## THE MAITE PAPER #31

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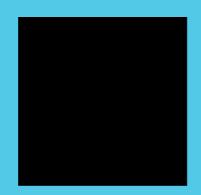


REAL BEDFIRD VE BIGGLESWADE UNITED THE ISUZU FA VASE SAT 11TH NOVEMBER '23 - 3.00 PM

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CLUB HONOURS: 22/23 SPARTAN DIVISION ONE WINNERS 22/23 BEDS COUNTY CUP WINNERS

- 5 FROM THE DRESSING ROOM
- **6** ARLESEY TOWN MATCH REPORT

HUNTENTS

- 8 FROM THE BOARD ROOM
- 12 POTTON UNITED MATCH REPORT
- 14 THE BIG INTERVIEW HARRY HURST
- **18 THE AWAY TEAM**
- 21 TUNNEL TUNES EDDIE CORBIT
- 22 FIXTURES
- 24 MATCHDAY SQUAD







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# FROM THE CERTIFICATION THE DRESSING ROOM

I want to give a warm welcome to the managers, staff, players and directors of Biggleswade United.

I want to start by thanking those fans who braved the conditions to support us last weekend at home to Arlesey. A particular thanks must also go to Jack Mudge and the rest of the Real Bedford staff and volunteers who ensured the pitch was suitable to play on after torrential rain. The performance shown by the team during the 90 minutes also showed character in the tricky conditions. To come away with 3 points and a clean sheet from a game like that is a great feeling.

Tuesday's clash with Potton puts us in good stead for today's game. Despite not taking all our chances in front of the goal on the night, getting another clean sheet and a result from the match was pleasing.

I want to give a special mention to Ben Walsh, who made his competitive debut for the club against Arlesey last weekend. Ben suffered a nasty knee injury during the start of the 2022/23 pre-season campaign and, since then, has been working tirelessly alongside Lottie Burton to get back to playing. Fifteen months on from the injury, it is great to see him back playing at McMullen Park and his appearance against Potton off the bench on Tuesday. Unfortunately, Matt Clifford picked up a knee injury in training last week, which could see him out for an extended period. We will continue to support Matt throughout his rehabilitation process and look forward to seeing him back on the pitch at McMullen Park as soon as possible.

The FA Vase clash today is an exciting prospect. The team have trained well in the week and look forward to the challenge of Biggleswade United in a competition we want to go far in. Knockout football works in funny ways, but we feel we have prepared well for what we anticipate will be a tough game this afternoon.

I want to wish Real Bedford Ladies the best of luck as they are involved in cup action of their own tomorrow. They face Billericay Town in the FA Cup at McMullen Park. The men's team will be there in force to cheer on the team as they look to overcome a talented Billericay side who currently play two leagues above The Pirates—best of luck to Dean and his squad.

Thank you to all those who continue to support the club. In derby games like this, the crowd always has a massive impact on the game. I look forward to hearing Pirates fans in fine voice around McMullen Park this afternoon.

Rob Sinclair, Manager

# ARLESEY TOWN MATCH REPORT

## Real Bedford heads to the top of the league with a win over Arlesey Town.

The Pirates put on a 5-goal thriller at McMullen Park in torrid conditions to take Bedford to the top of the Spartan Premier Division for the first time this season.

With heavy rainfall as kickoff approached, the referee delayed the start of the game by 30 minutes as the Real Bedford ground staff got to work ensuring the pitch was playable.

With the match finally underway, The Pirates got off to a great start, opening the scoring inside 10 minutes. Joey Evans found himself through on goal, but Jake Galatis saved his shot but only as far as Mo Ahmed, who smashed the ball into an empty net from 2 yards out to give Bedford an early lead.

The next goal came similarly to the first. An incisive pass from Eddie Corbit put Evans through on goal again; Galatis again saved his shot, but Stevens was on hand to tuck away the rebound to double Real's lead.

Luke Knight then came close to extending the lead from a free-kick. A perfect delivery in the box from Charlie Smith gave the captain a free header in the area, but his effort was narrowly off-target.

Stevens managed to grab his brace within 30 minutes. This time, a clever passing chain between Charlie Smith, Evans and Stevens unlocked the Arlesey defence, putting the latter through on goal. Stevens made no mistake to claim his 15th goal of the season.

Bedford got their fourth goal just before the halftime break. A well-weighted pass from Ben Stevens found Joey Evans, who rounded the keeper before striking the ball toward goal. Although the shot seemed like it was drifting



wide, Dan Wappett's attempted clearance ensured the ball crossed the line, making it four goals in the opening 45 minutes for The Pirates.

As the second half started, so did the downpour. Rain turned from heavy to torrential, threatening to end the game early. Charlie Smith got the first decent chance of the half, after good interplay between Mo Ahmed, Harry Hurst, and Smith gave the midfielder space in which to strike the ball from range, only to travel straight into the path of Galatis, who collected it in the second time of asking.

Things turned from bad to worse for the away team, as defender William Mc-Clelland was shown a straight red card for denying a clear goal-scoring opportunity as he took down Joey Evans, who was in on goal.

Harry Hurst came close to a home debut goal, as the ball fell to him at the

back post. But some heroic defending from Matt Gilbert denied the fullback the chance to get the strike away.

Bedford's fifth goal did eventually come. More superb interplay between Smith, Stevens, and Ahmed allowed the winger to come away with the ball in the box. Ahmed took his chance from a tight angle, burying the ball in the bottom right to take it to five goals on the day. It was a crucial score that meant Real Bedford would top the table on goal difference going into Tuesday's clash with Potton United on the road.

RBFC: McGregor, Corbit (A.Sinclair 76'), Hurst (Walsh 86'), Swain, Steele (J.Ducket 61'), Smith, Setchell (Hitchcock 80'), Knight ©, Evans, Stevens, Ahmed

**Unused Subs: Gordon** 

## FROM THE BOARDROOM

Welcome to McMullen Park for what promises to be an exciting weekend of cup football and the most important football weekend since I took over the club.

With two significant fixtures, this weekend is pivotal for Real Bedford. Our men's team face Biggleswade United in the second round of the FA Vase, while our ladies face Billericay Town in the first proper round of the FA Cup.

A key objective of mine with Real Bedford has been to foster parity and unity between our men's and ladies' teams; this is a process, and over the season and future seasons, we will continue aligning the goals and access to resources for the teams. Some of that work is happening this weekend; for example, we are producing dedicated programmes for both teams. I have only written one set of notes, so whichever programme you are reading, my notes will be the same. Next season, we will produce programmes for every ladies' fixture with dedicated notes per team.

In taking over Real Bedford, my vision was clear: to bring league football to Bedford for the first time. This ambition has since evolved. While I firmly believe in our men's team's potential to achieve league status, I am equally optimistic about our ladies' climbing their pyramid and believe the women's championship is possible.

Two core passions drive my commitment to these goals. Firstly, my love for football and the desire to see Bedford represented on the national football map. Secondly, and more importantly, is my love for Bedford, the town and the people who live here. Success in football can significantly contribute to the local economy, creating jobs and fostering new business opportunities. It also paves the way for nurturing young talent in our town.

Our strategic approach, detailed on our website, is structured around key pillars that will drive our club's success. We can't avoid the fact that money drives football and can contribute significantly to what we aim to achieve. Money does not guarantee success, but it is undeniably vital to an ambitious club, as a good budget helps recruit high-quality managers, coaches, and players who can win trophies.

I want to build a sustainable business model for the club, which requires a strong brand and a bold approach. We have already seen promising results with our success on the pitch, and our growing fanbase, both locally and internationally.

Rob Sinclair's appointment as Real Bedford's manager was a game-changer. When I first met Rob, I knew he would be perfect for the job, not just because of his understanding of football but because I met someone with a similar work ethic as mine. Rob understood my goals and vision and has delivered perfectly since his appointment. In our first season, he won the league by nine points, along with winning the County Cup, and now, in our second season, we are again top of the league. Rob will tell me there is a long way to go, but I can still



commend him on his achievements. We have the best manager in non-league football, and I hope to work with him for many years, delivering success for Bedford.

On the ladies' front, integrating Bedford Ladies and Girls into the club and rebranding them Real Bedford Ladies has been a significant milestone. The introduction of Dean Perrett as the new manager, backed by dedicated sponsorship and equal access to financial resources and facilities, has seen the ladies' team excel, mirroring the success of our men's team. So far this season, they have won every match and currently sit top of the league. Again, there is a long way to go, but I must also commend Dean on understanding our vision and building a competitive squad.

Off the field, building a loyal and growing fanbase is integral to our vision. We've seen a fantastic increase in attendance for both men's and women's matches. With our men's team, the crowds were 40-50 people when we took over, yet last season, we averaged 180, and this season, despite all the rain, we are averaging close to 230, with a record crowd of nearly 500 when we played Stansted. Similarly, our crowds averaged under 50 with the ladies last season, yet we are averaging close to 120 this season.

Local support is the lifeblood of any club. Each ticket, t-shirt, and burger you buy directly supports the club's goals. More importantly, when you come down to McMullen Park and cheer our teams on, you give them an extra buzz to go out and win. My long-term vision includes much more, from establishing a local academy to foster homegrown talent to developing opportunities for disability sports in the town. Over time, I will continue communicating our plans and progress in these areas.

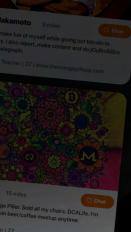
I sincerely thank everyone who has supported our journey thus far. The relentless dedication of our managers, staff, and teams to winning has been a pleasure to watch.

Looking towards the games this weekend, In Biggleswade United, we face a tough league opposition who will have equal ambitions in the FA Vase. We have all seen how Newport has made it to Wembley twice in this competition recently. It would be a dream for Real Bedford to do the same, and I hope we can go one step closer today.

The ladies face a very tough match in the FA Cup against Billericay Town, a team two divisions above us. Still, we have an excellent team that is difficult to beat, and I know they will give 100% this weekend to cause a cup upset.

Thank you again for coming down this weekend and supporting the teams. I hope you have a great afternoon, and I'll see you again soon.

#### Peter McCormack, Chairman





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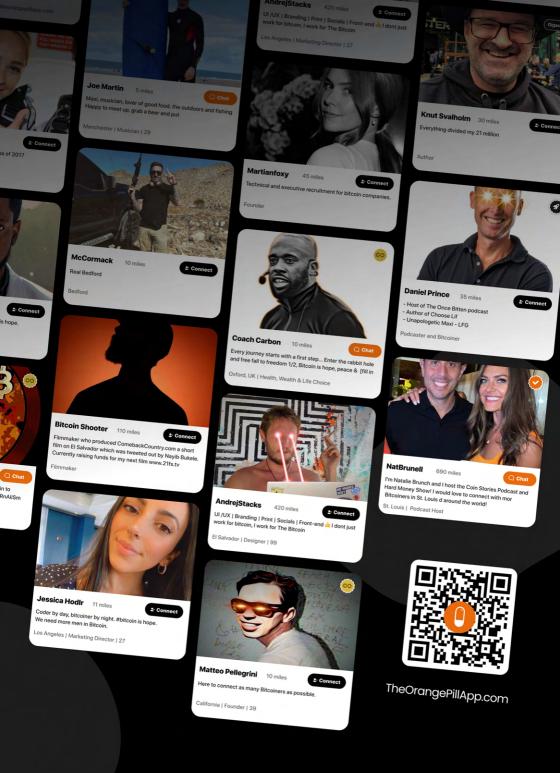
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Joe Nakamoto 5 miles i like to make fun of myself while giving out bitce strangers. I also report, make content and do jOu for Cointelegraph. Lisbon | Journalies

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# POTTON UNITED MATCH REPORT

Real Bedford fell short in the first round of the Beds Senior Challenge Trophy with a 3-1 loss to Leighton Town on the road.

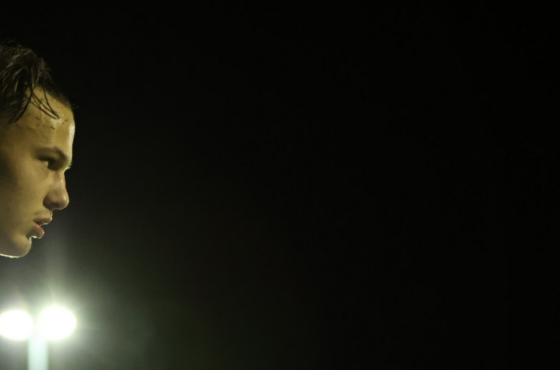
With a heavily rotated side from the weekend, The Pirates conceded two late goals and exited the competition at the hands of the Step 4 side despite having the majority of possession throughout the 90 minutes.

The best chances of the first half fell to Real Bedford. A good ball from Claston Gordon on the right flank found the head of Tom Hitchcock, but Karl Daley tipped his header around the post to deny The Pirates the opening score. Bedford were nearly off the mark off the resulting corner, Ollie Swain rising highest off the set piece, but Daley just managed to tip his header over the bar.

Real Bedford also had a solid red card shout in the first half. A long ball over the top of the defence found Joey Evans, who looked to tap it past Karl Daley, who had sprinted out to meet the striker. The collision between the two players saw Evans hit the deck; however, the referee only brandished Daley with a yellow card despite being the last man, as Evans appeared to have pushed the ball out wide.

## Second Half

The game lit up in the second period, with all the goals coming with 20 minutes to go. Leighton got the opener off a corner, with the ball



flicked on by Albie Hall to Jake Watkinson at the back post, who nodded it in for the hosts to take the lead.

Real Bedford responded to the goal instantly as Leighton failed to deal with a long Lewis Burgess throw-in in the box. The ball eventually sat up to Josh Setchell, who smashed it home on the half-volley to level proceedings with 10 minutes of the 90 to go.

The home side regained their lead not long after. A miscommunication at the back for The Pirates gave Jake Watkinson possession with McGregor off his line. The striker slotted the ball towards the goal, with substitute Ben Shepherd smashing it home as the ball was about to cross the line. Real Bedford then put everything towards finding another leveller, with multiple chances off of setpiece. But with all their players forward, the visitors were caught on the counter late on. Karl Daley collected the ball and smashed it downfield towards Jake Watkinson, who found himself one-onone with McGregor, bagging his brace and taking the game out of Bedford's sight.

RBFC: McGregor, Corbit, Burgess, J.Ducket, Swain, Knight © (Smith 70'), Setchell, Watkins, Evans, Hitchcock, Gordon (Stevens 79')

Unused Subs: Walsh, Ahmed, A.Sinclair

# THE BIG INTERVIEW

This week, we sat down with Harry Hurst. Having only joined the side on dual registration a fortnight ago, Harry has already made two consecutive starts for the club. Having arrived from Aldershot, Harry discusses the start to his time at McMullen Park.

#### Reflecting on the last two games, confident wins in tricky conditions. How would you sum up the wins against Arlesey and Potton?

I think the boys played well in both of those games. Everyone showed real skill and character in that Arlesey game with the weather as it was, and on Tuesday, we showed our dominance away from home. Both were good team performances, giving us good momentum heading into today.

## You're past your first few weeks at the club; how have you found

#### it so far?

Everyone at the club is so welcoming it's been easy just to fit in. My role on the field has been explained to me well and allows me to play the football I want to play, which I have enjoyed so far.

#### It is quite a youthful squad. What do you make of the team culture off the field?

It's a really nice mix of lads, and they have all been super welcoming. Everyone seems very calm and down to earth, which puts you at ease, especially when you join a club mid-season. There are a few players I knew before joining, but not many. But only a few weeks in, I feel settled and enjoy spending time with the group on and off the field.

## What drew you to the idea of joining Real Bedford on dual registration?



I knew Mark Ducket, who initially reached out to me before I joined. After approaching the Aldershot management, he told me there had been an injury crisis at leftback, and I would get some regular game time. It's been quite the jump, as this is my first time playing men's football. But everything about the club seemed right to me; the professionalism was there, and you could see it through all the social media. I knew it would fit me well, and I'm happy I joined.

## How can you see your time at the club developing your game?

It's all one big learning curve, really. Men's football is very different from youth; it challenges you more physically, tactically and most importantly, for me at least, it challenges you mentally. That's something I have tried to work on. Being in a good mental state when playing is important as there's a lot more pressure on you to succeed, especially at a club as ambitious as this. Hopefully, if I can develop my mental skills, everything else will follow suit.

## What are you expecting from Biggleswade Town, our visitors today?

It's an exciting game; having spoken to the team in the week, they have told me how important this competition is to the club; there's a massive buzz around the place. It is certainly one of the biggest games I have played in, but I look forward to that pressure, and hopefully, we can pull out a big result in front of a strong McMullen Park crowd. We have trained well in the week, so I'm confident that we can put on a good show this afternoon.

# Coin

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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.

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 was awarded the SML Special Achievement Trophy in July 1997.

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 Premier 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.

In November 2014 the club took a further positive step to realise its ambitions with the appointment of Sky Sports Presenter and renowned author, Guillem Balague as Biggleswade United's Director of Football. Guillem was quick 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.

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 declared Null and Void by the FA after the devastating outbreak of the Coronavirus.

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.

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Tunnel Tunes Eddie Corbit

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First Class By Jack Harlow Nice for What By Drake Last Last By Burna Boy Afraid to Feel By LF System It Was A Good Day By Ice Cube

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## FIXTURE LIST

## AUGUST '23

	MK IRISH	1	0	(W)	
5	FC CLACTON *	2	2	(D)	
12	COCKFOSTERS			(D)	
15	FC CLACTON *	4	1	(W)	
19	MK IRISH *	3	4	(L)	
26	ROTHWELL CORINTHIANS **	9	1	(W)	
29	ARLESEY TOWN	0	3	(W)	

#### **DECEMBER** '23

2	HARPENDEN TOWN	A
9	DUNSTABLE TOWN	А
16	FC ROMANIA	A
23	CRAWLEY GREEN	н
27	SHEFFORD TOWN & CAMPTON	A
30	COCKFOSTERS	н

## SEPTEMBER '23

2	TRING ATHLETIC	0	4	(W
9	SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN	7	0	(W
12	AYLESBURY VALE DYNAMOS	1	4	(W
16	ST PANTELEIMON		4	(L)
23	FLACKWELL HEATH **	2	0	(W
30	LONDON LIONS	0	3	(W

### **OCTOBER** '23

7	COLNEY HEATH	8			(W)
10	BIGGLESWADE UNITED	-1		5	(W)
14	STANSTED	2		0	(W)
21	MK IRISH **	0	1	5	(W)
24	LEIGHTON TOWN FIRST ***	3		1	(L)
28	CRAWLEY GREEN	1		4	(W)
31	STANSTED	Α		А	

#### **NOVEMBER '23**

4	ARLESEY TOWN	5		0	(W)
7	POTTON UNITED	0		3	(W)
11	<b>BIGGLESWADE UNITED</b> **		н		
14	WELLINGBOROUGH W'WORTH ****		н		
18	AYLESBURY VALE DYNAMOS		Н		
25	BALDOCK TOWN		н		
28	POTTON UNITED		Н		

- \* FA CUP MATCH
- \*\* FA VASE MATCH
- \*\*\* BEDS SENIOR COUNTY CUP
- \*\*\*\* GLADWISH CHALLENGE CUP
- \*\*\*\*\* PREMIER DIVISION CUP

#### **JANUARY '24**

6	LEVERSTOCK GREEN	H
13	ST PANTELEIMON	1
16	DUNSTABLE TOWN *****	
20	DUNSTABLE TOWN	H
27	BALDOCK TOWN	

### **FEBRUARY '24**

3	LEVERSTOCK GREEN	
0	HARPENDEN TOWN	
7	BIGGLESWADE UNITED	
4	FC ROMANIA	

### MARCH '24

2	LONDON LIONS	Н
9	MK IRISH	A
23	COLNEY HEATH	A
30	SHEFFORD TOWN & CAMPTON	Н

Н

#### APRIL '24

13	TRING ATHLETIC	н
20	SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN	A

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## MATCHDAY EQUAD

V



## PIRATES

TYLER MCGREGOR ALFIE BOZWARD **LEWIS BURGESS** JOE STEELE TOM WOOD **CURTIS HARTLEY** MATT CLIFFORD HARRY HURST JAMES DUCKET **OLLIE SWAIN BEN WALSH** LUKE KNIGHT © LEE WATKINS CHARLIE SMITH **ARCHIE JONES BEN STEVENS** EDDIE CORBIT **BEN FITZJOHN** JOSH SETCHELL **MO AHMED** CLASTON GORDON ANDY SINCLAIR TOM HITCHCOCK JOEY EVANS



## BIGGLESWADE

FREDDIE JOYCE AARON DADA AARON HUDSON ROLAND ASHBY OLLIE LESLIE CALEB CHANDLER TOM WYANT ANTHONY LESLIE JOE BABBAGE JAKE STRONGE ETHAN FLANAGAN JAIDEN IRISH © JESUS MENDOZA MEKHI ANGOL COREE WILSON DAVE PARKINSON MARKEL COUSIN GARETH HUNT JORDAN JARROLD

MANAGER - ROB SINCLAIR ASST. MANAGER - MARK DUCKET COACH - PETER THORNES GOALKEEPER COACH - IAN BROWN PHYSIO - LOTTIE BURTON KITMAN - GERRY MCCORMACK HEAD COACH - JORDAN WRIGHT HEAD COACH - GARETH HUNT ASST - DEL DIGWEED ASST - MARTIN RUSSELL GK COACH - JOSH THOMAS PHYSIO - LILY HYDE

REFEREE - SCOTT HANNA ASSISTANT 1 - LIAM JACKSON ASSISTANT 2 - JAKUB GIERCZYK