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THE WOMEN'S FA CUP

SUN 12TH NOVEMBER '23 - 1.00 PM





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MANAGEMENT:

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SECRETARY: MARTIN TRINDER

REAL BEDFORD:

CHAIRMAN: PETER MCCORMACK

VICE CHAIRMAN: CONOR MCCORMACK

CEO: EMMA FIRMAN

SECRETARY: NEIL MCCORMACK

MEDIA: WILL ROBERTS

BACKROOM STAFF:

MANAGER: DEAN PERRETT

ASSISTANT MANAGER: JOE PERRETT

COACH: GEORGIA CLARKE

COACH: KYLE HELLINA

GOALKEEPING COACH: JOHN FROST

PHYSIO: TREVOR FROST

REAL BEDFORD MEN:

MANAGER: ROB SINCLAIR

ASSISTANT MANAGER: MARK DUCKET

COACH: PETE THORNES

GOALKEEPING COACH: IAN BROWN

PHYSIO: LOTTIE BURTON

KITMAN: GERRY MCCORMACK

GROUNDKEEPER: JACK MUDGE

CLUB HISTORIAN: GEOFF SEAGRAVE

BEDFORD PARK RANGERS:

CHAIR: JAY ALLISON

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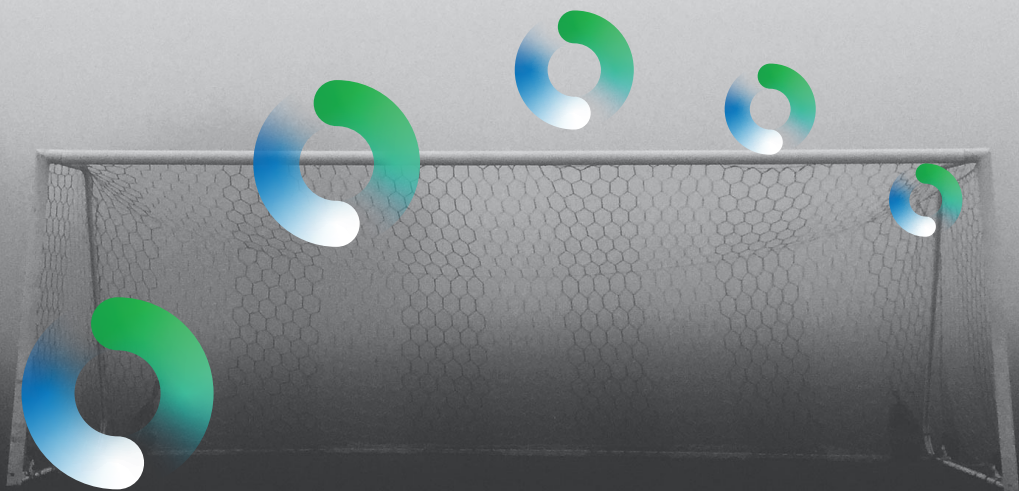
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LADIES CHAIR: JILL UPTON

I want to give a warm welcome to the managers, staff, players and directors of Billericay Town Ladies, a team we have played a few times in the past.

As chair of Real Bedford Ladies and Girls, this season has seen us build a partnership with Real Bedford, which has been a very different experience.

I've always championed girls' and women's football, but I have been very wary of getting too involved with male clubs because I have seen so many relationships fail, and when it does, it is always the women who seem to lose out. Peter McCormack has a refreshingly positive attitude toward the female game and enthusiastically supports us.

The benefits to the ladies have been great as we have been able to recruit a strong, focused manager in Dean Perrett, and we

have attracted some new talented players. The team has sat at the top of the Eastern Regional Premier League since the beginning of the season, winning every game so far.

Dean has also gathered a strong team of coaches to support our ambitions, and everyone is really proud of their achievements.

All 23 teams, from under 8s to Walking football, will play in the same Real Bedford home kit, instilling a sense of pride in the whole club.

Today, we face Billericay Town Ladies in the first round of the FA Cup. Despite our opponents playing two divisions above us, I know the team will give everything to cause a cup upset today.

**Jill Upton,
Chair**



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FROM THE TOUCHLINE

Welcome to the supporters of Real Bedford and those who have travelled to support Billericay Town this afternoon. I hope everyone who joins us at McMullen Park today enjoys what we hope will be an exciting FA Cup clash.

We have had a brilliant start to the season. To be undefeated in all competitions in November is a testament to the players and staff and the hard work they put in week in and week out to ensure that the squad is 100% ready on match days.

A massive amount of credit must also go to those off the field who run the club so well, allowing us to focus on the football and providing us with all the resources we need to be successful.

A big thank you must also go to the fans. We are in the middle of an unusually long stretch of home games, but the support at McMullen Park has been unwavering and certainly helps the players reach their full potential on the field.

Thank you to all those supporting the team, and we welcome any newcomers today to join everyone in cheering on the team throughout the remainder of this

campaign.

Results in the league have been unbelievable. Sitting at top of the league without dropping a point is an excellent achievement for such an aspirational club. Our successful FA Cup results have also allowed us to reach the First Round Proper, which leads us to today's visitors, Billericay Town. Currently playing their football two leagues above us, Billericay will prove to be our toughest test yet, and one as a team we are very much looking forward to.

I know Billericay Town well and have met a few of their players over the last few years, as well as having regular chats with their coaching staff, so it will be nice to have some familiar faces in the opposite dugout.

Today will be a massive challenge for us, but I know the team will give it their all and battle to the end.

Enjoy the match!

Dean Perrett,
Manager



NEEDHAM MARKET MATCH REPORT

On a wet Sunday afternoon at McMullen Park, Real Bedford Ladies looked to continue their perfect start to the season, hosting Needham Market in the league.

From the first whistle, the Pirates dominated proceedings, with Erin Price, Zara Carroll, and Gemma Croucher controlling the midfield and stifling any attempts from Needham to establish a foothold in the game.

The first real opportunity of the match came within the opening 10 minutes, courtesy of CJ's pace down the left flank. She put in a dangerous low cross, but Cesca Partridge was just out of reach. Amber Smith raced onto the loose ball, only to send her shot agonisingly wide of the target.

Smith continued to threaten the Needham defence, nearly setting up Tasha Fensome in a move similar to the opening goal of last week's win against Stevenage, but this time, the ball was just too high for the head of the Bedford striker.

Bedford's persistence paid off in the 18th minute when Erin Price delivered a perfect through ball to Cesca Partridge. Partridge took a deft touch to evade the Needham defenders and unleashed a powerful strike from the edge of the box, finding the bottom left corner of the net.

The Pirates doubled their advantage just three minutes later. Gemma Croucher, deep in her own half, launched a pinpoint



through ball to Tasha Fensome, who outpaced the Needham defence and coolly slotted the ball home, marking her 15th goal of the season.

Fensome netted her second of the day in the 27th minute following a long free kick from the Bedford captain, Zara Carroll, into the Needham Box. Her slight header confused the away side's defence, and the ball rolled into the net.

Needham's Page Wakefield narrowly missed a chance to get her side back in the game just before halftime. A low cross from the right found her free in the box, but as she slid in, she could only guide the ball wide of the sticks.

The second half saw a shift in

momentum, with the Pirates unable to capitalise on their chances and Needham gradually growing into the game. Fensome, Smith, and Partridge missed opportunities to extend the lead with good opportunities.

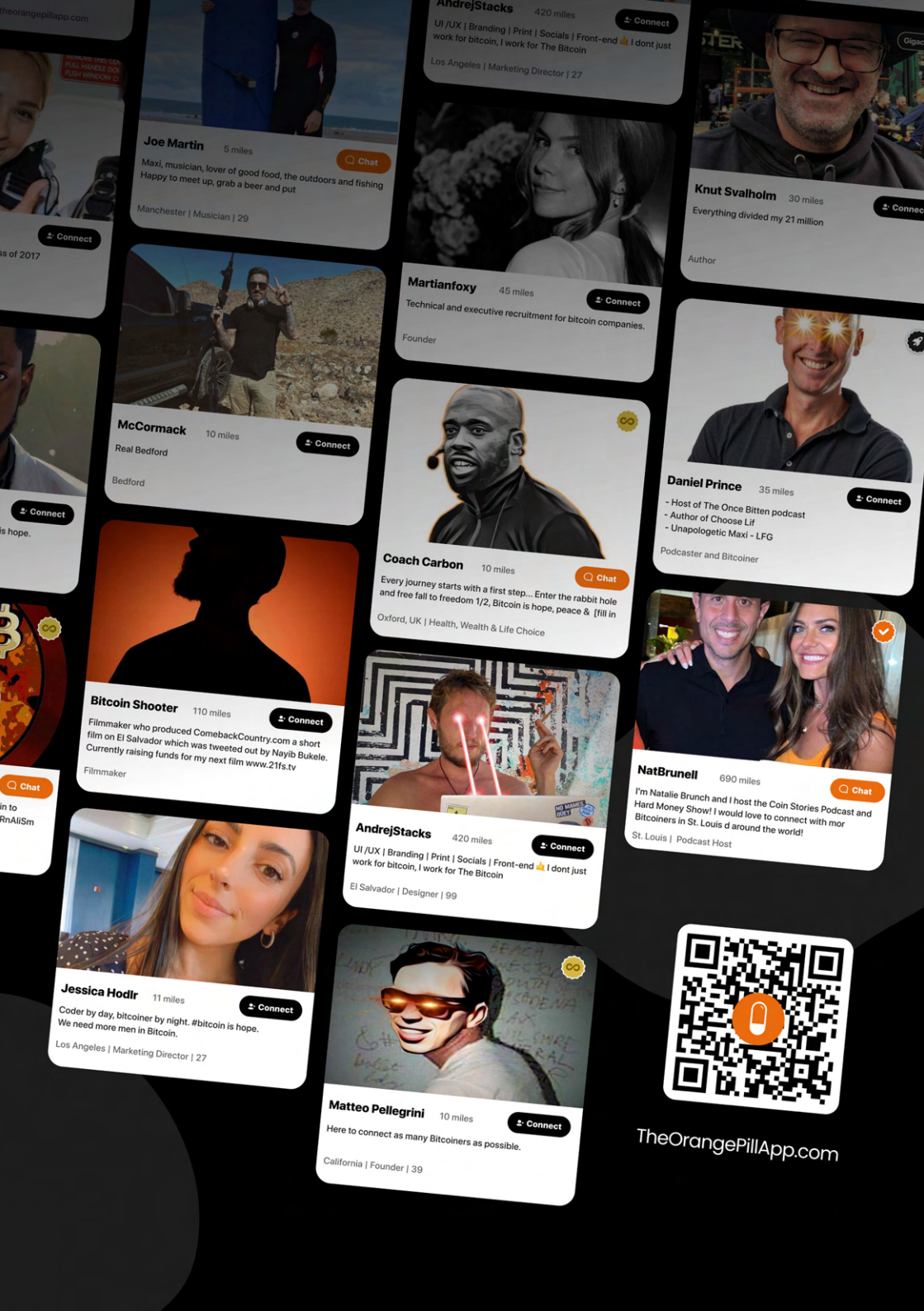
Needham's persistence finally paid off in injury time, capitalising on a rare mistake from the Pirates' defence to snatch a late consolation goal, courtesy of Lucy Loomes.

Despite a less convincing second half, Real Bedford Ladies walked away with all three points, maintaining their 100% start to the season and extending their lead at the top of the table to 8 points.

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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 na-

tional 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 home-grown 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
Real Bedford FC



STEVENAGE WOMEN MATCH REPORT

In a highly-anticipated clash at McMullen Park, Real Bedford Ladies and Stevenage Women faced each other for the second time this season for a chance to progress to the first round proper of the FA Cup. The teams played in the league's opening weekend, a match which saw Real Bedford triumph 4-1 after opening the scoring in the first half against the run of play and Stevenage reduced to 10 players in the second half.

The expectation was that Stevenage wanted to avenge this result and take the Real scalp for the first time this season, and the opening 20 minutes of the match proved that both teams were up for it.

Real Bedford Ladies had the first chance in the 5th minute when Ta-

sha Fensome broke down the left wing and delivered a testing cross, but Stevenage's defence managed to clear the danger. While Stevenage matched The Pirates in midfield, they struggled to create clear-cut opportunities. Gemma Franklin, in particular, put in a player-of-the-match performance, thwarting every Stevenage effort to make a chance.

Stevenage finally broke into the box in the 23rd minute, as Baker-Re sprinted down the left and delivered a well-placed cross to Amy Makewell, but her shot went wide of the target. The breakthrough for Real Bedford Ladies came in the 41st minute. Newcomer Amber Smith, who had been a constant threat with her pace down the right wing, raced to the touchline and delivered an



inch-perfect cross into the six-yard box, where Tasha Fensome, in the clear, nodded home from close range to give Real Bedford a 1-0 lead heading into halftime.

The second half was a very different affair, as Real Bedford Ladies asserted their dominance, with Erin Price controlling the midfield. Within five minutes of the restart, The Pirates doubled their lead. Rolling back the years, Zara Carroll collected a pass from Cesca Partridge in the box and calmly slotted the ball into the bottom corner, making it 2-0.


Fifteen minutes later, Bedford's captain secured her brace. CJ delivered a pinpoint corner, and the unmarked Bedford legend rose to power a header into the back of the net, all but ending Stevenage's

hopes of a comeback at 3-0.

Just two minutes later, Real Bedford Ladies added a fourth goal to their tally, with the pick of the bunch. A Cesca Partridge shot rebounded to Erin Price, who unleashed a strike from the edge of the box, finding the top left-hand corner of the goal.

The remainder of the match played out without any further goals. Real Bedford Ladies dominated this game, highlighting their progress under Dean Perrett and securing a place in the first round proper of the FA Cup.

The Pirates now face a formidable challenge in South Premier side Billericay Town in the First Round Proper.



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THE BIG INTERVIEW

This week, we sat down with Tash Fensome, who has played football in Bedford for over two decades. Tash has been at the forefront of the exponential growth of Real Bedford Ladies this season, having already scored 15 goals in 11 games. Tash spoke about the changes she has noticed around football in Bedford and the opportunities younger players now have in the game.

Looking back on the last few games, what's the feeling like in camp at the moment?

As you can probably imagine, everyone is buzzing. To be undefeated in all competitions heading into November is no mean feat. Everyone is enjoying their football, and there seems to be a close togetherness between the squad off the field, too, which is nice, especially considering many of us haven't played with each other for very long.

15 goals in 11 games is some achieve-

ment. Is this some of the best football you have played in your career? What is that down to?

It certainly is. I think the belief and support from the coaches for me has been the difference. Dean, Georgia and Kyle always back us to take a chance if we get one, so that fear of missing has gone for me. Also, having such talented footballers behind me is so helpful; having teammates who can make space for you makes your job as an attacker so much easier.

We can see a big difference in quality on the field from last year, but what have the changes been like off the field?

I think the difference during games has come from the effort that is being put into training during the week. The coaching staff always puts on next-level sessions that allow us to develop our technical skills, shape and fitness, which separates us from many teams at our



WITH TASH FENSOME

level. We are still firing deep into the second half, which we lacked last season, and is proving to be the difference this campaign.

What impact do you think the success of this club will have on girl's football in Bedford?

It's massive. The work of Pete and his team and the aspirations he has shown to grow ladies' football in Bedford are already having a significant impact on the broader community. Having youngsters fully kitted out in Real Bedford gear, joining us as mascots on a match day, and being coached by members of the first team makes it feel like one big club and community. We feel like we can inspire a new generation of girls, which is a real honour. I just hope that we can continue improving on the field so that the success can keep inspiring others to give football a go.

Looking back, how does today's game and opportunities differ from when you first started playing football?

It's night and day, really. I joined Bedford when I was 9, so I have been playing here on and off for just over 20 years. The lack of opportunities back then was frustrating. You could only really go to a Centre of Excellence if you wanted to pursue football. Now, there are countless ways to get into the pro game. There is still work to be done, but it is great to see more and more young players joining the girl's ranks.

What are you expecting from Billericay Town, our visitors today?

They'll be our toughest opponents yet, for sure. Having a Step 3 side come to McMullen Park is an exciting prospect. Hopefully, we can draw a decent crowd and put on a good show. It's the FA Cup, and you never know what will happen.



Tunnel Tunes

Gemma Croucher



What's My Name? By Rihanna feat. Drake

Afterglow By Becky Hill

Stronger By Kanye West

The Business By Tiësto

All I Do Is Win by DJ Khaled

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FOOTBALL FOUNDATIONS: BEX FLAHORA

I have been with the club since I was 13, playing through the youth structure and eventually playing for the ladies.

When I was 17, I went through my coaching badge with the club and took on my first team. Since then, I have coached on and off for the club.

Last year, Jill asked me to step up to Vice Chair of the Ladies, which I was delighted to accept. Being part of the club for so long and seeing how the club has grown since I was younger is a great feeling; everyone involved should be

very proud of what the club has accomplished.

There have been many changes since last season, not only with the managers and players but in the closer integration built with everyone at Real Bedford.

Today's game against Billericay Town is a highlight for the club. Facing a step 3 side will be a good test of the progress we have made.

FIXTURE LIST

AUGUST '23

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

DECEMBER '23

3	BARKING	A
10	WROXHAM FC	H
16	BOWERS & PITSEA	H

SEPTEMBER '23

3	BARKING	5 - 0 (W)	
10	WROXHAM FC	2 - 4 (W)	H
17	BOWERS & PITSEA	0 - 1 (W)	A
24	ST ALBANS CITY	4 - 0 (W)	H

JANUARY '24

7	ST ALBANS CITY	A
14	HARINGEY BOROUGH	H
21	KINGS LYNN TOWN	A
28	LUTON TOWN	H

OCTOBER '23

1	HACKNEY WOMENS *	2 - 9 (W)	
8	ROYSTON TOWN	4 - 1 (W)	A
15	KINGS LYNN	13 - 0 (W)	A
22	STEVENAGE FC *	4 - 0 (W)	A
24	NEEDHAM MARKET	3 - 1 (W)	A

FEBRUARY '24

4	NEEDHAM MARKET	A
11	STEVENAGE FC	A
18	HARINGEY BOROUGH	A
25	LUTON TOWN	A

NOVEMBER '23

12	BILLERICAY TOWN *	H
19	WOOTTON BLUE CROSS **	H
26	AFC DUNSTABLE	H

MARCH '24

10	ROYSTON TOWN	A
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* FA CUP MATCH

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MATCHDAY SQUAD



V



PIRATES

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SOPHIE BILLING
SHANNON CARROLL
ZARA CARROLL
BECKY CHARTER
LAUREN COPPIN
CAROLL CRIPPS
ISSY CROOKS
GEMMA CROUCHER
NATASHA FENSOME
GEMMA FRANKLIN
KAYLEN GERKEY
SARAH HUDSON
OLIVIA JAMES
KAYDEE KING
CHLOE MARTIN
NEVE MAYES
LISA MILLIKEN
DESTINY PAPP
FRANCESCA PARTRIDGE
ERIN PRICE
AMY REED
AMBER SMITH

MANAGER - DEAN PERRETT
ASST. MANAGER - JOE PERRETT
COACH - GEORGIA CLARKE
COACH - KYLE HELLINA
GOALKEEPER COACH - JOHN FROST
PHYSIO - TREVOR FROST
KITMAN - GERRY MCCORMACK

BILLERICAY

ALEX BAKER
OLIVIA SMITH
LUCY JONES
DANICA DOUGAL
SCARLETT WILLIAMS
KARESHA ITON
MADDIE BIGGS
GEORGIE MORTON
KARISSA DOO
BEAU PARKER
ZOE RUSHEN
LEANNE BELL
OTESHA CHARLES
CHARLOTTE O'SHEA
JANAYE BEAUFORT
JESS KING
MORGAN ROGERS
ELISE JENNINGS
KATIE O'HANLON (GK)
RUBY SEALEY
SORAYA WALSH
CHE THOMAS
AMELIE JOHNSON
HOPE SMITH (GK)
AMBER GAYLOR
ALEX HENNESSY

MANAGER - JAMES GIBSON

REFEREE - CHRIS PARPERI
ASSISTANT 1 - TREVOR GREGORY
ASSISTANT 2 - MARK HOWARD