

WINGATE & FINCHLEY FOOTBALL CLUB

Wingate & Finchley vs Folkestone Invicta



Saturday 17th
August 2024

Isthmian
Premier Division

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WINGATE & FINCHLEY FC

Hello and welcome to the Maurice Rebak Stadium! We hope that all associated with the club, the match officials and the staff, players and officials of Folkestone Invicta enjoy their stay in N12 this afternoon!

Only the seventh day into the season, and we're already on our third game of the season!

Both our games so far have ended with a 3-2 scoreline – one for the better and one for the worse.

A brace from Ogo Obi and a shot from Ryan Lowe saw the Blues claim a win against Dulwich Hamlet last Saturday here at the MRS.

Then on Monday evening we travelled to Carshalton Athletic, where the result did not quite go our way, with our goals coming through Luke Deslandes and Ben Frempah.

Next weekend sees us play another two fixtures – firstly away at Canvey Island on Saturday then on bank holiday Monday we host local rivals Potters Bar Town

Company Name and Number:

Wingate and Finchley Development Ltd, 6014465

Ground: The Maurice Rebak Stadium, Summers Lane, Finchley, London N12 0PD. Tel: 020 8446 2217

Company Number: 6014465

Training Ground: Barnet Lane, Barnet, EN5 2DN

League Match Ticket Prices:

£12 adults, £8 concession, £5 for ages 11-18, under 11 free

Chairman: Aron Sharpe

Vice Chairman: Nicky Rifat, Joe Sharpe

President: Harvey Ackerman

Life Vice President: David Ackerman

Life Vice President: David Wolff

Life Vice President: Peter Rebak

Life Vice President: Steven Astaire

Director: Paul Lerman

Secretary: Andrew Kouroushi

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First Team Manager: Ahmet Rifat

First Team Coaches: Ruben Gaspar, Jonny Georgiou, Ricky Machel

First Team Goalkeeping Coach:

Gavin King

First Team Analyst: Michael Smith

Kit Manager: Peter Barker

Head Groundsman: Andy Ward

Welfare Officer: Jonny Georgiou

Bar Manager: Lorraine Coleman

Matchday Hospitality: Tony Ward

Programme Editor: Joshua Palmer

CLUB NOTES

New teams to the division

This season we welcome six new clubs to the Isthmian League Premier:

Bowers & Pitsea return after one season away in the Isthmian North

Hendon are transferred from the Southern League Premier South, where they have been competing since leaving the Isthmian League in 2018

Dartford and Dover Athletic join having been relegated from the National League South. The sides last competed in the Isthmian Premier in 2010 and 2009 respectively.

Chichester City and Cray Valley Paper Mills promoted from the Isthmian South East, both playing at this level for the first time in their histories.

Leaving the division

This season we also see six clubs departing the Isthmian League Premier:

Enfield Town won last season's playoff so are now in the National League South

Hornchurch join them having won the league

Concord Rangers and Haringey Borough relegated and join the Isthmian North

Kingstonian and Margate also faced the drop, falling into the Isthmian South Central and Isthmian South East respectively.

Cup draws

The league campaign has barely started, and somehow we already have our first cup tie of the season!

London Senior Cup – Receiving a bye in the first round, we will host Erith and Belvedere in round two, on Tuesday 29 October.

FA Youth Cup

Thanks to our 4-1 win away at Fisher last night, our U18s will now host Romford in the preliminary round on Wednesday 5th September here at Summers Lane.

New vice chairman

Please give a warm welcome to one of our own Joe Sharpe, a former player and of course son of chairman Aron who returns to the club on the board of directors. Joe joins as a vice chairman alongside Nicky Rifat.

Opening day win

The 3-2 win vs Dulwich Hamlet last Saturday was our first opening day win since the 2015/16 season.

That year, a Billy Healey brace secured a 2-1 home win against Brentwood Town.

FA Cup draw

We enter the 2024/25 FA Cup at the 1st qualifying round stage on 31st August.

With the preliminary round taking place this weekend, the draw is expected to be released this Monday.

LEAGUE RESPECT STATEMENT



“The Isthmian Football League strongly supports the Football Association’s statement that there should be a zero-tolerance approach against all forms of discrimination. Any inappropriate conduct toward others, including but not limited to that based on an individual’s sex, race, colour, weight, size, religion and belief, national origin, age, marital or domestic-partnership status, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, will not be tolerated and will be reported to the relevant authorities. The Isthmian League and our Member Clubs are committed to promoting equity and equality by treating all people fairly and with respect, by recognising that inequalities may exist, by taking steps to address them and providing access and opportunities for all members of our communities.”



Respect

A VIEW FROM AFAR

On this date in history, which of these football related statements is true?

- In 1982, Tony Cottee, later to manage Barnet, made his debut for West Ham in a 1-2 home defeat to Nottingham Forest
- In 1946, the BBC showed their first ever live football, when they showed 35 minutes of the first half of an Athenian League match. It was Barnet v Wealdstone, from Underhill
- Barnet's first game as a Football League club ended in a 4-7 home defeat to Crewe Alexandra

Answer at the foot of the column

For the second season running, Folkestone have the pleasure of an August visit to North London. Last season it was the very first game whereas this year, of course, we are well under way.

It's the third game; looking back, it seems to me that it was only after three games that newspapers (still available at specialist outlets) deemed it appropriate to publish a league table. Carlisle United were top of the old Division One after three games in their one season there in 1974 and I'm sure some of their supporters still have the framed league table hanging on their living room walls. In my youth, the Finchley Press would publish full reports and the up to date league table weekly. A young John Motson would sometimes be excused Barnet duties to sit in the grandstand at what was then known simply as Summers Lane.

I was a regular there, (but never in the glorified area of the seats) in the early to mid sixties, but one midweek game that I missed – probably hadn't finished my Maths homework - was attended by one of my schoolfriends. The next day on arrival at the alma mater, he was full of the story that Tommy Docherty had been spotted, sitting there in our very own listed stand; he may have not had much legroom, but there we are. Apparently, he left at half time, having uncharacteristically rebuffed any attempts at conversation. Nobody knew quite who he was looking at, but word on the streets was that the then Finchley striker, Alan Noonan, was the subject of his interest.

I have no idea what happened to him (Noonan, not Docherty) but he certainly didn't turn up at Manchester United. Perhaps he thought that he had little chance of displacing Law, Best and Charlton, coming straight from the Athenian League. I decided to look him up, as you can nowadays and was thrilled to find quite a bit of information. Unfortunately, closer reading revealed that all the articles concerned an Australian gentleman of the same name who played that strange game they have over there, refereed by people in pork pie hats.

A VIEW FROM AFAR

The Australian Noonan was apparently a major star with Essendon, which confused me further as that was a place of which I had happy memories. At school I had been involved in organising a charity sponsored walk, where Essendon Primary School agreed to act as the midway staging post and I had later played several games of cricket in the village. I always enjoyed the journey out into the Hertfordshire countryside. But then I realised that the Essendon being referred to wasn't reached via Potters Bar, but if travelling from Finchley, usually via Melbourne Airport.

Folkestone will have no such confusion today, having made one of the longer journeys in our league and we wish them a pleasant afternoon admiring the architecture before setting off on their journey back to Kent. It's important on long journeys to make sure you leave nothing behind except, of course, the three points on offer.

What happened on this date in football history?

The correct answer is that Barnet's league career began with an extraordinary 4-7 defeat. Three days later, they drew 5-5 with Brentford.

By Peter Brown

WINGATE & FINCHLEY CLUB HISTORY

Wingate and Finchley Football club can trace its roots back to the formation of Finchley Football Club in 1874 making it one of the oldest clubs in the country. Founded by Pa Jackson, who also was instrumental in the creation of the Corinthians, The London Football Association as well as later serving as secretary of the FA, Finchley became founder members of the Athenian League in 1912 after spells in the London League and North London League. They finished fourth in the maiden season, higher than such luminaries as Grays Athletic, Chelmsford City and Enfield.

However their stay was cut short due to the onset of World War One and they would only return for a lone season in 1929 before returning to the London League and forging success. The club's first piece of silverware was won during the 1934-1935 season when the League Cup was captured, with the taste of achievement forming Finchley went on to win the London League in 1936-1937 before World War Two scuppered their winning streak.

It was immediately after the conflict that saw Major Harry Sadow, Frank Davis, George Hyams and Asher Rebak form a Jewish Football Club believing the field of play was a ground of battling the ignorance of anti-Semitism. So in 1946 Wingate Football Club began life in the Middlesex Senior League. The club was named after General Orde C. Wingate who despite not being Jewish himself oversaw the creation of the Israeli Army during the Second World War. The club enjoyed early success and by 1952 they were promoted to the London League.

Meanwhile Finchley, back in the Athenian League, were in the middle of their glory years with the 1952-1953 season proving to be the pinnacle. That year saw their progression to the Third Round Proper of the FA Cup. Defeated along the way were Chelmsford City, Kidderminster Harriers (1-0 at Aggborough) and Crystal Palace (3-1 at Summers Lane) before the Finches were finally beaten 2-0 at Gay Meadow against Shrewsbury Town.

Despite an Amateur Cup semi-final appearance, losing to bitter local rivals Hendon at Highbury in 1965, a sense of decline was starting to emerge. A switch to the Isthmian Premier League failed to stop the halt, and in 1980-81 Finchley were relegated to the second division.

Wingate by now had become a senior club and were competing in the Athenian League. Many players had become members of the Middlesex FA representative side and also partook on behalf of Great Britain in the Maccabiah Games. Disaster struck though in 1972 when their Hall Lane ground in Hendon was lost to the M1 extension and despite a short ground share with Finchley FC the club reverted to junior football.

Wingate finally returned to the senior game with a brief merger with Leyton FC. This partnership proved to be unsuccessful and despite a 1984-1985 League Cup victory, ironically defeating Finchley in the final, both clubs went their separate ways.

In 1991 with Finchley struggling in the Isthmian League Second Division and with mounting debts it was announced that a merger with Wingate would take place in the

WINGATE & FINCHLEY CLUB HISTORY

summer. After extensive refurbishment and a name change of the Summers Lane ground in honour of long time Wingate supporter Harry Abrahams, Wingate and Finchley took to the field for the start of the 1991-1992 season.

Success was immediate and despite starting life in the South Midlands League the club were quickly competing in the Isthmian League and by season 2003-2004 were members of the newly formed Division One North.

In recent seasons the club has continued its growth. A brief flirtation with the Southern League was shortly followed by the arrivals of Manager Michael Stone and Chairman Aron Sharpe. Now back in the Isthmian League a youthful squad achieved seventh position in the First Division North in the 2008-2009.

Stone sadly left the club in 2009 after being offered the post of Assistant Manager at Conference giants Rushden and Diamonds. The club's first team manager in time for the start of the 2009/10 season was former Oswestry Town manager and Total Network Solutions Llansantffraid midfielder David Norman. At the end this season the Club finished in a record high position of 3rd in the Ryman Division One North, mainly thanks to a record run of 17 matches without defeat from the turn of the year, a run which included 13 wins. The Club reached the playoffs but lost out to Enfield Town in the semi-final 3-2 in an incredible match. This paved the way for what was to be a monumental and unforgettable 2010/11 season.

The Club was quickly becoming the most progressive non-league club in the area, thanks to Sharpe's focus on youth development. Bobby Aisien and Medi Alabimba had progressed from Hadley Wood and Wingate to earn professional contracts, and in 2011 over 20 of the U16-18 age group represented their County. Six boys at U16's were given scholarships with pro sides and the club developed into a community club with a Mencap disability initiative, work with schools, and it entered its fourth year of the Flex educational scheme.

A consistent league season for the First Team saw the side match their previous 3rd place league finish and earn a second crack at the playoffs. In the semi-final Harlow Town were beaten 4-2 after extra time, and promotion to the Ryman premier Division was won with a 118th minute winner over Brentwood Town in extra time of the final - The Blues winning 3-2 on their home turf.

This victory was the middle leg of a remarkable and unique Treble. Earlier that season the club had lifted the Ryman League Cup having beaten Dulwich Hamlet 2-0 at Imber Court, and London Senior Cup success was to follow shortly afterwards when Hendon were convincingly beaten 3-1 in the final.

Success flowed throughout the Club this year, with the youth teams also building on their previous season's work as they progressed superbly. The U18's won the Middlesex County Cup, and at U15 level the League Title and three Cup trophies followed (two County cups and the League cup). Even the Under 10's were getting in on the action as they lifted the Spring Cup!

WINGATE & FINCHLEY CLUB HISTORY

The first season in the Ryman Premier Division in 2011/12 saw the side secure safety in this new level with a comfortable mid-table finish, ending up closer to the playoffs than from relegation. The final third of the season saw breakthroughs for youth players Liron Mannie and David Smouha who both played big roles in the first team squad. Meanwhile there was huge cup success at youth level yet again; The Under 18's won the AFA Cup, beating Valley Park after extra time, as well as the London County Cup. The Under 17's won a double as they beat Thurrock in the EJA League Cup final to add to their earlier AFA Cup success having beaten Bethwin 8-1! The Under 16's also got in on the action securing their AFA Cup title beating Woodford FC, which they added later on securing their EJA (Herts) League title.

Success of the youth sides prompted three players - Ross Weinreb, Nathan Sollosi and Joe Sharpe - to earn selection to the Great Britain Maccabi Team for the world games in Israel during July 2013. Meanwhile the Barnet Mencap disability sides grew in strength as they entered the fourth season with the club, with three sides now competing in the Camden Step Leagues. The year ended on a high as McDonalds joined in lucrative sponsorship deal.

The following season, 2012-13, was a difficult one for the first team. Early season poor form led to the departure of Norman in November as ex-Northwood boss Gary Meakin came in. The Club flirted with relegation all season until a momentous 3-2 victory over Lowestoft two days before the final day secured survival. However Norman rejoined the Club in the summer as Director of Football, as veteran defender Daniel Nielsen was put in place as Head Coach. Meanwhile a new Under 21 Development squad was set up to compete in the inaugural Ryman U21 League.

There was continual success for the youth sides. The U17's added the London County Cup to an earlier EJA league title, the EJA cup and the AFA cup. These were also followed up with the League Regional Playoff title. The U16's won two cups in this season, the EJA and AFA trophies.

In 2014 the side faced another relegation fight in the league, which was lost on goal difference on the final day of the season despite a 5-0 victory over Billericay Town. However, when Worksop Town pulled out of the Southern League due to financial problems, Wingate & Finchley were the first in line to earn the reprieve back to the Ryman Premier Division.

The 2014-15 season resulted in a record finish of 12th place in the Ryman Premier League, and at the end of the season Norman departed, to be replaced by Simon Lane as Director of Football. However for the start of 2016 he was replaced by former Northern Ireland International Keith Rowland and the side finished in a stable 13th position. In August 2016 the stadium at Summers Lane was re-named after Wingate FC co-founder Maurice Rebak who had passed away in February of that year aged 95.

WINGATE & FINCHLEY CLUB HISTORY

The 2016-17 season saw the club set a new record, finishing in 5th place in the Ryman Premier League and qualifying for the end of season playoffs. A last-minute defeat at Bognor Regis Town in the semi-final ended the season, but this was a magnificent achievement and saw the Blues win the League's Team Performance of the Year Award.

A ninth-place finish followed in 2017-18 as the Blues narrowly missed out on a second successive play-off berth. There was success for the Under 23 side who won the Isthmian Development League North Division at a canter. Over the summer the Club embarked on an extensive state-of-the-art refurbishment of the stadium, for the first time since 1991's merger, giving the clubhouse a much-welcomed overhaul and making the stadium one of the most impressive in non-league football.

The subsequent three seasons saw a period of uncertainty both on and off the pitch, with short management stints for ex England International Nicky Shorey, ex Premier League stalwart Glen Little and ex West Ham Academy and Wingate & Finchley favourite Steve Clarke, followed by two null and void seasons under the stewardship of Spencer Knight due to the COVID pandemic. However, during this period there were still many successes, including U18s winning County Cup in consecutive seasons and the London Champion of Champions trophy, U23 Development Squad being victorious in Herts League Cup fielding a squad largely made up of Under 18s, while both U13s and U12s secured League Titles.

In the summer of 2021, Club legends Ahmet Rifat (Director of Football) and Marc Weatherstone (Manager) were appointed as a new Management Team after nearly 1000 first team appearances between them. Later in the 2022/23 season Ahmet Rifat was to take sole charge.

Season 2024/24 will go down on record as one of our finest if not the finest. Finishing in 4th position with a record haul of 76 points and scoring 78 goals. Ahmet Rifat's charges made it to the play offs on the last day of the season with a 3-0 win over Carshalton.

We faced local rivals Enfield Town in the play off Semi finals at the QE II Stadium. We narrowly lost a very tight match 1-0 in front of a crowd of 2,225 that night. A fine season was ended, but what memories it brought.

What does 2024/25 hold, a new revamped side, and a manager and coaching squad with that extra years experience. Looking forward to the journey.

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2024 PRE-SEASON REVIEW

Sporting Bengal	BL	W5-1	Tue 02/07/2024
Royston Town	BL	W2-0	Sat 06/07/2024
Ware	A	W3-0	Tue 09/07/2024
Peterborough United	H	D0-0	Sat 13/07/2024
Brentwood Town	BL	L0-1	Tue 16/07/2024
Aldershot Town	H	D2-2	Sat 20/07/2024
Hadley	A	W3-1	Sat 27/07/2024
Welwyn Garden City	A	W6-1	Tue 30/07/2024
Watford U23	H	W1-0	Sat 03/08/2024



Watford U23 (H) – Saturday 3rd August 2024

All photos by Martin Addison

* BL – Barnet Lane training ground

FOLKESTONE INVICTA FC

Folkestone Invicta Football Club, which was formed in 1936 and played in the East Kent Amateur League, took over use of the Cheriton Road ground in early 1991 after the demise of the old Folkestone club who had enjoyed a long history in the Southern League. Under manager Gary Staniforth, Invicta joined the Winstonlead Kent League and completed the Division Two league and cup double during the 1991-92 season, also winning the Kent Intermediate Shield that season.

Invicta achieved senior status and joined Division One of the Winstonlead Kent League, making steady progress in its first two seasons at this level under club stalwart Staniforth. The nearest the club came to another trophy during these two seasons was when they lost the 1994 Plaaya Kent Senior Trophy Final 3-1 against Alma Swanley at Gravesend & Northfleet's Stonebridge Road.

Former Folkestone, Dover Athletic, Hythe Town, Crawley Town and Sittingbourne player Tim Hulme then took over as player-manager for the 1994-95 season. Invicta at one point chased the Kent League treble that season, but ended up empty handed. The club were runners up for a second successive season in the Plaaya Kent Senior Trophy after losing a penalty shoot out in the final against Deal Town at Dover's Crabble ground following a 2-2 draw after extra time.

Invicta entered the F. A. Cup for the first time during the 1994-95 season, beating Hailsham Town and then Southern League Premier Division side Sittingbourne before going out 2-1 at home to a Worthing side which included former Tottenham striker Mark Falco. Hopes were high for the 1995-96 season as Invicta strengthened their squad, but things turned sour during the second half of the season as Hulme left the club, with his assistant Micky Dix taking over for the remainder of the season.

Former Canterbury City boss Darren Hare was recruited for the 1996-97 season, but after a poor start he was soon replaced by one-time Folkestone Town manager Denis Hunt, assisted by veteran player Bobby Wilson.

It was during this season that a club record 2,332 saw the club play hosts to West Ham United in a benefit game following freak floods in the town. Harry Redknapp brought down a strong West Ham side that won 6-0 and included Portuguese World Cup star Paolo Futre, Julian Dicks, a young Frank Lampard and Stan Lazaridis.

It was the arrival of manager Neil Cugley from Ashford Town during the summer of 1997 which was to provide the catalyst for the return of Southern League football to the town. Cugley made an immediate impact as promotion was achieved by finishing runners up to Herne Bay in 1997-98 when the club also finished runners up in the Plaaya Kent Senior Trophy for the third time after losing 1-0 in the final to Greenwich Borough at Ashford Town's Homelands ground.

But under manager Cugley the club were to be permanent fixtures in the top three of their respective division for three successive seasons. The club continued to make good progress in 1998-99 as Southern League football returned to Folkestone. Invicta finished third in the Dr. Martens League Southern Division behind champions Havant & Waterlooville and runners up Margate, with the promotion race going to the final day of the season. Invicta also reached the final of the 1999 Kent Senior Cup where they lost 1-0 at home to then Conference club Welling United.

FOLKESTONE INVICTA FC

The club also made its mark in the F.A. Umbro Trophy by beating Conference club Hayes to reach the Third Round before going out 8-4 in an incredible tie away to three-times winners Woking.

The 1999-2000 season saw the club achieve more progress with promotion to the Dr. Martens League Premier Division as runners up to Fisher Athletic (London) in the Eastern Division. Again there was final day heartbreak for Invicta as the championship went right to the wire with Fisher winning away to Newport (Isle of Wight) to make Invicta's final day win at Wisbech in vein. Invicta went down 1-0 at home to holders and eventual winners Kingstonian in the F.A. Umbro Trophy and again reached the Kent Senior Cup Final, but went down again, this time 3-0 to Gravesend & Northfleet, their fifth successive defeat in a cup final as a senior side. It was a good season all round for the club as the reserves won the Kent Intermediate Cup and the youth team won their section of the MUSH Kent Youth League and reached the 2nd Round of the Times Sponsored F. A. Youth Cup before bowing out 6-0 against a strong Millwall side at the New Den

The 2000-01 season saw the club compete in the Dr Martens League Premier Division for the first time and Invicta achieved their objective of staying up. In the process they were the only side to win away to Nigel Clough's Burton Albion at Eton Park.

The 2001-02 season saw an improved Invicta side briefly top the Premier Division table for the first time in the club's history during the opening weeks of the season. The club reached the 4th Qualifying Round of the F. A. Cup but were beaten 5-1 in a replay away to Welling United after drawing the initial tie 1-1 with a lucrative trip to Reading as the prize. The season ended on a dramatic note as Invicta 3-3 home draw with Tamworth on the final day of the season denied the Lambs the championship – that game was watched by a crowd of 1,277.

That record was broken in August 2002 when the visit of neighbours Dover Athletic attracted a crowd of 1,446 to Cheriton Road. But the 2002-03 season was to prove a difficult season for Invicta as financial constraints took their toll. The club finished bottom of the table and was relegated back down to the Eastern Division. The 2003-04 season was more successful for Invicta as the club finished fifth in the Eastern Division to win promotion via the re-structuring of the non-league game. Highlights of the season were a club record unbeaten 24-match league run and reaching the Third Round of the F. A. Trophy before bowing out at home to Nationwide Conference club Stevenage Borough.

The club switched from the Southern League to the Isthmian (Isthmian) Premier League for the 2004-05 season and finished in a mid table position. Striker James Dryden broke both the club's record senior appearance and goalscoring records during the season and a new home league record attendance of 2,278 saw Invicta win 1-0 at home to local rivals Dover Athletic over Christmas. A 2,390 crowd saw Invicta win the return 1-0 over the Easter weekend.

But the club was to suffer real tragedy on Tuesday April 12th, 2005 when striker Paul Sykes collapsed on the pitch and died during a Kent Senior Cup semi final against one of his former clubs Margate. Invicta subsequently pulled out of the competition to allow Margate to play another of Paul's former clubs Dover Athletic in the final at Folkestone when the Kent footballing community came together to remember one of its most popular characters.

FOLKESTONE INVICTA FC

Folkestone Invicta went into the 2005-06 season in good spirits with a new sponsorship deal with local coach company Buzzlines. The club subsequently enjoyed its best ever run in the F. A. Cup, going down 2-1 away to Chester City in the First Round after leading 1-0 at half time thanks to an early Adam Flanagan goal which was shown on Match of the Day. The reserves also finished as champions of the Kentish Observer Football League Division Two and the club also enjoyed great success at youth level.

The 2006-07 season saw the club maintain its Isthmian Premier League status on the final day of the season with a 1-1 draw away to Carshalton. But the next season was to see the club relegated on the final day of the season with a 1-0 home defeat against Maidstone United in a winner-takes-all encounter. 2008-09 saw the club in the Isthmian League Division One South but a financial crisis put paid to early season hopes of promotion and the club put its faith in a predominantly young, local, up-and-coming side.

That faith came to fruition during a truly remarkable 2009-10 season that saw the club win promotion from the Isthmian League Division One South and reach the final of the Kent Senior Cup (losing 3-1 to Sittingbourne). Operating with a small squad, Invicta were denied the championship after being docked ten points for entering into a CVA agreement but were promoted via the pay-offs.

Croydon Athletic clinched the championship with a 0-0 draw on a memorable night at Invicta after both towns had paid tribute to Rifleman Peter Aldridge of A Company 4 Rifles, who had died in an explosion in Afghanistan, aged just 19, becoming the 250th UK serviceman to die in the campaign. New Invicta chairman Lynn Woods' efforts in staging the commemoration were rewarded with a 2,134 crowd.

Invicta – who conceded just 23 goals in 42 league games – recovered from the disappointment of missing out on the championship by winning the play-offs. A thrilling semi final saw the club come back from 2-0 down at half time against Leatherhead to force a 2-2 draw after extra time and win 5-3 on penalties. Godalming Town were then beaten in the final as Invicta returned to the Isthmian Premier League. The club also won the Isthmian League Division One South Fair Play Award during 2009-10 and again in 2012-13.

But continuing financial constraints meant that the club found life back in the Isthmian Premier League difficult and it was relegated back down to Division One South in 2010-11. For the 2011-12 and 2012-13 seasons the club reached the semi finals of the play offs, losing away to Dulwich Hamlet and Maidstone United respectively.

In 2013-14 the club finished as Isthmian League Division One South runners up and reached the play off final after beating Hastings United 3-2 after extra time in the semi final but lost the final 3-1 on penalties at home to Leatherhead following a 1-1 draw after extra time. The club also had young striker Johan Ter Horst signed by Premiership club Hull City during May 2014.

Folkestone Invicta won both the Division One South's Fair Play and Respect awards in 2013-14, the third successive season that it had been rewarded for its disciplinary record. The club again finished as runners up in the Isthmian League Division One South during 2014-15 and the season

FOLKESTONE INVICTA FC

was again to end in home play-off heartbreak as Invicta lost the final 3-0 against Merstham after beating Whyteleafe 2-1 after extra time in the semi final.

It was a different story in 2015-16 as Invicta won the Isthmian League Division One South championship by 24 points and manager Neil Cugley completed 1,000 matches as the club's manager. The title was clinched with a 6-0 win over Walton & Hersham on Good Friday in front of a 1,545 crowd.

During the summer of 2016 the club prepared for life back in the Isthmian League Premier Division and sold striker Harry Smith to League Division One club Millwall. The club achieved its objective of staying in the Premier Division which was confirmed with a 3-0 final day win away to Grays Athletic amid a party atmosphere at Aveley and also won the division's Respect award.

Invicta stepped up a gear during the 2017-18 season scoring over 100 goals in the Isthmian League Premier Division and reaching the Play Offs where they lost 4-0 in the semi final away to Hendon. It had been an exciting end to the season as the club lost on penalties in the Kent Reliance Senior Cup Final away to Maidstone United and finished their scheduled league programme with a 2-2 draw away to Billericay Town where a stoppage time Jamie O'Hara screamer denied them a league 'double' over the champions.

Despite winning its last five matches during April, Invicta narrowly missed out on the play offs on the final day of the 2018-19 season. Invicta were still very much in the Isthmian League Premier Division promotion race and in the semi finals of the League Cup when the 2019-20 season came to a halt due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The start of the curtailed 2020-21 season was a strange time with COVID protocols and procedures and with elite level sport continuing behind-closed-doors, Invicta was for a short spell one of the best supported clubs in the country.

2021-22 saw Invicta go further in the F A Trophy than the club had ever gone before – losing 5-1 behind-closed-doors away to National League club Wrexham; reach the Fourth Round Qualifying of the F A Cup with a thrilling 3-3 away draw and then 3-2 home defeat against National League club Eastleigh after extra time. Invicta also reached the semi finals of the League Cup (losing to eventual winners Horsham) and the final of the Kent Senior Cup (losing 6-2 against Dartford at Chatham Town FC) but just missed out on a play off place. Ian Draycott broke the club's all-time senior goalscoring record last season when the club also won the Isthmian League Premier Division Fair Play Award.

Neil Cugley stood down as first team manager in October 2022 after 1,299 competitive matches in charge and took on a new role as Head of Football Operations at the club. Record appearance holder Micheal Everitt and former Gillingham, Hibernian and Hull City defender Roland Edge stepped up to become joint Head Coaches.

Edge and Everitt were relieved of their duties in November 2023 and player-coach Andy Drury appointed as the new manager.

SEASON TICKETS 2024/25



EARLY BIRD

EQUIVALENT PRICE PER MATCH

- Adult £135.00 £6.43
- Conc. £90.00 £3.80
- Under 18 FREE

*EARLY BIRD AVAILABLE UNTIL 31st JULY

**Concessions over 65 and Students.

***Match Day Tickets £12, Conc-£8, U18 £5
(U18 Season tickets only available on early bird)

FULL PRICE

EQUIVALENT PRICE PER MATCH

- Adult £185.00 £8.80
- Conc. £130.00 £6.19

*FULL PRICE FROM 1st AUGUST

**Concessions over 65 and Students

***Match Day Tickets £12, Conc-£8, U18 £5



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Manager: Ahmet Rifat

Coaches: Ruben Gaspar, Jonny Georgiou, Ricky Machel

Goalkeeping Coach: Gavin King

Analyst: Michael Smith

Physio: Kim Harris

Kit Manager: Pete Barker

Prince Adegoke
Toby Byron
Billy Cracknell
Luke Deslandes
Evangelos Empochontsif
Ben Frempah
Rhamar Garrett-Douglas
Brian Garzon
Andronicos Georgiou
Fergal Hale-Brown
Loic Hernandez
Arthur Iontton
Ryan Lowe
Zack Newton
Michael O'Donoghue
Tommy Roberts
Ogo Obi
Ferdinand Oko
Destiny Oladipo
Khristopher Oti
Lonit Talla
Ayo Tanimowo
Bobby Webb

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: Joe Burgess

Assistants: Bruno Marques and Liam Giles



Manager: Andy Drury

Assistant Manager: Chris Lynch

Coach: Akevin Brown

Goalkeeper Coach: Andy Morris

Physio: Beth Cooper

Sam Blackman
Ellis Brown
Josh Chambers
Tom Derry
Marvel Ekpiteta
Eze Ebuzeome
Ian Gayle
Jonny Hennly
Jack Jebb
Dan Kennedy
Jamie Mascoll
Frankie Morgan
Joel Odeniran
Peter Ojemen
Dean Rance
Chris Sessegnon
Dan Smith
Brad Walledge
Matt Young

NEXT UP IN N12:

Potters Bar Town (ILP) – 26/08/2024

TBC (FAC) – 31/08/2024

Romford U18 (FAYC) – 05/09/2024

Chichester City (ILP) – 21/09/2024