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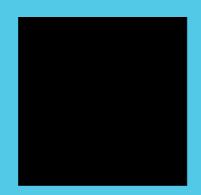


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REAL BEDFIRD VE BIGGLESWADE UNITED SPARTAN PREMIER DIVISION EAT IZTH FEBRUARY '24 - 3.00 PM

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BEDFORD PARK RANGERS: CHAIR: JAY ALLISON

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

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FROM THE DUGOUT

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

Despite being well into February, today we host our first league clash at McMullen Park in 2024. The constant rain and dipping temperatures have disrupted nonleague football, but as we head closer towards Spring, we can only hope for a good run of uninterrupted fixtures.

We have, though, had our fair share of matches on the road to start the year. Beginning with a well-fought victory over St Panteleimon back in January, we then shared the points at New Lamb Meadow with Baldock Town before bouncing back against Stansted at Hargrave Park with a character-driven 1-0 win in tricky conditions.

We then fell short to Leverstock Green a fortnight ago. They showed their quality in key parts of the game, while we were unable to capitalise on our time on the ball. But once again, the team showed character to right wrongs at Creasey Park in a dominating 6-1 win over Dunstable Town in the league cup last weekend. We have also welcomed three new players into the squad during this time. Eniola Agemoh-Davies, Ali Bangura and Brett Longden have all joined The Pirates over the last few weeks, adding further quality and personality to the group. These are three exciting additions that I look forward to walking out onto the McMullen Park pitch this afternoon.

As we head towards the business end of the season, I would like to thank once again the fans who continue to bring the noise every match day. The run-in for a promotion place is always a daunting task, but the Real Bedford faithful's support can make a difference during those crucial moments. Please continue to join us on a match day and make your voices heard to spur on the team heading into the final home run of the campaign.

Thank you to all those in attendance this afternoon, and enjoy the game.

Rob Sinclair, Manager

FROM THE BOARDROOM

Welcome back to McMullen Park for what will likely be another tough game against Biggleswade United. The last time we played Biggleswade United was in the FA Vase, where they knocked us out on penalties, so I am sure the lads will do everything to get all three points in this crucial league fixture.

It feels like a long time since I have had to write my programme notes. With how the fixtures have been scheduled and the seasonal loss of games to weather, we last played a home league game on January 9th. I have been joking with my manager, Rob Sinclair, that this season will be known as the season of rain.

Since my last notes, there has been much to discuss and reflect upon in the month. Firstly, I want to thank my manager, his staff and the players for all their hard work this season, especially this recent run of away games. I set them the goal of back-to-back promotions, and they have shown a relentless dedication to delivering this. Our recent draw with Baldock Town ended a 16-match winning streak, the largest winning streak in the short history of Real Bedford and quite the accomplishment. The team followed this with a tough win away at Stansted on a Tuesday night and our second defeat of the season to Leverstock Green.

Winning leagues is demanding, and I have always admired how Rob Sinclair's teams bounce back. Under his stewardship, the team has never had back-toback defeats. Whenever the team has lost, they have bounced back, something we witnessed with a dominant 6-1 victory this weekend against Dunstable in the League Cup. While it is always nice to score so many goals, the nature of the win was particularly impressive, with the lads playing some of the best football I have seen at Real Bedford.

New signing Brett Longden made his debut and fit straight into the team, making several contributions to our goals. He joined other recent signings, Eniola Agemoh-Davies and Alie Bangura. As the season enters the business end, these signings strengthen the squad as we challenge for two cups alongside the league.

Our ladies' team, under the guidance of



manager Georgie Clarke, has continued its excellent run of form, having now won all 13 of their league games. With nine games to go, the team is close to securing a very impressive promotion. We aren't taking anything for granted and have also strengthened the team, welcoming the experienced Georgie Giddings into the squad. The ladies are also challenging for two cups alongside the league title, and I will back both teams with the resources they need to be as successful as possible.

Community and youth development remain at the heart of our club, and this weekend. I went down to watch Bedford Park Rangers under 13s beat Crawley Green and cement their position at the top of the league. I want to give a special mention to their manager, Jay Allison, for his coaching and broader contributions to youth football in Bedford as chairman of BPR. I'm committed to supporting youth football in Bedford and grateful to Jay for the opportunity to work alongside his teams. This weekend, I will watch one of the youth teams on the girl's side and try to get to more games through to the end of the season.

As a growing club, we have growing infrastructure demands, and you may have noticed our recent challenges regarding our lease renewal, as outlined in my public letter. With each promotion, the demands on our facilities increase as we are required to pass ground gradings to be accepted for promotion through the leagues. The mayor's decision to cancel our lease renewal has underscored the significance of this issue. However, with Beds FA stepping in and the vocal support of the local community, this is heading towards resolution. I must thank Alan Young from Beds FA for all his support here.

As you can see, a lot is happening, and your support is essential for this club. We're not only at a pivotal point of the season but also in the life of the Real Bedford project. Therefore, thank you for your relentless team support.

Up The Pirates!

Peter McCormack, Chairman

DUNSTABLE TOWN MATCH REPORT

Real Bedford through to the next round of the League Cup after putting 6 past Dunstable Town at Creasey Park.

The win sees The Pirates head to the Quarter Finals of the Dudley Latham Trophy thanks to a hat-trick from Ben Stevens alongside goals from Joey Evans, Josh Setchell and Charlie Smith.

Despite the resounding scoreline, the hosts struck first inside the opening 5 minutes. After The Pirates lost possession inside the Dunstable half, a quick-thinking Tolu Ikuyinmu played an inch-perfect through ball towards a racing Danny Webb. Dunstable's number 10 evaded the challenge of Drew Richardson before toe-poking it past McGregor to give the hosts an early lead.

The Pirates soon levelled proceedings with a spectacular goal. Ben Stevens picked up on a loose ball from Connor Coulson, catching the Dunstable keeper in no man's land. Stevens then produced a wonder of a strike off his left foot to lob Coulson into the Dunstable net from 35 yards out.

This moment of magic proved to be the catalyst for The Pirates, and soon after, Mo Ahmed was racing down the by-line after some good defensive work from new signing Brett Longden released the winger. Ahmed's cutback pass found Evans, who squeezed the ball in at Coulson's near post to give Bedford the lead inside the 30-minute mark.

Ahmed was soon causing more trouble in the Dunstable box as he sat down defenders with his dribbling prowess. Ben Sturgess blocked his shot but only as far as Brett Longden, who produced a brilliant pass to Ben Stevens behind the Dunstable defence. Stevens slid the ball back across the face of the goal towards Josh Setchell at the back post, who slotted it into the vacant net for his



first goal in 2024.

However, the Pirates weren't done there as they managed to bag another just before the break. Once again, Brett Longden was at the heart of the attack, playing a quick throw-in to Joey Evans, who slid the ball back to Ben Stevens, making it a first-half brace for Bedford's number 10 as he smashed it past the keeper.

Second Half

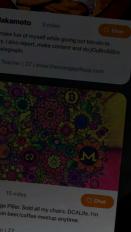
Despite still having most of the ball in the second half, an altered Dunstable defence proved trickier to unpick until the game's latter stages. Good chances fell to Joey Evans, Archie Jones and Eniola Agemoh-Davies, all smothered by the Dunstable back-line.

However, with 10 minutes left on the clock, the visitors produced a final flurry. After some good midfield interplay between Charlie Smith and Archie Jones, Ben Stevens found space on the edge of the area to line up a shot. His effort nestled into the bottom left to complete his hat-trick, making it 35 goals for the midfielder this season.

With moments left of the match, Charlie Smith also managed to get on the score sheet, another long-range effort attempt, this time rattling the bottom right of the post before crossing the goalline, signalling Smith's first goal since his half-pitch spectacular against Biggleswade back in October.

RBFC: McGregor, Corbit, Longden, Wood ©, Richardson, Watkins (Jones 69'), Smith, Setchell (Hitchcock 75'), Evans, Stevens, Ahmed (Agemoh-Davies 69')

Unused Subs: J.Ducket, Knight





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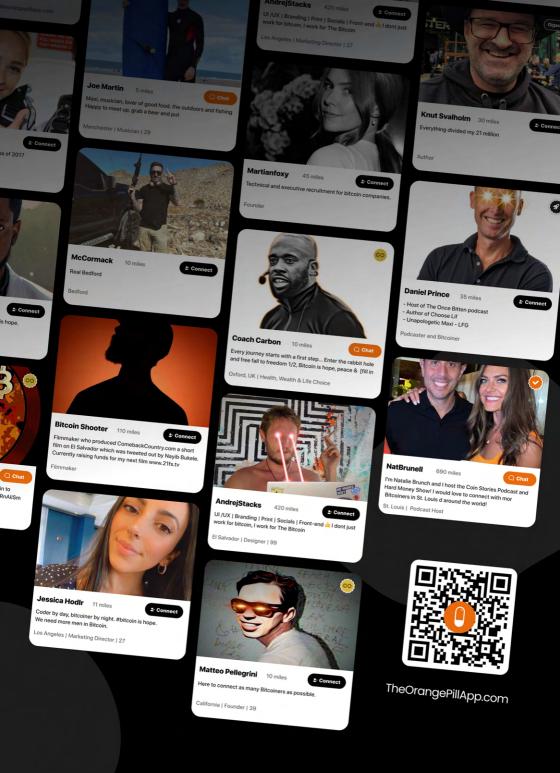
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LEVERSTOCK GREEN MATCH REPORT

Leverstock Green End Real Bedford's Unbeaten Away Record

The Pirates experienced their first-ever away loss in the league on Saturday with a narrow defeat to promotion-pushing Leverstock Green. The hosts did most of their damage in the opening few minutes, scoring two early goals to stun Bedford.

The first goal came from an in-swinging corner where the hosts found Stefanoaica at the back post, who headed the ball towards goal. McGregor managed to get a decent hand to the chance, but only as far as Luke Beckwith, who tapped it home from point-blank range for the opening score at Pancake Lane.

Five minutes later, The Pirates registered their first chance. A good block from Archie Jones on a clearance kick from Rio Beach ended up at the feet of Joey Evans in the area; the forward struck it well on the half-volley but couldn't find the target.

Ten minutes later, the visitors found themselves 2-0 down. Drew Richardson had the ball swiped from underneath his feet by Rawn Seale, who in turn found Luke Beckwith, who raced down the by-line before clipping the ball over Bedford defenders towards Stefanoaica at the back post, who doubled Leverstock Green's advantage inside 30 minutes.

Despite this double blow, Real Bedford continued to grow into the game. Tom Wood's direct pass from the back unlocked space for Joey Evans, who initially flicked it on into the area for Setchell; however, heavy traffic in the box prevented the winger from gaining possession, and the ball instead found Stevens. After evading defenders in tight spaces, Stevens managed to get a shot off, which fired past Bowler to half the deficit before the break.



It could've been more as seconds before the whistle, Evans was in again. This time, Stevens set him up, and despite being surrounded by Leverstock defenders, Bedford's top goal scorer managed to get a shot away, which was inches from finding the top right.

Second Half

Leverstock managed to deter Bedford from getting a hold of the second half despite having most of the ball. The hosts' first real chance on goal came as substitute Ethan Mooney produced a wonder strike from just outside the area, forcing McGregor to produce a wonder save to keep his team in the match.

Heading into the last 10 minutes, The Pirates came close to an equaliser. A free-kick from Charlie Smith was headed towards goal by Luke Knight but agonisingly trickled around the post. Similarly to the end of the first half, Evans had a golden opportunity to level the game with seconds left on the clock after Ben Stevens found space in the area and squared it to the striker. However, heroic defending from Rio Beach blocked the shot on goal.

The visitors were, therefore, dealt their first-ever loss away from home in the league. We now turn our attention to the League Cup next weekend as Dunstable Town hosts Real Bedford at Creasey Park.

RBFC: McGregor, Wood, Knight ©, Watkins, Richardson, Smith, Setchell (Bangura 62'), Jones (Corbit 66'), Evans, Stevens, Ahmed

Unused Subs: Hitchcock, Agemoh-Davies, Burgess

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THE BIG INFERVIEV

This week, we sat down with experienced defender Jim Ducket. Jim talks about his time at Real Bedford, his life outside McMullen Park and how family interlinks within football.

Looking back on last weekend, what's the mood been like in camp after that big win?

It was a good bounce-back victory. The squad showed a lot of character off the back of the defeat to Leverstock, going to Creasey Park and completing a resounding victory. The fact we have never lost two games in a row is a testament to the attitude we show towards defeat and the consistency this team brings.

A month into the New Year, the idea of promotion looms closer; as someone who has been here for both promotions pushes, what feels different this time around?

The dynamics of the team and the way we play have certainly changed and

evolved. We also have a lot more players in this side now that have experienced a run-in for the title. Those who were here last year, as well as those who have been there, did that with other top clubs nearby. I think it's common for teams to have some shakier moments this time of year, just down to the sheer volume of games played in a short amount of time, but it's about how you react to those shaky moments that really count and from what we've done so far we look in a good place.

Away from McMullen Park, you've always kept yourself in the sport/fitness world. How does that complement your time on the football pitch?

I think it goes hand in hand really. I have been very fortunate with injuries and fitness during my time on the pitch (touch wood), and I would certainly put that down to having such an active lifestyle away from the sport. At 32, this can be when injuries start to get the better of

WITH JIM DUCKET

your football career, but through my job, I've learnt how to take good care of my body and ensure that, hopefully, I can keep playing for as long as possible.

You played all of last year alongside your twin brother Rob. How's it been growing up playing football alongside your brother?

This season is the first year we haven't played in the same team, which is quite a feat when you think of it. Football has always been something that we have bonded over, so to play on the same pitch for so long with him was a really enjoyable experience. It also helps off the field too, as you know that you always have someone to talk to and that will have your back no matter what. That's a rarity in the world of football, so I feel very lucky to have that person in Rob.

With Mark Ducket also involved in the club, what impact does football have on your family?

People often say football is like family, but we seem to have taken that literally! Although it is obviously useful to have brothers and cousins and nephews, etc, in the sport, we have always made sure that we have a line between football and family and that we never cross it. It means that we can have that separation but still keep that strong connection.

What can we expect from Biggleswade United this afternoon?

The two games we have played against them so far this season have been challenging. The FA Vase loss on penalties here in November means that we are certainly keen to right some wrongs from that game and get us back on a good winning streak heading into the end of the season





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 - win- ning 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 Champion- ship and the Division One Cup. We also retained the Beds. FA Intermedi- ate 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.

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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FIXTURE LIST

(W) (W) (W) (U) (U) (W)

AUGUST '23

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

DECEMBER '23

2	HARPENDEN TOWN	0	5	(W)
16	FC ROMANIA	1	3	(W)
23	CRAWLEY GREEN	6	0	(W)
27	SHEFFORD TOWN & CAMPTON	0	7	(W)
30	COCKFOSTERS	3	2	(W)

SEPTEMBER '23

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

OCTOBER '23

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

NOVEMBER '23

4	ARLESEY TOWN	5		0	(W)	
7	POTTON UNITED	0		3	(W)	
11	BIGGLESWADE UNITED **	2		2	(L)	
		(PE	NS	6-7)		
14	WELLINGBOROUGH W'WORTH ***	* 5		1	(W)	
18	AYLESBURY VALE DYNAMOS	5		2	(W)	
25	BALDOCK TOWN	2		0	(W)	
28	POTTON UNITED	3		1	(W)	

JANUARY '24

9	COCKFOSTERS ****	2	1	(W)
13	ST PANTELEIMON	0	4	(W)
27	BALDOCK TOWN	2	2	(D)
30	STANSTED	0	1	(W)

FEBRUARY '24

27	HARPENDEN TOWN		Н		
24	FC ROMANIA		Н		
20	CODICOTE ****		A		
17	BIGGLESWADE UNITED		н		
10	DUNSTAB:E TOWN *****	1		6	(W)
3	LEVERSTOCK GREEN	2			(L)

MARCH '24

2	LONDON LIONS	Н
5	DUNSTABLE TOWN	А
9	MK IRISH	А
16	LEVERSTOCK GREEN	н
19	SHEFFORD & CAMPTON *****	Н
23	COLNEY HEATH	А
30	SHEFFORD & CAMPTON	н

APRIL '24

13	TRING ATHLETIC	H
20	SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN	A

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

LADIES FIXTURE LIST

AUGUST '23

13	STEVENAGE	4	1	(W)
24	AFC DUNSTABLE	0	7	(W)

JANUARY '24

28	WATFORD DEVELOPMENT **	11	2	(W)
21	KINGS LYNN TOWN	0	9	(W)
14	HARINGEY BOROUGH	2	3	(W)

SEPTEMBER '23

3	BARKING	5	0	(W)	
10	WROXHAM FC	2	4	(W)	
17	BOWERS & PITSEA	0	1	(W)	
24	ST ALBANS CITY	🕤 🔮 🔮 👍	0	(W)	

FEBRUARY '24

4	NEEDHAM MARKET	0 - 9 (W)
11	STEVENAGE FC	ΡP
18	WOOTTON BC RESERVES ***	TH N
25	LUTON TOWN	А

OCTOBER '23

1	HACKNEY WOMENS *	2 - 9 (W)	
8	ROYSTON TOWN	4 - 1 (W)	
15	KINGS LYNN	13 - 0 (W)	
22	STEVENAGE FC *	4 - 0 (W)	
24	NEEDHAM MARKET		

NOVEMBER '23

	BILLERICAY TOWN *			(L)
26	WOOTTON BLUE CROSS **	6	1	(W)

DECEMBER '23

3	BARKING	3	9	(W)
10	AFC DUNSTABLE **	0	2	(W)

MARCH 24

3	LUTON TOWN **	А
10	ROYSTON TOWN	A
17	WROXHAM FC	H
24	BOWERS & PITSEA	H

APRIL '24

7	HARINGEY BOROUGH	н
14	ST ALBANS CITY	А
28		Н

Н

MAY '24

12 AFC DUNSTABLE WOMEN

* FA CUP MATCH ** LEAGUE CUP *** COUNTY CUP

MATEMDAY EQUAD

V



PIRATES

TYLER MCGREGOR (GK) ALFIE BOZWARD (GK) **LEWIS BURGESS** JOE STEELE TOM WOOD MATT CLIFFORD JAMES DUCKET **BRETT LONGDEN OLLIE SWAIN BEN WALSH DREW RICHARDSON** LUKE KNIGHT © LEE WATKINS CHARLIE SMITH ARCHIE JONES **BEN STEVENS** EDDIE CORBIT **ENIOLA AGEMOH-DAVIES** ALIE BANGURA **JOSH SETCHELL MO AHMED** CLASTON GORDON TOM HITCHCOCK JOEY EVANS



BIGGLESWADE

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

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REFEREE - JOSH BURNS ASSISTANT - NATHAN PARRIN ASSISTANT - RUSSELL SHACKLOCK