

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME

BIGGLESWADE UNITED

















It's half time, or thereabouts, for all Biggleswade United's senior sides this season and the perfect time to assess our progress.

New, joint-men's first team coaches Jordan Wright and Gaz Hunt certainly hit the floor running when they took over from Cristian Colás at the beginning of the season going unbeaten in seven league matches, winning four and drawing three, only to face a reality check in the second half of December and early January when five league matches yielded just one point from a possible 15.

But there's still a long way to, the atmosphere in the dressing room is excellent and we all know that Rome wasn't built in a day. It's all part of the process and I have always said that in football you learn more from a defeat that you do a victory. Gaz and Jordan deserve, and will be given, their chance to find a way out of this current sticky patch, stabilise, look to strengthen the side, learn as they go, and become as good as they can be.

Our men's reserve team, meanwhile, carried on

the good form they had shown at the end of last season with three wins and a draw from their first four matches and after languishing for much of last season near the bottom of the table fully deserve the top four position that they are, at the time of writing, currently enjoying.

We currently have around 30 women signed up for our two senior sides and while neither of them enjoyed the best of starts they have got stronger as the season has progressed. Our Red side currently sit mid-table although they will looking to maintain their recent improvement if they want to avoid being dragged into a relegation battle.

Our Blue side however are currently near the top and if they can maintain their form are very much in with a shout for the the Division One title of the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Women's Football League and promotion into the Premier Division.

We are always looking to improve, recruit and welcome new friends, be they players, coaches and, of course, volunteers and would be delighted to hear from anyone eager to join us in whatever capacity at biggleswadeunited@gmail.com.

As always raising money that can allow us to function on a daily basis remains one of our most urgent and constant priorities.

To that end we recently raised £1140 with a one ticket takes all super raffle with a value of over £400 which contained two season tickets for the 2024-25 season, a selection of club merchandise, two sets of top quality earphones, chocolate and last but not least, a signed copy of the latest edition of my book on Leo Messi. Tickets costed £2 each and were sold by every team leader/coach at the club and in the bar.

There will be another brilliant hamper in April and anybody will be able to win it (and help the club in the process) as tickets will be available online too.

And I will be continuing with my "Evening with Guillem" events, this time to be held on April 4 in the Leicester area with a special VIP night featuring myself in conversation with the brilliant Enzo Maresca, the coach of high-flying Leicester City currently taking the Championship by storm.

It should prove to be a very popular night and hopefully, profitable, with all proceeds going to club funds.

Guillem Balagué biggleswadeunited@gmail.com



Biggleswade United Football Club was re-formed on the 16th July 1959. However, local history records indicate that there was a Biggleswade United side playing at Second Meadow as early as 1929. Our first season (1959/60) saw us competing in Division Three of the North Herts. League (NHL). After 10 successful years in the NHL the club made the step up to South Midlands League (SML) football. But towards the end of a 15-year association with the SML the club began to struggle and after three years of finishing in the bottom three of Division One we sought fresh fields. The club joined the Herts. Senior but club continued to find the going tough. In 1986 we elected to return to local League football, joining the Bedford and District Football League and began to build again.

The appointment of Brian Swords as first team manager in 87/88 proved to be the turning point in the club's fortunes. During the next ten years the club achieved a tremendous amount of success on and off the football pitch. Our record of League and Cup honours speak for themselves but aligned to this a great deal of work went on behind the scenes to match the on-field success. The club now boasts one of the best clubhouse and ground facilities in the Mid-Bedfordshire area. The success of the club also attracted many new players as well as commanding a great deal of loyalty from those players who helped the club progress from Division Three of the Bedford and District League to County Senior Club status in just 15 years.

The 1995/96 season was the most successful in the club's history - winning five major honours; the Beds Intermediate County Cup, Bedford and District League Championship, League Cup Championship and as the League's representatives the club won the Beds. FA Centenary Cup. Having won every major Bedford League honour the club felt it was time to move on and made the decision to make the step up once again and returned to Division One of the

SML. In an exceptionally successful first season we celebrated a Division One "double" by winning the Championship and the Division One Cup. We also retained the Beds. FA Intermediate County Cup, only the second club in the competition's history to achieve this feat. To crown our success the club were awarded the SML Special Achievement Trophy in July 1997.

In the season 1997/98 we finally achieved Senior status. This was achieved not only through the endeavours of the players on the field but ultimately as a result of an extremely hard working committee. With the help of the Biggleswade Town Council a new stand was erected and perimeter fencing installed. And two seasons later the club erected floodlights and on the evening of 26th October 1999 we played our first-ever floodlit game at Second Meadow, Ryman League side Leighton Town were the visitors in the Bedfordshire Premier Cup.

The next eleven years saw the first team led by Steve "Snowy" Wright and under his management the club continued to enjoy a very high level of League and Cup success ultimately achieving promotion to the Molten Spartan South Midlands League Premier Division and with it the opportunity to compete in the FA Cup. And under Snowy the club made three Beds FA Senior Challenge Cup final appearances, winning two of the three with victories over Stotfold (4-1) and Leighton Town (1-0) but missed out in 2006/07 going down 2-0 to Dunstable Town. Snowy's other cup successes came in the form of the Hunts Premeir Cup, North Beds Charity Cup, Hinchingbrooke Cup, the SML Division One Cup and the SML Special Achievement Award once again. The end of the 2006 2007 saw Snowy step down as manager with his assistant, Nick Burton taking over the first team reins. January 5th 2009 saw the club embark on further ambitious ground improvements. With financial backing from Biggleswade Town Council, Mid Beds District

Council and the Football Foundation we installed a 260-seater stand, fully enclosed the ground with a double turnstile entrance and players' secure walkway which raised the ground to Grade E status. After several years of stability in terms of first team managers the next six years saw a regular turnover of first team and reserve team managers with Nick Burton, Dave Elkin and Phil Childs all taking over the first team reins for a time.

At the start of the 2013 2014 season we appointed Mick Reardon and Mark Royal as first team managers both of whom had enjoyed success as coaches at the higher levels of football. Their disciplined approach was quickly adhered to and responded to by the players and under their stewardship we achieved the highest Premier Division position in nine years and first silverware in seven years winning the North Beds Charity Cup for the first time in the club's history.

In November 2014 the club took a further positive step to realise our ambitions with the appointment of Sky Sports Presenter and renowned author, Guillem Balaque as Biggleswade United's Director of Football. Following Mick and Mark's decision to step down at the end 2014 2015, Guillem was guick to act and recruited a new Head Coach in Cristian Colas Beccera. Cristian was assisted by former professional player, Stuart Bimson, and under their guidance the team finished in eighth spot in the Premier Division in 2017 2018 - the highest position in the club's history. Having built a strong reputation for their outstanding coaching ability and playing philosophy Cristian and Stuart moved up to Step 3 level club, Staines Town, for the start of the 2018 2019 season. Guillem was again in search for a high quality coach and Jimmy Martin came highly recommended by his predecessor, Colas, who worked with Jimmy at Stevenage FC Academy. Jimmy was appointed Manager in May 2018 but he tendered his resignation in October 2018 having been offered a "hard to refuse" opportunity to take up a coaching role at Premier Division club Watford. Despite the setback the first team went on to record their highest ever League placing – a fourth spot in the Premier Division.

In the season 2019 2020 the club were sitting in a highly commendable third position in the Premier Division and under the management of Chris Devane and Trishnan Patel were hoping for a promotion play off opportunity. However, in March 2020 the season was decalred Null and Void by the FA after the devastating outbreak of the Coronavirus. The club were also to learn that Chris and Tishnan had accepted the offer to work at Step 4 and departed the club at short notice. Fortunately the club were

able to call upon the services of former Head Coach Cristian Colas Cristian took the club to its highest ever position in the club's history at the curtailmant of the 20/21 season leaving us second in the table on PPG. The club applied for promotion to Step 4 but were unsuccessful. A double whammy came when the club were subjected to a lateral move to the Uhlsport United Counties League. The FA's actions had a devastating effect on the club and we spent most of the 2021 2022 season at the foot of the table. But we rallied and secured Step 5 football on the final day of the season. The club have now been re-instated in to the SML and with a strong squad will be looking to put that season's nightmare in to a distant memory and push on to return as a top of the table club.

With the nightmare season confined to the history books we kicked on and finished a very creditible 8th in the Premier Division but the highlight of the season was achieving the best ever run in the FA Vase. Starting at the qualifying round stages we came through five rounds reaching the fourth round proper but fell to Coventry Sphinx. At the end of a great season Cristian Colas made the difficult decision to step down after 7 (-2) seasons as head coach. Two United players came forward with the right experience, credentials and knowledge of the football world at this level and the next and the decision was felt to be the right one. Gareth Hunt, who had captained the side and had been instrumental in helping us through the difficult season, will be partnered with Jordan Wright who captained the FA Vase winning Newport Pagnell Town team. Highly respected by their peers we are confident that Gaz and Jordan will see us enjoy further success in the years to come.

The club has certainly come a long way in relatively few years but we could not have done it without the help of a very supportive Town and District Council who clearly understand the benefits of having a community based club in Biggleswade. Our success is also very much down to a very hard working committee who throughout the year - not just the football season - continue to volunteer their time and commitment to the club, to help it continue to thrive and be a source of enjoyment for our supporters and the Biggleswade community.

BIGGLESWADE UNITED FC



OLLIE LESLIE (GK) TOM WYANT (GK) VALENTINO ALANEZI **JOE BABBAGE GEORGE BOLAND MARKEL COUSINS AARON DADA ETHAN FLANAGAN AARON HUDSON GARETH HUNT CONOR INSKIP** JAIDEN IRISH (CAPT.) **MILO KEANE ANTHONY LESLIE MELVIN ONU DAVID PARKINSON TOM ROBERTS CADE STEPHENS-ABBEY JAKE STRONGE JOSH STURNIOLO COREE WILSON**

JOINT TEAM MANAGERS:
GAZ HUNT & JORDAN WRIGHT
COACH: DEL DIGWEED &
MARTIN RUSSELL
GK COACH: JOSH THOMAS
PHYSIO: LILY HYDE

SAWBRIDGE TOWN FC



JACK MICHAEL DIXSON MARCUS DOWDESWELL **AUSTEN GARROD WESLEY CELESTINO G DOS SANTOS DANNY PALMER EDWIN PLACKETT GEORGE SPILLANE BRYN THORPE LEWIS WICKER JEREMY EBELEBE ANTONIO FUSCO CALLUM LEGGATT BILLY WISE AARON CROCKETT ANTONIO FUSCO CHARLIE FAIRHEAD CHARLES ANTHONY**

> MANAGER: BEN TAYLOR ASSISTANT: KEIRAN AMOS COACH: DECLAN LAMBE



VERDANT

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HREOUR CLUBHOUSE

WRITE TO KAREN AT CLUBHOUSE@BIGGLESWADEUTD.COM

OUR OPPONENTS

Formed in 1897 by members of Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club, Sawbridgeworth Town Football Club played their first friendly match on Pishiobury Park, a large tract of common land to the south of the Town. At the turn of the century they joined the East Herts league and later relocated to Great Hyde Hall. At this time, they were playing in the Stortford League and had their headquarters in the White Lion Hotel in the centre of town. Just after the first world war they moved to their next ground - a field next to the Hand & Crown Public House. This venue became very popular at the time and staged many local cup finals.

They moved to their present ground in 1930. At the time the facility was known as Cambridge Road but following construction of a housing estate and provision of a new entrance it was rechristened Crofters End. Following the second World War Sawbridgeworth Town FC joined the Spartan Lague for their first taste of senior football, however this proved not to be successful and they rejoined the Stortford League.

With the building of a new clubhouse in 1975, the club reapplied for Senior status and joined the Essex Senior League. After a few years and steady improvements to the ground, floodlights were erected which enabled the Robins to participate in further cup competitions and evening games.



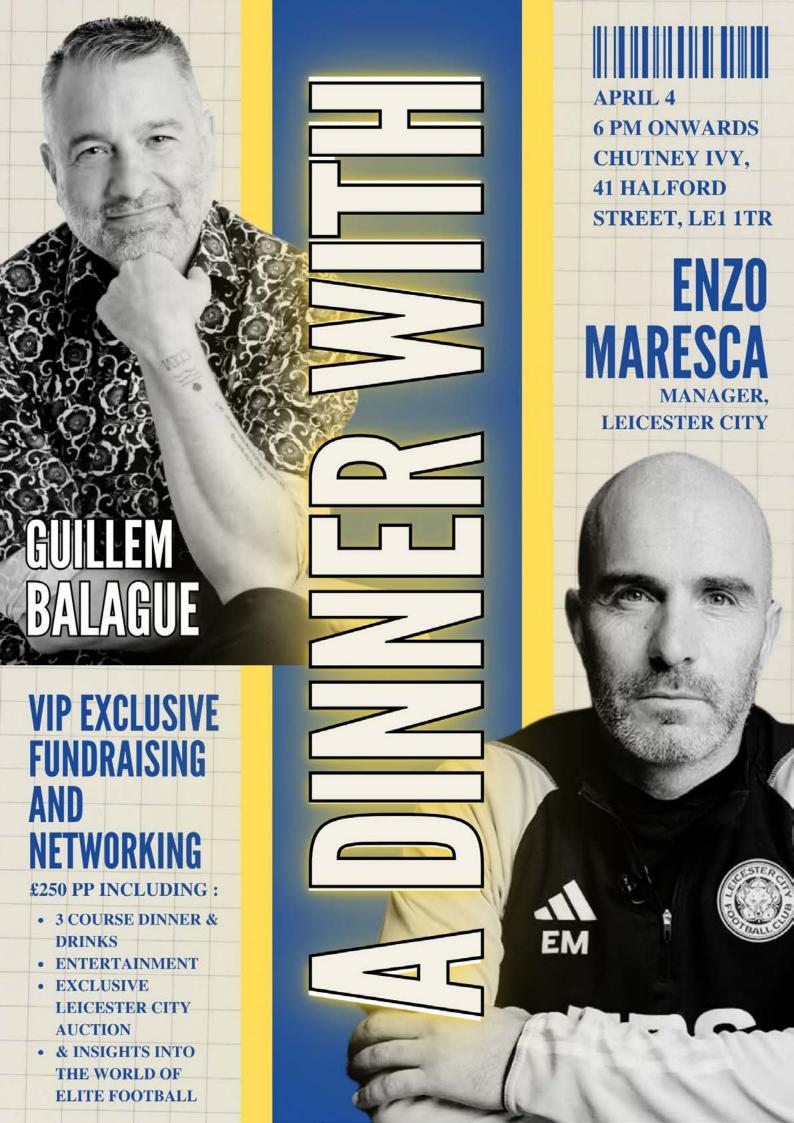
LEAGUE - STORY

The League is relatively young compared to other's being formed in 1922 as the Bedfordshire County League. With new clubs keen to join from outside the County it was decided in 1929 to change the name to the South Midlands League. The League continued to consolidate and strengthen over the ensuing 70 years or so providing quality football for many teams over a large area of the South Midlands. In 1997 it became apparent that the London Spartan League, which was very much to the South of the League's geographical footprint, was struggling administratively and, with the full support of the Football Association, the decision was taken to merge the two competitions with the new League being known as the Spartan South Midlands League. The League now covers a wide area from

North London in the South to Milton Keynes in the North and from Ware in the East to Aylesbury in the West.

The League is part of the FA's National League System (NLS) and comprises of three Divisions; Premier at Step 5 of the NLS, Division One at Step 6 and Division Two at Step 7.

The League has a proud record of promoting clubs to Step 4 of the NLS and has also provided 4 FA Vase Finalists including two winners in Arlesey Town and Hoddesdon Town FC.



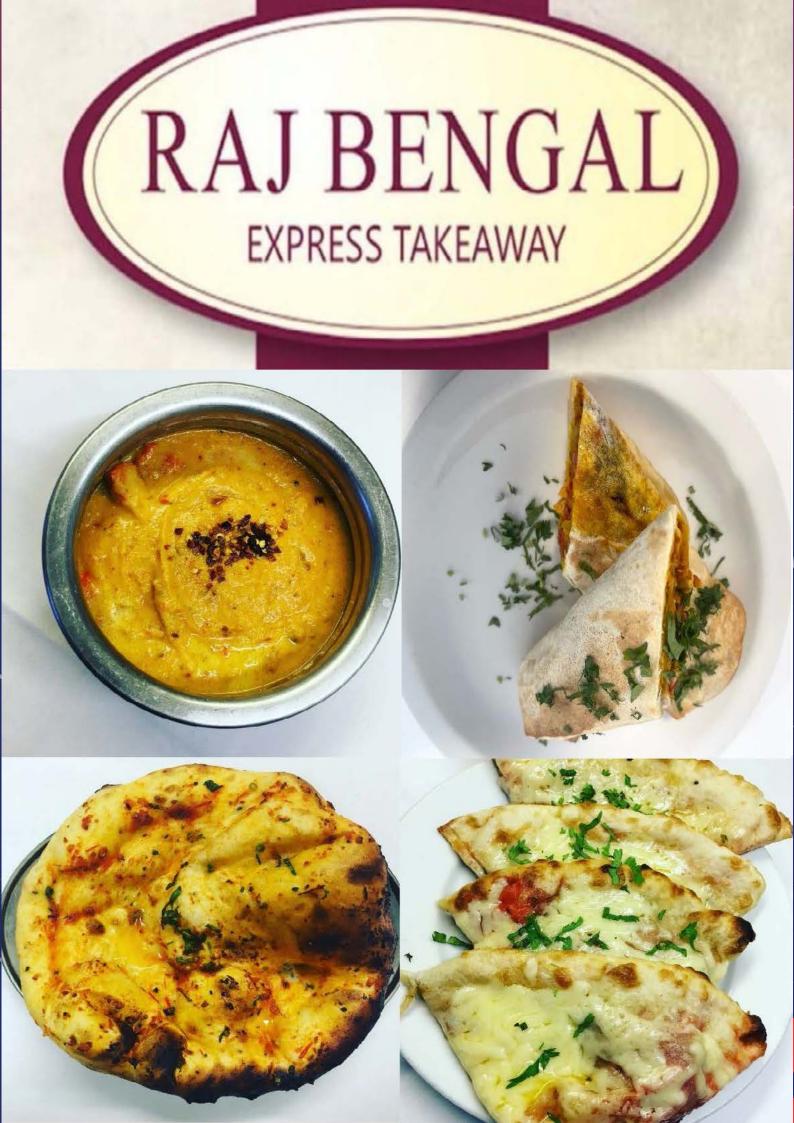


Biggy Talks is a podcast that started during the pre-season to cover all things Biggleswade United.

In this weeks episode join Ryan and Nick as they catch up with striker Coree Wilson. Dean joins to discuss the women's reds and blues teams and they announce the January players of the month

Click to listen to Episode 30

Follow Biggy Talks on X



PLAY YOUR PART

Everyone at your club has A ROLE IN KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE



Together we'll help every child enjoy the beautiful game.

Find out more at TheFA.com/PlaySafe





NSPCC











Biggleswade United is lending its full support to Play Safe – a national FA-led campaign to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding in football.

Play Safe is being run in partnership with the NSPCC and has the full backing of the Premier League, EFL, Barclays FA Women's Super League and the FA Women's Championship. It's also supported and being run across every other level of the game.

The main element of Play Safe is a series of short films which emphasise the importance of clubs such as ours having safeguarding as an everyday reality. The films also explain to parents/carers and children themselves know what to do if they feel unsafe or worried, because nothing matters more than making sure football is safe for everyone, especially children and young people. You can see these films on our club website and we've also broadcast them on our social media channels.

"As a youth team coach, I will be working with my club to ensure we support the Play Safe messaging," says FA Chief Executive Mark Bullingham. "I am also pleased that the campaign has the support of the former footballers with lived experience of abuse in football, who are on our Survivor Support and Safeguarding Advisory Group. The Group has collectively said:

"Learning from the past is crucial, so that we can prevent the horrific experiences that happened to us and so many others in football, from happening again.

"As a group of survivors, we fully support the ethos and important messages that Play Safe conveys – whether to club officials, parents/carers and or vitally, children and young people themselves. Equally important is that Play Safe is not a one-off campaign – it will be used at key points in the football calendar to remind everyone in football, that children's welfare and keeping them safe, should be at the heart of all that we do."

As the Survivor Group points out, you'll see Play Safe appearing at various points throughout the season to keep safeguarding front of mind in football. Together, we want to do everything we can so everyone – particularly children and young people – has a consistently positive experience of our great game.

Biggleswade United have appointed Tracey James as the club's Child Welfare Officer. Tracey's contact details are tracey james 58 (a) btinternet.com or telephone 07714 661827.

WHO IS AT THE CLUB

CHAIRMAN - GUILLEM BALAGUÉ

SECRETARY AND FIXTURE SECRETARY - TRACEY JAMES
TREASURER - BRENT WILKS

HEAD OF COMMS – PATRICIA GONZÁLEZ MUÑIZ HEAD OF MEDIA – ARITRA BOSE MEDIA OFFICER – ARYA YUYUTSU

HEAD OF YOUTH - DAN WATKINS

SPONSORSHIP RELATIONS MANAGER - KAY MANSHIP FUNDRAISING TEAM - KAY MANSHIP, WILLIAM GLASSWELL



KIT MANAGER - WILLIAM GLASSWELL CLUB WELFARE OFFICER - TRACEY JAMES

BOARD MEMBERS – GUILLEM BALAGUE, WILLIAM GLASSWELL, KAREN DIGWEED, PETULA HUNT, TRACEY JAMES, GIACOMO MALLAMACI, DAN WATKINS, JORDAN BARROW, PATRICIA GONZÁLEZ MUÑIZ, KAY MANSHIP

MEN'S FIRST TEAM JOINT MANAGERS – GAZ HUNT, JORDAN WRIGHT
MEN'S FIRST TEAM ASSISTANTS – DEL DIGWEED, JOSH THOMAS, MARTIN RUSSELL

RESERVE TEAM COACHES - CAMERON OMAR, MARTIN RUSSELL, DARREN HUNT

WOMEN'S TECHNICAL SECRETARY - GIACOMO MALLAMACI
WOMEN'S TEAM SUPERVISOR - DEAN FOSTER
WOMEN'S CONFLICTS RESOLUTION OFFICER - SUE GRIFFIN
WOMEN'S HEAD COACH - ASHLEY PEAD
WOMEN'S COACHES - BRADLEY JONES, PEARSE HAMILTON, MATTHAIOS
SIDIROPOULOS
WOMEN'S GOALKEEPER COACH - AMY BUTLER

MEDIA TEAM – PETE LOCKYER, ARITRA BOSE, RYAN MADDEN, ELLE THORNE, PATRICIA GONZÁLEZ MUÑIZ, MICHAEL GRIMES, ARYA YUYUTSU, NICK WITCOMBE, JOSH RUSSELL, ALBERTO MORELL LÓPEZ, BARTOSZ ROMANEK

MATCH DAY ANNOUNCER – NICK WITCOMBE CLUB PHOTOGRAPHERS – TIA THORNE, COSMIN IFTODE, PATRICIA GONZÁLEZ MUÑIZ LIVE CAMERA AND GAME COMMENTATORS – RYAN MADDEN, NICK WITCOMBE

HOSPITALITY TEAM - KAREN DIGWEED, PETULA HUNT, TRACEY JAMES, HEATHER RENNIE, DEL DIGWEED, DARREN HUNT

GROUNDS AND FACILITIES TEAM - TRACEY JAMES, HEATHER RENNIE, STEVE GRENFELL, GEOFF HANCOCK, BOB MILES, DAVID CARELESS, NEIL MANSHIP MAINTENANCE - KAREN DIGWEED, PETULA HUNT, DEL DIGWEED, DARREN HUNT

KEECH HOSPICE RELATIONS - LOU GROCOTT

HEAD OF MERCHANDISHING - HARRIET CURZON

MATCH REDURI

By Bartosz Romanek

Biggleswade United Women Reds lost at home to Histon after poor performance at windy Verdant Stadium.

Even though the team had really good match in the previous gameweek, which has significantly boosted hopes for another win, it wasn't to be on this occasion.

Head coach Ash Pead said: "Unfortunately, after such a positive the week before, this week was very much the end of the spectrum.

"In a game against Histon that we were confident of a positive result we found ourselves behind inside two minutes after failing to switch on.

"We tried to play the right way in the early parts of the game but unfortunately our own errors and lack of energy mixed with some good finishing meant we were punished by the opposition and found ourselves 4:0 down at the break."

Sport is unpredictable, and I guess that is the beauty of it. It doesn't always work in the way we wish for.

Even though the match was quite badly lost, second half brought a little bit of positivity after horror of the first 45 minutes. It's all about hard work for the Reds to the end of the season. It isn't over yet, and the team is aware that it's still plenty to play for.

Pead said: "A better second half meant no further goals were added in the game but unfortunately the damage was done early in the game.

"We will have to be much better in the coming weeks if we hope to make two semi-finals and finish the season on a high."



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PLAYER SPONSORSHIP



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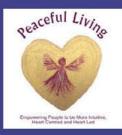
GARETH HUNT

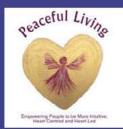
JORDAN WRIGHT

JOE BABBAGE

MARKEL

AARON DADA









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MEKHI ANGOL CONOR INSKIP

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CHRIS JACKSON

PAUL LESLIE

RESERVED

JORDAN JARROLD ANTHONY LESLIE

JACK SHERWOOD CADE STEPHENS-ABBEY

JAKE STRONGE











JOSH STURNIOLO MASON WATKINS-CLARK

COREE WILSON

THOMAS ROBERTS ETHAN FLANAGAN

SPONSORSHIP AVAII ARI F THE GROUND CREW
SUPREMES



SPONSORSHII AVAII ADI F



DAVID PARKINSON AARON HUDSON

FREDDY JOYCE









AMBER LAWRENCE



DREaM Jones



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MEN'S SENIOR TEAM

UPCOMING FIXTURES



UPCOMING FIXTURES

SHEFFORD TOWN CAMPTON SHEFFORD SPORTS CLUB SG17 5 JD 17:45 PM

10 FEB TRING (PREM DIV CUP)
ATHLETIC
THE MICHAEL ANTHONY
STABLUM
HP23 5 NT 1 3 PM

13

SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN

VERDANT STADIUM SG18 OAA | 7:45 PM **17**

REAL BEDFORD MCMULLEN PARK MYAA 338 1 3 PM

24 FEB

SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN

CROFTERS END CM21 ODE | 3 PM **27**

MARCH TOWN (HINCH CUP) ROBINGOODFELLOWS LANE

02MAR

POTTON UNITED VERDANT STADIUM **09**MAR

STANSTED FC HARGRAVE PARK

12MAR

CRAWLEY GREEN VERDANT STADIUM SG18 DAA 17:45 PM 16 MAR HARPENDEN TOWN VERDANT STADIUM

NEXT MATCH





VERDANT FINANCIAL PLANNING



BIGGLESWADEUTD.COM MEDIA@BIGGLESWADEUTD.COM