Alfold face Upper Beeding.

Worthing Town host Rudgwick.

Meanwhile several other Division Two clubs head into County Cup action, including Chichester City B, Southwater, Bosham and Brighton Electricity.

Which means the table won't necessarily become any easier to read next weekend.

Excellent.

We wouldn't want it to.

Because Division Two has already given us a 17-0.

Two perfect teams.

A seven-goal top-end thriller.

A team losing 6-1 and then beating an unbeaten side five days later.

A club responding to defeat by winning 5-0.

And Worthing Town going from conceding seventeen on opening day to scoring six themselves.

We're five games in.

If this is the calm bit of the season, we're in trouble.

Chichester are top.

Shipley are perfect too.

Rustington are coming.

Ferring haven't lost.

And everybody else has just been reminded that on any given Saturday, Division Two can make absolutely no sense at all.

Exactly how we like it.

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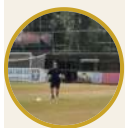
SNLF **LIVE**

DUGOUT **AI**

IBB10 **LIVE**

THE DAY EVERYTHING STARTED

The message, the meeting, the tour of Jarvis Brook, and the first session that began my coaching journey.



REECE MCQUADE

NEW BEGINNINGS · A SUSSEX COACHING JOURNEY

Every coach has a beginning. Mine didn't start with a match, a qualification, or a job title. It started with a moment of uncertainty — a moment where football, for the first time in my life, wasn't guaranteed anymore.

I'd been playing men's football since I was sixteen. Saturday league, Sunday league, park pitches, changing rooms that smelled of mud and Deep Heat — the proper grassroots experience. I played for years, even as work and family commitments slowly chipped away at my availability. Football was always there, even when life got busy.

Then, in November 2022, everything changed.

I damaged my ACL and MCL. Proper damage. The kind that forces a decision. The surgeon gave me two options: a big operation... or give up playing.

I chose the latter.

And that choice left me rattling around, unsure of what to do with myself. Football had been my routine, my release, my identity. Suddenly it was gone. And the months that followed were some of the most uncertain I've ever had. I flip-flopped constantly — one day convinced I'd find a new path in football, the next day wondering if I should walk away from it altogether.

From November through to late June, even early July of 2023, I was stuck in that limbo. No clarity. No direction. Just a gap where football used to be.

Coaching had always felt like it was going to be the next obvious step, but I didn't know how to get started or where I belonged. I didn't know if anyone would take me seriously. I didn't know if I had anything to offer. I didn't know if I'd be welcomed into that world.

THE MESSAGE

Then Jacob put a message out on social media.

He said he needed help. He wasn't bothered about experience. He wasn't bothered about qualifications. He just wanted someone who loved the game, was keen, dedicated, and wanted to learn.

That was me. That was exactly me. Before I even spoke to him, it felt like a perfect fit.

So I sent him a message — the first real step in my coaching journey.

It wasn't a confident message. It wasn't the message of someone who already knew where they were going. It was the message of someone who wanted to learn, wanted to be involved, and wanted to see if there was a place for him in Sussex football. I remember typing it out, deleting it, typing it again. That mix of nerves and excitement — the feeling that you're stepping into a world you've admired from the outside but never truly entered.

That message was the first time I backed myself.

THE DAY EVERYTHING BECAME REAL

I still remember walking into the club for the first time to meet Jacob properly. Jarvis Brook weren't just any club at that moment — they were fresh off the back of winning SCFL Division 2 and winning the County Cup, a season where they'd earned everything on the pitch. But they were also fresh off the bitter disappointment of being denied promotion for missing a deadline by a few days. You could feel that mixture of pride and pain the second you stepped inside.

Jacob showed me around the place — properly. Not rushed. Not half-hearted. He wanted me to understand the club, not just see it.

I remember the architect plans pinned up on the wall. New ideas. New ambitions. New standards. A vision of what the club wanted to become.

But behind those plans, you could feel something deeper — the hurt of being held back, the frustration of knowing they'd done enough on the pitch but still weren't allowed to move forward. It wasn't anger. It was determination. A desire to right the wrongs. A hunger to go again.

And I took all of that in.

But alongside the excitement, there was something else — uncertainty. Jarvis Brook was a male-dominant, settled, established environment. A group of players and staff who already knew each other. A club with its own identity, its own rhythm, its own standards.

And then there was me. The new boy. Walking into a place where everyone already had their role, their place, their voice.

“One wrong impression. One awkward moment. One sign that you don't belong — and it's over before it begins.”

It's easy to forget how intimidating that can be. How quickly something like that can fall flat on its face before it even gets started. One wrong impression. One awkward moment. One sign that you don't belong — and it's over before it begins.

“WHAT TEAM WERE YOU WITH LAST YEAR?”

And that feeling only intensified when I met the chairman, Carl.

He was welcoming, but one of the first things he asked me was: “What team were you with last year?”

I know now that it's a completely normal question in this world — almost a standard opener. But at the time, it hit me hard. It fed straight into my insecurities. It made me feel exposed. It validated the sense I already had that this hobby, this profession, this way of life is guarded, built on trust, built on reputation, built on knowing who's who.

In that moment, I felt every bit of the outsider. Every bit of the newcomer. Every bit of the person trying to step into a world that wasn't sure about him yet.

But Jacob wanted help. He wanted someone to support him, someone to learn, someone to grow alongside him. And that gave me a chance — a real one.

THE FIRST SESSION

Then came the first session.

Your first session in a new environment is a strange mix of adrenaline and uncertainty. You're watching everything. You're trying to understand the standards. You're trying to figure out where you fit. You're trying not to get in the way. But you're also desperate to contribute.

That first session taught me more than any qualification ever could. I saw how Jacob worked. I saw how players responded. I saw what good coaching looked like. I saw what real standards felt like.

I wasn't leading anything. I wasn't delivering anything. I was just absorbing it all — the detail, the tempo, the communication, the expectations. But even in that first hour, something clicked. I knew I wanted to be part of this properly. I knew I wanted to coach. I knew I wanted to grow.

Looking back now, it's easy to see how small those moments might seem from the outside. A message. A meeting. A tour of a clubhouse full of ambition and frustration. A conversation with a chairman that exposed my insecurities. A first session that lit a spark.

But they were the foundation of everything that followed — Jarvis Brook, Uckfield, Pagham, the C Licence, the rebuilds, the setbacks, the breakthroughs, the identity I've built as a coach.

This series is about those moments. The raw ones. The honest ones. The ones that shaped me long before anyone called me a manager or a coach.

Every coach has a beginning. This was mine.



No. 01

RAZZAQ COLEMAN DE-GRAFT

WINGER / FORWARD • WORTHING • NATIONAL LEAG...

WHY HE'S HOT 4 National League goals in 6 games — scored at Carlisle, a brace v Boreham Wood and the 89th-minute...

2025/26: 17 league goals and 12 assists in 53 appearances as Worthing won the National League South title; Supporters'...

6

APPS

4

GOALS

4

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 02

GREG LUER

STRIKER • HORSHAM • NL SOUTH • 31 • NO.12

WHY HE'S HOT 3 league goals in the captured table; scored twice at Braintree. Experienced forward with Football Leagu...

2025/26: 41 NLS apps, 3 goals for Horsham.

5

APPS

3

GOALS

3

LEAGUE
GOALS

1

MOTM



No. 03

JOSH SPINKS

CENTRE-BACK • LEWES • ISTHMIAN

WHY HE'S HOT 2 league goals from centre-back in a defence with clean sheets in 4 of its last 5 league games

2025/26: at Burgess Hill Town, helped the newly promoted Hillians to a top-half Isthmian Premier finish. Previously 24...

7

APPS

2

GOALS

2

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 04

NOEL FISHER

WINGER • LEWES • ISTHMIAN • 21

WHY HE'S HOT Scored in consecutive league games — the third in the 3-1 v AFC Whyteleafe and the only goal of the 1...

2025/26: 18 goals and 7 assists in 28 appearances for Horsham YM in the SCFL Premier.

7

APPS

2

GOALS

2

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 05

REGGIE WARD

RB/LB • BURGESS HILL TOWN • ISTHMIAN • 23

WHY HE'S HOT Player of the match in a 3-0 win and clean sheet. More than 200 Burgess Hill appearances; full-back an...

2025/26: 30 apps for Burgess Hill Town; club's longest-serving player, 200+ career apps.

6

APPS

0

GOALS

0

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 06

KAI CORBETT

ATTACKING MIDFIELDER · EASTBOURNE BOROUGH · ...

WHY HE'S HOT 4 goals in his first 3 league appearances, including a hat-trick. 33 appearances and 7 goals for...

2025/26: joined Eastbourne Borough from Chelmsford City in Oct 2025; Before that 34 National League apps for Aldershot...

6

APPS

4

GOALS

4

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 07

NOEL LEIGHTON

STRIKER · THREE BRIDGES · ISTHMIAN

WHY HE'S HOT Two goals in his first two league games of the season — the 83' header that sparked a comeback for a 2-2...

2025/26: Isthmian South East Golden Boot winner as Three Bridges won the title; club's all-time leading scorer.

2

APPS

2

GOALS

2

LEAGUE
GOALS

1

ASSISTS



No. 08

MAX WALSH

CENTRAL MIDFIELDER · HASTINGS UNITED · ISTHMI...

WHY HE'S HOT Club top scorer with 4 goals in all competitions as Hastings sit top of the South East Division;...

2025/26: joined Hastings United from Margate mid-season; 10 Isthmian South East apps.

7

APPS

4

GOALS

3

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 09

MASON DOUGHTY

STRIKER · BROADBRIDGE HEATH · ISTHMIAN

WHY HE'S HOT 4 current league goals; scored in a 3-0 win that preserved an unbeaten start

4

APPS

5

GOALS

5

LEAGUE
GOALS

1

MOTM



No. 10

ED RATCLIFFE

MIDFIELDER / FORWARD · EASTBOURNE TOWN · IST...

WHY HE'S HOT Two goals in the 5-0 home win over Peacehaven & Telscombe on 25 Aug; joint top scorer from 3...

2025/26: 13 Isthmian South East apps for Eastbourne Town; retained for 2026/27.

3

APPS

2

GOALS

2

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 11

CONNOR TIGHE

STRIKER • PEACEHAVEN & TELSCOMBE • ISTHMIAN

WHY HE'S HOT 4 current league goals; two goals and player of the match in a 4–0 win

2025/26: 21 goals in SCFL Premier for Peacehaven & Telscombe as the Tye won promotion via the play-offs.

4

APPS

4

GOALS

4

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 12

RUSHAAR SAMUEL-SMIKLE

STRIKER • CROWBOROUGH ATHLETIC • ISTHMIAN

WHY HE'S HOT 5 goals in all competitions by 22 Aug — a brace in the 5-0 FA Cup win at Guernsey, Crowborough's goal...

6

APPS

5

GOALS

1

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 13

JARED RANGE

CENTRAL MIDFIELDER • STEYNING TOWN • ISTHMIAN

WHY HE'S HOT 3rd-minute winner in Steyning's first Step 4 league win, 1-0 at Eastbourne Town on 31 Aug, plus an FA Cup...

2025/26: started the Peter Bentley Cup final as Steyning Town completed the SCFL Premier/Peter Bentley Cup double...

4

APPS

1

GOALS

1

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 14

FINLEY WALSH-SMITH

DEFENDER • BOGNOR REGIS TOWN • ISTHMIAN

WHY HE'S HOT Joint-most appearances in a back four that has kept 5 clean sheets in 8 games, including the 1-0 at...

2025/26: 14 Southern Premier South apps for Gosport Borough, then 6 apps and 1 goal on loan at Bognor Regis Town before...

6

APPS

0

GOALS

0

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 15

HARRY HEATH

STRIKER • LITTLEHAMPTON TOWN • ISTHMIAN

WHY HE'S HOT 2 goals in his last two games — the equaliser v Winchester City and a penalty at Harrow Borough; club top...

2025/26: double-winning season with Steyning Town; used as a substitute in the cup final.

4

APPS

2

GOALS

2

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 16

CHARLIE BALL

FORWARD · EASTBOURNE UNITED · SCFL PREMIER

WHY HE'S HOT 7 current league goals in the captured Step 5 leaderboard. 19 SCFL Premier goals in 2025/26.

—	8	7	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 17

JOSH RAPSON

DEFENDER · HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN · SCFL PREMIER...

WHY HE'S HOT Centre-back and player of the match in a 2–0 league win. Defensive standout rather than a goals-only...

—	—	—	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 18

KWESI NTIM

FORWARD · LINGFIELD · SCFL PREMIER

WHY HE'S HOT 7 current league goals; scored four in one match against Billingshurst

—	9	7	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 19

LEWIS RUSTELL

FORWARD · PAGHAM · SCFL PREMIER

WHY HE'S HOT 7 current league goals in the captured Step 5 leaderboard.

4	8	7	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 20

OWEN SHERIFF

FORWARD · PAGHAM · SCFL PREMIER

WHY HE'S HOT 3 FA Cup goals in 2 games — scored in the 2–1 extra-preliminary replay win at Hollands & Blair and both...

—	—	—	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 21

LEWIS FINNEY

CENTRAL MIDFIELDER · HASSOCKS · SCFL PREMIER

WHY HE'S HOT 4 current league goals. Early-season output for a relegated side resetting at Step 5.

10

APPS

2

GOALS

2

LEAGUE
GOALS

2

MOTM



No. 22

WILLIAM FAZAKERLEY

STRIKER · GUERNSEY · SCFL PREMIER · NO.19

WHY HE'S HOT 4 current league goals. Attacking contributor in Guernsey's positive start.

Career at Guernsey FC: 133 apps, 41 goals; returned for 2025-26 pre-season

8

APPS

5

GOALS

4

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 23

JORDAN MASE

MIDFIELDER / FORWARD · ROFFEY · SCFL PREMIER

WHY HE'S HOT 5 current league goals. Consistent attacking threat in current Roffey reporting.

—

APPS

5

GOALS

5

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 24

BRETT PITMAN

STRIKER · MIDHURST & EASEBOURNE · SCFL PREMIER

WHY HE'S HOT Current league scorer and focal point in an ambitious rebuild. Former Football League striker; headline...

2025/26: 31 goals in all competitions for Downton despite debuting on 1 November

7

APPS

7

GOALS

—

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 25

RYAN MOIR

FORWARD · BEXHILL UNITED · SCFL PREMIER

WHY HE'S HOT At least 6 goals in all competitions by 31 Aug — opening-day opener at Billingshurst, two in the Peter...

—

APPS

—

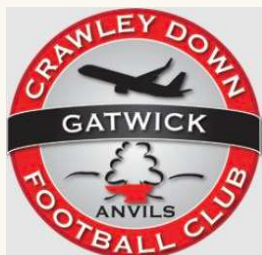
GOALS

—

LEAGUE
GOALS

—

MOTM



No. 26

WILL HARLEY

FORWARD · CRAWLEY DOWN GATWICK · SCFL PREMI...

WHY HE'S HOT 5 current league goals. Early scoring leader in a strong team start.

—	6	5	1
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	ASSISTS



No. 27

JOSH WRIGHT

MIDFIELDER / FORWARD · SEAFORD TOWN · SCFL P...

WHY HE'S HOT 5 current league goals.

—	5	5	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 28

KIERON PAMMENT

ATTACKING MIDFIELDER · EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN ...

WHY HE'S HOT 3 current league goals. Early scoring case for a club dropping from the Isthmian League.

7	5	3	1
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	ASSISTS



No. 29

TOM EDWARDS

FORWARD · BILLINGSHURST · SCFL PREMIER

WHY HE'S HOT 5 current league goals; two against Lingfield in August. 17 SCFL Division One goals in 2025/26 before...

—	5	5	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 30

PAUL FEAKINS

MIDFIELDER / FORWARD · LITTLE COMMON · SCFL ...

WHY HE'S HOT Headed in the 3-1 win over Seaford Town on 31 Aug — "his third goal in four games" — after scoring in...

—	3	—	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 31

LOUIE SULLIVAN

GOALKEEPER • AFC VARDEANIANS • SCFL PREMIER

WHY HE'S HOT Man of the match with "two superb saves" in the 1-0 v Bexhill, the first of three straight league clean...

—	2	—	1
APPS	CLEAN SHEETS	GOALS AGAINST	MOTM



No. 32

FREDERICK CHIPP-SMITH

MIDFIELDER / FORWARD • SELSEY • SCFL DIV ONE

WHY HE'S HOT 2 current league goals, both in an opening-day brace. Immediate early-season scoring case.

2025/26: Selsey finished 8th in SCFL Division One.

—	2	2	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 33

ZACH WILLETT

FORWARD • INFINITY • SCFL DIV ONE

WHY HE'S HOT 6 current league goals; hat-trick against Dial Square and a consecutive-hat-trick club record

2025/26: Infinity finished 5th in SCFL Division One and lost the play-off semi-final to Billingshurst.

—	6	6	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 34

TOMMY TIERNEY

MIDFIELDER / FORWARD • INFINITY • SCFL DIV ONE

WHY HE'S HOT 1 current league goal confirms 2026/27 registration. 17 SCFL Division One goals in 2025/26; long...

2025/26: Infinity finished 5th in SCFL Division One and lost the play-off semi-final to Billingshurst.

—	1	1	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 35

DANNY KINGSTON

MIDFIELDER / FORWARD • WORTHING UNITED • SCF...

WHY HE'S HOT 3 current league goals; two goals in the 4-0 FA Vase win over Ringmer

2025/26: Worthing United finished 4th in SCFL Division One and reached the play-off final after beating Reigate Priory...

—	5	3	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 36

DEAN SHERWOOD

MIDFIELDER • WORTHING UNITED • SCFL DIV ONE

WHY HE'S HOT 3 current league goals; 25-yard free-kick against Ringmer. Captain; 150 club appearances; described as...

2025/26: Worthing United finished 4th in SCFL Division One and lost the play-off final.

—	4	3	2
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	ASSISTS



No. 37

JOSHUA WILLIAMS

FORWARD • GUILDFORD CITY • SCFL DIV ONE

WHY HE'S HOT 5 current league goals. Joint-second in the captured Division One scoring table.

2025/26: Guildford City are newcomers to the SCFL this season - 'a superb introduction' after 3 games.

9	6	5	2
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	ASSISTS



No. 38

TOMMY MCKENNA

MIDFIELDER / FORWARD • REIGATE PRIORY • SCFL ...

WHY HE'S HOT 5 current league goals. Joint-second in the captured Division One scoring table.

2025/26: Reigate Priory finished 2nd in SCFL Division One and lost the play-off semi-final to Worthing United.

—	6	6	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 39

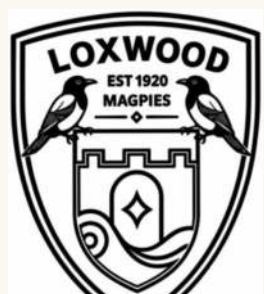
DAN TEWKSBURY

STRIKER • WESTFIELD (SUSSEX) • SCFL DIV ONE

WHY HE'S HOT 4 current league goals. Leading scorer in Westfield's current Division One group.

2025/26: Westfield were a Step 7 side promoted into SCFL Division One this summer.

6	5	5	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 40

LEWIS HUGGINS

MIDFIELDER / FORWARD • LOXWOOD • SCFL DIV ONE

WHY HE'S HOT 4 current league goals.

2025/26: Loxwood finished 16th of 18 in SCFL Division One.

—	4	4	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 41

TYLER PEARSON

MIDFIELDER / FORWARD · HAILSHAM TOWN · SCFL ...

WHY HE'S HOT 4 current league goals. Two-goal match featured in the opening-round reporting.

2025/26: Hailsham Town won SCFL Division Two and were promoted.

—	4	4	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 42

ALEXANDER JOY

MIDFIELDER / FORWARD · MILE OAK · SCFL DIV ONE

WHY HE'S HOT 3 current league goals, all in one hat-trick. Immediate high-ceiling scoring burst.

2025/26: Mile Oak finished 10th in SCFL Division One.

—	3	3	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 43

CHIKE EJEZIE

WINGER · AFC WALCOUNTIANS · SCFL DIV ONE

WHY HE'S HOT 3 current league goals. 18 league goals in 2025/26.

2025/26: 18 league goals for AFC Walcountians in SCFL Division One - joint-third in the division's scoring chart...

—	3	3	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 44

GEORGE DOUGLAS

GOALKEEPER · DIAL SQUARE · SCFL DIV ONE · NO.1

WHY HE'S HOT Emergency signing who kept a clean sheet on debut in the 2-0 v Clanfield then produced an 87th-minute...

2025/26: 'former Bedfont Sports goalkeeper'; recent arrival at Dial Square, who are SCFL Division One newcomers this...

3	3	—	0
APPS	CLEAN SHEETS	GOALS AGAINST	MOTM



No. 45

DAEGAN WALSH

CENTRAL MIDFIELDER · ARUNDEL · SCFL DIV ONE

WHY HE'S HOT 2 goals in his first 3 league games and man of the match in the 2-1 win over Dial Square

2025/26: joined Hastings United from Margate mid-season; 10 Isthmian South East apps.

7	4	3	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 46

WILL MOGER

GOALKEEPER · RINGMER AFC · SCFL DIV ONE

WHY HE'S HOT Clean sheets in the 0-0 at Jarvis Brook and the 0-0 Peter Bentley Cup tie at Westfield, won 11-10 on...

2025/26: Ringmer finished 15th in SCFL Division One.

—	1	—	—
APPS	CLEAN SHEETS	GOALS AGAINST	MOTM



No. 47

FRANKIE BIGWOOD

MIDFIELDER / FORWARD · EAST PRESTON · SCFL DI...

WHY HE'S HOT Hat-trick and official man of the match in the 4-0 home win over Shoreham on 31 Aug

2025/26: East Preston finished 12th in SCFL Division One.

—	3	3	1
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 48

JOSHUA IRISH

MIDFIELDER / FORWARD · CHICHESTER CITY B · SC...

WHY HE'S HOT 6 goals in the 17-0 opening league win. The most explosive single-match output in the Division Two pool.

2025/26: Chichester City B finished 4th in SCFL Division Two; team-mate Josh Hall was 3rd in the division's scoring...

—	6	6	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 49

JACK LANIGAN

MIDFIELDER / FORWARD · FERRING · SCFL DIV TWO

WHY HE'S HOT Opening-day hat-trick. Immediate current-season scoring case outside the 17-0 match.

2025/26: Ferring finished 6th in SCFL Division Two; Joe Sadler scored 19 for them.

—	3	3	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM



No. 50

SAM HAYTER

MIDFIELDER / FORWARD · HURSTPIERPOINT · SCFL ...

WHY HE'S HOT Two goals in the 5-0 opening-day win at ASC Brighton Rangers; Hurstpierpoint then won 6-0 at Copthorne

2025/26: Hurstpierpoint were not in the SCFL - this is a 'flying return' to SCFL Division Two.

—	2	2	—
APPS	GOALS	LEAGUE GOALS	MOTM

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