

WINGATE & FINCHLEY FOOTBALL CLUB

Wingate & Finchley vs
Cray Wanderers



VS



Tuesday 17th
September 2024

FA Cup 2nd Qualifying
Round Replay

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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 Cray Wanderers enjoy their stay in N12 this evening!

This evening we host Cray Wanderers for the first time this campaign, becoming the first club we will have faced more than once this season.

Tonight's tie was set up thanks to an Ogo Obi penalty in the 93rd minute on Saturday, which saw us get a 1-1 draw to earn this replay.

Cray's first qualifying round tie against Larkfield & New Hythe also went to a replay, with Cray scoring 8 without replay to set up our tie.

We next face Cray Wanderers here at the Maurice Rebak Stadium on Saturday 4th January 2025 in an Isthmian League tie, whilst the away fixture takes place on Saturday 12th April.

The draw for the third qualifying round took place yesterday afternoon, and the winner of tonight's tie will face fellow Isthmian Premier side Hastings United at home.

In the event of a draw after 90 minutes tonight, we will play 30 minutes extra time. If the two sides still cannot be separated, then penalties it is.

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

Finance: Liam Blaney

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

Congratulations David Wolff!

Our life vice-president David Wolff has recently received the London FA's Bobby Moore Award for 2024 Grassroots Heroes Award sponsored by Panini.

Congratulations David!

Mr Wolff is also chairman of the Maccabi (Southern) GB Football League (since 1970!), overseeing the organisation of the league.

His footballing career began back in the 1950s as a member of the Ivri Maccabi Youth League and is a supporter of West Ham United – once being asked to manage their under 16s team. He joined the MSFL Management Committee in December 1963 as assistant secretary, before rising to vice chairman in 1965 then chairman in 1970. During his directorship, the league has risen from 12 clubs to 66.

David has also chaired the London FA since 2022.

From all at the club, congratulations on your award David!

Folkestone Invicta (H)

Following a horrible injury to our goalkeeper Prince Adegoke that saw the above tie abandoned late on, it has been decided that the game will not be replayed. The tie stands as it was at abandonment – a 3-3 draw, both sides receiving one point.

Cup draws

The league campaign has barely started, and somehow we already have our first cup ties 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 Cup – Should we win tonight's tie, we will face Hastings United here at the Maurice Rebak Stadium. Date expected to be Saturday 28th September. See club publications for more details.

FA Youth Cup

Our under 18s travel to Heybridge Swifts in the first qualifying round of the competition tomorrow night. Be sure to follow the young Blues on their progress in the cup!

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.

Match report

See later pages of this programme for a match report from Saturday's game against Cray.

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

A View From Afar – Cray Wanderers, FA Cup

To begin with, a football brain teaser for this evening. Which of these is true?

- *In 1988, a game between Elgin City and Dunfermline was postponed because of snow. This is the earliest recorded date of a snow postponement in a British football season.*
- *In 1954, Roy Dwight, Elton John's uncle, made his debut for Fulham in a game against Manchester City*
- *In 2016, a game at Valley Parade between Bradford City and Bristol Rovers became the first match in the UK to be held up by a drone being flown over the ground*

Answer at the foot of the column.

I for one, am delighted that replays are still a feature of the FA Cup at this stage of the competition. I can well understand that later in the season, when the big clubs with their huge, full-time professional squads and great training facilities, with teams of masseurs, fitness coaches, dieticians and astrologists (eh?) are involved, it would be too much for them. At this stage, when players have other jobs and train a couple of times a week for quite modest rewards, everybody is clearly much tougher and can cope without difficulty.

So it is that Cray Wanderers visit us just three days after a draw on our first visit to Flamingo Park. Coincidentally, when I used to accompany the Lady Wife's school Year 6 residential trip to the Isle of Wight, we used to have a day at Flamingo Park, but I'm not sure it was the same place. For a start, we had to travel by boat and secondly, the numerous wildfowl wandering about trying to find seed dropped by hundreds of schoolchildren would surely have impeded the progress of a marauding winger and caused complaints by a less than sanguine club manager; Mikel Arteta, for example.

I am sending these thoughts from further afar than usual, basking currently in the sunshine in the Highlands of Scotland. Thus it was that we found ourselves trying to follow the game on Saturday, with its unusual 1pm kick off time, which I had initially incorrectly thought

A VIEW FROM AFAR

meant that the game had been selected for coverage by Sky tv, while driving along the A9 through the Cairngorms, having left the Scottish Borders earlier that morning.

Strangely, we couldn't find any radio commentary, Talk Sport unaccountably choosing to cover Southampton v Manchester United, which must surely have had less appeal. In any event, the signal on the car radio in what is one of Europe's more isolated regions, tends to fade in and out, leading to snippets of commentary such as '.. and this one has seemingly done the impossible...' or 'and he's through on goal, with just the keeper to beat and...' at which point you lose the signal and have to piece together what might have happened later.

There was not such an issue with the mobile telephone contraption, however. The Lady Wife was following the scores and relaying news as I drove northwards. Late in the second half came a groan as it was reported that Cray had scored. As the minutes ticked away, she kept reporting that it was now 83, 86 and eventually 90 minutes and the score was still 1-0.

'Oh well', I said 'at least I won't have to spend time on holiday writing a piece for the programme'. But then; a stoppage time equaliser! So here is the said piece.

So, what happened on this day?

It was the drone incident. The referee took the players off the field 'for several minutes' as a health and safety precaution.

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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CRAY WANDERERS (A) – NOAH BERCOFF

A beautiful early afternoon in south London would see two sides battle it out for a space in the next round of English football's biggest cup. In a match that saw Cray Wanderers and Wingate & Finchley face each other for the first time ever in the FA Cup, a place in the third qualifying round was at stake, which would equal the Blues' best ever FA Cup run.

Both sets of fans were hopeful in their side being victors in this FA cup fixture. Wingate & Finchley had lost their last two games in the league, but were comfortable winners last time out in the FA Cup against Thame United. Meanwhile Cray have made a slow start to the season, but did manage to pull off an impressive draw last week against a Horsham side who will likely be pushing for this season's playoff places.

Cray had the first chance of the match with their number 11 Nyren Clunis shooting directly at Charlie Grainger in the Blues goal. Shortly after this, the Blues' first chance came in the 12th minute with Ogo Obi having a header blocked, the ball then fell to Destiny Oladipo whose shot was tipped onto the crossbar the home goalkeeper. Eight minutes later Cray Wanderers had a wonderful chance to take the lead with Nyren Clunis again shooting at close range, but striking the left corner of the bar. The next 25 minutes saw both sides failing to create good chances with the peak of entertainment being a well worked Cray Wanderers free kick which saw Wingate defender Bobby Webb block Anthony Cook's shot for the hosts.

The half time whistle was greeted by a jeer from both sets of fans who were disappointed with their sides performance and hoped to see a more impressive second half.

It took until 54 minutes for fans to see signs of improvements in the quality of football they were being treated to, with Cray star-man Clunis finding Kayani who shot from outside the box directly at Grainger. Cray then struck again in the 57th minute with a half volley from Cook but his attempt was high and wide. Wingate mustered their first real chance of the second half around the hour mark with Deslandes shooting just wide of the left post. Shortly after, it was Clunis again with a golden chance but yet again he was unable to give his side the lead, due to a super save from Grainger.

The next ten minutes saw Cray dominate proceedings, meanwhile last season's player of the year Mathew Achuba made his return for the Blues, replacing Mikey O'Donoghue.

Finally, in the 75th minute there was a goal, but the goal came for the home team. Cray's Frankie Raymond swung in a dangerous cross from a corner from the left for David Ijaha to head the ball past Grainger at the near post. With Cray looking the better side and pushing for a second it looked as though Wingate were going to be exiting the FA Cup at this stage. This was until substitute Zack Newton came charging down the pitch in the third minute of additional time and was fouled by his man in the box, leading the referee no choice but to award a penalty for Wingate. Up stepped number 9 Ogo Obi to hit the ball just past the goalkeeper into the bottom corner of the net for his eighth goal of the season in as many games. For the final minutes of the match Wingate defended well to earn a replay on Tuesday night.

Wingate & Finchley: Grainger; Cracknell; Webb; Tanimowo; Frempah; Iontton; Garrett-Douglas; Deslandes (Roberts 79'); Obi; Oladipo (Newton 71'); O'Donoghue (Achuba 62')
Unused subs: Adegoke, Byron

CRAY WANDERERS

The 2024-25 season will be a momentous one for Cray Wanderers FC as London's Oldest Football Club will be playing in a home of their own for the first time in the club's history at Flamingo Park on the A20.

Cray Wanderers had been in exile from the Cray's since 1973 when they lost the Grassmeade ground in Chelsfield Road, due to housing development. They moved to Oxford Road, on the borders of Footscray and Sidcup, but when that ground was ruled to be unsuitable for Step 5 football (the Wands were then playing in the Kent League) it became necessary from 1998/99 to play first team matches at Hayes Lane, as tenants of Bromley FC.

However, an off the field victory was obtained in March 2018 as approval by Bromley Council was granted for a new Football Stadium/Community Hub at Flamingo Park in Sidcup which on Monday 26th November received a further boost when approval was given by the GLA (Mayor of London) giving the green light to a bright future for the club and community. The 2018-19 season saw Cray Wanderers now playing in the newly formed Isthmian South-East and were crowned the first champions of the division and despite a season of struggle in 2021-22, last season was the most successful league campaign in the clubs history finishing 5th in the Isthmian Premier.

The first origins of Cray Wanderers are linked to the construction of the London, Chatham & Dover railway line during 1858 to 1860. During their leisure time, migrant workers kicked a ball around, and that is how the club originated in the St Mary Cray village. The pitch at Star Lane is now a cemetery, and is located beneath the nine-arch railway viaduct that spans the Cray Valley. The industrial belt of the River Cray, especially the paper mills, provided much of the club's support up till the 1950s.

Cray Wanderers were a strong force in senior county football at the turn of the century. After being Kent Junior Cup semi-finalists and finalists in 1890/91 and 1891/92 they entered the first ever FA Amateur Cup competition in 1893/94. They had a spell as a professional club between 1895 and 1907. They were a nursery club for Woolwich Arsenal during part of this period. They were one of the founder members of the Kent League in 1894/95, and they won the championship in 1901/02. Other honours included Southern Suburban League champions in 1898/99, West Kent League champions in 1903/04, and Kent Senior Cup runners-up in 1899/1900.

After World War One, Cray switched to the London League where they remained till 1934. In 1930/31 they won the Kent Amateur Cup. Cray rejoined the Kent League in

CRAY WANDERERS

1934/35, but their four year stay came to grief when 1936 saw the loss of the Fordcroft ground in Cray Avenue, their home since 1898. Cray were forced to drop into a lower level of football, drifting from one temporary pitch to another while the club committee dwindled to a perilously small number. The team struggled badly in the South London Alliance and the Kent Amateur League.

1951/52 heralded a new era, and an upturn in the club's fortunes, when local businessman Mick Slater took over at the helm. The club was elected to the London League and regained its senior status. Cray moved to a new ground at Grassmeade in 1955. Their stay there was a very successful period in the club's history. Drawing extra support from the commuter town of Orpington, they played in the London League and then the Aetolian League. They were three times crowned champions, won the League Cup twice, and also won the Kent Amateur Cup three times.

Cray switched to the semi-professional Metropolitan League for five seasons commencing in 1966/67. In 1971/72 a merger of the Metropolitan League and the Greater London League created the Met London League.

Cray moved to Oxford Road in 1973/74. Johnny Biddle and Jimmy Wakeling proved to be successful managers. In 1974/75 Cray won the Met London League and League Cup, scoring 170 goals in all matches that season. In 1976/77 and 1977/78 Cray won the London Spartan League championship.

Cray decided to return to the Kent League in 1978/79. Success came quickly because Cray won the championship in 1980/81, having been runners-up the year before. Their powerful new team under manager Harry Richardson reached the FA Vase quarter final and 5th round in those two seasons. After that, the 1980s decade brought only one more piece of silverware, the Kent League Cup in 1983/84. After finishing Kent League runners up in 1990/91, Cray had a lean period during most of the 1990s, with the exception of 1992/93 when they won the Kent Senior Trophy.

A new club chairman Gary Hillman arrived in 1994/95 and Ian Jenkins, a Cray player since 1993, was appointed manager in 1999. By now, Cray were tenants of Bromley FC. As champions of the Kent League in 2002/03 and 2003/04, also reaching the FA Vase quarter final, they achieved promotion into the Ryman League Division One. Five years later at the end of season 2008/09 came further promotion into the Ryman Premier League, the highest level of football that the club has played at since the war.

CRAY WANDERERS

After parting company with long-serving manager Ian Jenkins, relegation into the Ryman Division One North came at the end of 2013/14. The 2014/15 season started with much optimism but this was soon dispelled with a run of difficult results and three changes in management. Looking very much like having to suffer back to back relegations at Christmas and with 10 games to go after suffering a home defeat to the eventual League Champions the Wands went on a 10 game winning run, with a team assembled by the then manager Tommy Warrilow to secure survival and became the Ryman North League Team of the Year.

For 2015/16 The Wands were managed by former player Tony Russell. The Wands finished third in the Ryman North Division losing in the play-off semi final. Two years later and now in the Bostik League South they were beaten by Walton Casuals at the same stage after an excellent season saw Cray finish third and as top scorers with 112 goals.

The 2018-19 season saw Cray Wanderers now playing in the newly formed Isthmian South-East and after a 15 game unbeaten start to the season the team were on their way and were crowned the first champions of the division on Saturday 13th April and Cray took their place in the Isthmian Premier after a five year absence. Cray were lying 2nd in the division on 7th March, 2020 but the continuing escalation of Coronavirus led to the season being considered null and void. The 2020-21 season began and the 4th Qualifying Round of the FA Cup was reached for the second time but with the Wands lying 5th in the Isthmian Premier the season was curtailed with the introduction of tier systems and two more national lockdowns.

The 2021-22 season saw the start of a new era for Cray Wanderers as Tony Russell and his coaching team departed the club in March 2021 and in April, former Welling United, AFC Wimbledon and Gillingham forward Danny Kedwell was appointed as new manager. However, Danny departed the club at the end of December and ex-Wands player Grant Basey took over in an interim capacity but ex-Bromley boss Neil Smith was appointed on 22nd March to guide Cray through the remaining league games and managed to stave off relegation and became Cray Wanderers first ever full time manager in May 2022 and the club are looking to prosper on and off the field. Cray Wanderers in 2022-23 amassed a record points total for an Isthmian Premier League season with 74 points and also with 78 goals the highest number of goals scored in an Isthmian Premier season. The club finished the regular season in 5th place which is also a first and reached the playoffs for the first time in Cray Wanderers long history losing only to Hornchurch on penalties in the Semi-Final.

CRAY WANDERERS

The move to the new ground is taking shape and grass pitches were laid for Cray Wanderers youth sides to play on while it was announced on the eve of the 2023-24 season that work is beginning on laying the pitch and the foundations for the ground so it can be ready to play first team football from the 2024-25 season. Cray will finally be playing football at their own ground for the first time since 1973. The club currently have 30+ youth teams + girls teams and the launch of a new academy side in July 2022 is already bearing fruit winning the AoC Sport London Football Men's Regional League F title undefeated in their first season. For the 2023-24 season the club had a Women's team for the first time in Southern Counties East Women's League Division One West and were crowned champions to earn promotion to the Premier and the future for the club is looking rosy.

In November 2023, the 3G pitch was laid at Flamingo Park ahead of the construction of the ground and floodlights were installed and the Women's team were the first side to play on the pitch on 4th February 2024. The ground share agreement with Bromley FC was officially announced would be ending on 9th February and the ground development has continued at a steady pace ever since. Cray Wanderers played their first men's first team game under lights vs Corinthian Casuals in March 2024 and the first pre-season game vs. Forest Hill Park on 6th July and played matches against Sheffield and Bromley, Millwall, Crystal Palace and Tottenham Hotspur XI's with the latter drawing a crowd of 1047. The first home league match vs Cray Valley PM took place on 13th August in front of a crowd of 840 and the start of a new exciting era for the club.

SEASON TICKETS 2024/25



EARLY BIRD

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- 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
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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

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



Manager: Neil Smith

Assistant Manager: Tim O'Shea

Coach: Ugo Udoji

Goalkeeping Coach: Alfie George

Physio: Ally Maloney

Kit Manager: Paddy Gray

Lateef Adaja

Tom Bonner

Tom Borders

George Brooke

Mitch Chapman

Nyren Clunis

Kenny Coker

Anthony Cook

Darion Dowrich

Charlie Edwards

Arezki Hamouchene

David Ijaha

Archie Johnson

Imran Kayani

Adrian Owiredu-Gyamera

Frankie Raymond

Shaun Rowley

David Smith

Harrison Sodje

Dontai Stewart

Quade Taylor

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: Mr. Ross Murphy

Assistants: Mr. Joseph Gray, Mr Oliver Hind

Fourth Official: Mr. Thomas Cartwright

NEXT UP IN N12:

Chichester City (ILP) – 21/09/2024

TBC (FAT) – 05/10/2024

Bowers & Pitsea (ILP) – 15/10/2024