

WINGATE & FINCHLEY FOOTBALL CLUB

Wingate & Finchley vs
Lewes



VS



Saturday 21st
December 2024- 3.00PM KO

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 Lewes enjoy their stay in N12 this afternoon!

Our games against the Rooks are always entertaining affairs, and this afternoons fixture shall be no different.

Last season we took 6 out Of 6 points in our games with the Sussex side. Biler and Chukwu scored in a 2-1 win away on Saturday 11th November 2023, then a Long brace and a Carvalho strike saw out a 3-0 home win on Saturday 3rd February 2024.

This seasons' return fixture at The Dripping Pan will take place on Saturday 5th April 2025.

Lewes are currently in 7th place in the league, one place behind ourselves. We are both level on 30 points but we find ourselves on top, with +4 goal difference compared to +1. However, the Rooks have played one less league games than ourselves. Therefore a win this afternoon is vital!

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!

League table

We enter this years' festive period in 6th place in the Isthmian Premier. After 20 games played we have accumulated 30 points and have a goal difference of +4.

New festive hot dogs!

Visit the tea hut under the main stand this afternoon to try our new festive hot dogs!

The Bird & Berry!
Turkey & studding with a touch of cranberry!

Christmas special
£7.50

Upcoming away games

After back-to-back home games this afternoon and this Thursday (Boxing Day, 1pm) against Cheshunt, we face a duo of away days. Firstly we are at Folkestone Invicta on Saturday 28th December then at Potters Bar Town on Wednesday 1st. Both 3pm kick offs.

Top scorers 2024/25

Competitive first team games only.
Total games: 20 league, 7 cup:

| | Lge | Cup | Tot. |
|---------------|-----|-----|------|
| Obi | 18 | 3 | 21 |
| Lowe | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Frempah | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Georgiou | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Drakes-Thomas | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Oladipo | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Tanimowo | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Deslandes | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Briscoe | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Ionton | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Newton | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Restrepo | 1 | 0 | 1 |

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

As Lewes are our visitors and as the Women's side are such a big part of their club, here are three facts related to Women's football. Only one is true – but which one? Answer at the end of the article.

- *Until 1985, adult women's matches were played over 40 minutes per half*
- *The USA became the first country to have professional female players, in the 1970's*
- *The record crowd at Lewes' Dripping Pan ground was for a women's match*

Well, here we are at the penultimate home game of the year and it's the first one marked on our calendar, as we welcome visitors from deepest Sussex; no, not the Lady Wife and I, although we are planning to attend thanks to the wonders of Thameslink trains and our Senior Citizens bus passes, but the Rooks of Lewes. This has been christened by none other than Mr Tom Salinger as 'El Brownico' thanks to us being the only two people in the world to hold season tickets at both clubs. I don't anticipate this record being challenged at any point in our lives, or for that matter, ever.

Lewes and the Blues have been in the same division for a few years now since Lewes were promoted from a somewhat surprising season in the division below. This suits us, as we do get to see them play each other twice and are also sometimes in the position of having seen an opposition team that one of 'our' clubs is yet to play. This gives us the opportunity to provide invaluable insight into the strengths and weaknesses of key players, the tactics likely to be employed and whether the half time chips are worth queuing for; surprisingly neither management team has yet seen fit to tap into this deep rooted intelligence.

It has always intrigued me, as a simpleton who knows little, exactly what information is loaded into dossiers by scouts, or what specific facts they may relay about a particular player. 'That Erling Haaland,

A VIEW FROM AFAR

he's quite big and powerful' or 'Timo Werner, if he unaccountably makes the team, is extremely quick but just keep him running with the ball and he'll end up crashing into the pitch side wall having forgotten that he's supposed to do something with it' are hardly top-secret facts. In former times, before the days of VAR, certain players could have their effectiveness reduced against certain opposition. Jimmy Greaves, for example, rarely performed well against the Chelsea of Ron 'Chopper' Harris' era as he would be gently kicked into the terraces early in the match. Ironically, they later became great friends. The players tended to work that out for themselves, though.

I have mentioned before that Tommy Docherty (look him up, youngsters) was once spotted in the stand here at Summers Lane and a friend of ours who was once on the coaching staff at Crystal Palace has been doing some scouting on behalf of Eastbourne Borough, so I suppose I could ask him, but in many ways, a bit like a magician telling you how a trick works, the mystique would disappear and the enjoyment would be the lesser for it.

But back to Lewes; it would suit us (which is obviously the most important thing), if both of today's sides were to be promoted together, or if disaster ever struck, went down together – obviously that would never happen though. So, what does that mean for today's game? Well, if Lewes win, the Lady Wife will have to walk home from the station – Oh, I've just been informed that she has stolen my car keys.

Which fact is true? It's the Lewes record crowd, 2,347 against Liverpool in May 2022. Italy was the first country to allow professionals and sanctioned women's matches have always been of the same duration as men's.

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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LEWES CLUB HISTORY

The Early Years – Lewes Football Club was formed following a meeting at The Royal Oak pub on 23 September 1885. For the first eight years, the players wore light green shirts which were designed to reflect the scenery of the surrounding South Downs, but black and red finally became the club colours in 1893.

The club has played at the Dripping Pan ever since, apart from a couple of seasons prior to the First World War when the club was banished to the adjoining Convent Field. The early years of the club produced only mediocre results and successes were few and far between. In 1920, Lewes became founder members of the Sussex County League.

1960s – Progress was slow and despite four runners-up places, by the 1960s Lewes had only one Sussex RUR Cup win to their name. In 1965, the club's fortunes changed dramatically, winning the County League title for the first time with a massive nine-point lead over runners-up Lancing, as well as both the RUR and Sussex Senior Cups.

Lewes became members of the Athenian League and after winning the Division 2 title in 1968, promotion to the Premier Division was gained just two years later when the Division 1 title was snatched from Boreham Wood, with a further Sussex Senior Cup triumph added in 1971. Six years later, the club entered the newly expanded Isthmian League.

1980s – Promotion to Division 1 soon followed although two sixth-place finishes in 1982 and 1989 were the highest positions attained in Division 1. During that time, Lewes reached the final of the Sussex Senior Cup on three occasions, and won the trophy in 1984/85.

1990s – Disaster struck in 1990/91 when Lewes were relegated for the first time in their history. An immediate return as runners-up to Purfleet followed, but that success was short-lived and relegation in successive years meant that by the 1994/95 season the club was down in Division Three. The slide continued and the first season in the basement division would have been the last in the league if it hadn't been for Cove who conveniently propped-up the league and saved Lewes from automatic demotion.

The club survived rather than thrived until the 1998/99 season when Jimmy Quinn joined as manager, and at the first attempt missed out on promotion by just one place. Midway through the 1999/2000 season Martin Elliott and a new board of Directors stepped in and immediately the fortunes of the club began to improve, with the capture of the Sussex Senior Cup in 2001 following victory over Bognor Regis.

Naughties (2000s) – There was mixed news on the pitch. The pinnacle of the Men's team's achievement, and what a pinnacle, was to gain promotion to the top of the non-League pyramid in 2007/8. However, the Rooks only lasted one season in the top flight as the Global Credit Crisis hit and funds dried up. The Rooks' new economic reality saw them drop down the divisions. However, a brand new Women's team was started by Jacquie Agnew and underwent a dramatic rise from park football to the Women's Combination.

A New Dawn (2010s) – Behind the scenes, a group of six supporters calling themselves Rooks125 were working hard to take the club into community ownership

LEWES CLUB HISTORY

having witnessed the serious financial problems that had befallen the club, despite the owners' best efforts.

Finally on July 8th 2010, Lewes FC was officially transferred out of private ownership into a mass-ownership Community Benefit Society called Lewes Community Football Club, consisting of benefactors and members of the former Management Committee.

The six members of Rooks125 formed the inaugural Executive Board, working as volunteers to install improved working practices and procedures during the season before planning to open up the wider ownership of LCFC to all the club's supporters in 2011/12. The first chairman of the Community Club was appointed in 2013 with club legend Terry Parris taking up the position. Terry was succeeded by Stuart Fuller in 2015. All Board positions now are elected by the whole Ownership base.

In the summer of 2017 the club hit the headlines globally when it announced that it would pay our Men's and Women's squads the same – a first for any semi/professional club in the world. Under the Equality FC banner, the club attracted and continues to attract a number of partners who shared the same beliefs and vision for gender equality in sport.

On the pitch, restricted resources saw the team drop two Leagues, down to Step 4 but under Darren Freeman they gained promotion as runners-up in the Isthmian League South in 2017/18, then came within a whisker of a play-off spot in the Isthmian Premier the following season. The Lewes Women's side were given a place in the inaugural Women's Championship, the second tier of English football playing alongside sides such as Manchester United, Leicester City and Tottenham Hotspur. In December 2018 they attracted a record attendance when nearly 2,000 fans saw them host Manchester United at the Pan.

So where are we now? – Freeman stepped down in October 2019 after four years in charge to concentrate on his footballing career away from management and after a period when his former assistants Ross Standen and Tony Coade led the side, Hugo Langton took over the hotseat in February 2020, leading the team to 16th spot before the COVID-19 pandemic curtailed the season.

In April 2021, the Club appointed Tony Russell as manager and former Lewes player Joe Vines as his assistant. Their appointment and unique playing style brought new impetus and invigoration to the Rooks who finished just four points outside the play off places in 2021/22.

The Rooks had a sluggish start to the first half of the 2022/23 season but found their feet and came agonisingly close to finishing in the play offs, losing out on a goal difference of plus two.

An up and down season saw The Rooks finish 8th in the 2023/24 season. Following the departure of Tony Russell, the club appointed Craig Nelson as manager for 2024/25.

The club is building a solid foundation on which to build for the future. It has around 3,000 Owners and has gained a great reputation for all its community work and stand-out marketing especially with the continued stance on pay equality and committed stance against the harms of gambling advertisement in football.

LEWES PLAYER PROFILES

Toby Bull – The shot-stopper was a product of Brighton & Hove Albion's youth system, playing in all age groups through to the U23s. Following his departure from the Seagulls, Bull went on to join Worthing, a club he had previously spent time with on loan. Toby has also had spells with Eastbourne Town, Carshalton Athletic, Aveley, Wealdstone before joining Worthing once more in spring 2024.

Ben Mundele – First joined The Rooks in 2021, moving from Cray Wanderers with former manager Tony Russell. A serious injury halted Ben's career although he remained on the periphery of the side, joining pre-season sessions in 2022 and 2023. A former England C international, Ben is a full back by trade but can also play at centre back and in midfield. Despite his young age at the time, Ben was named in the Isthmian Team of the Season in 2017/18 and 2018/19 and spent last season at Glebe.

Jack Enk – A dynamic left back, Jack Enk came through the highly regarded Dulwich Hamlet youth system before moving on to Cray Wanderers and Beckenham. He teamed up with new Rooks manager Craig Nelson at Glebe, from whom he joins us.

Jerry Puemo – A composed centre back, Puemo began his career at Farnborough followed by spells at Kingstonian, Bognor Regis, Cheshunt, Sittingbourne and Carshalton. Best known for several spells at Leatherhead from who he joins us and was the part of the team that made the 2023/24 Isthmian South East play off final.

Ethan Kaiser – A product of the Carshalton youth system, 24-year-old centre back Kaiser signed for Tonbridge Angels in 2020-21 before going on to play for Bedfont Sports, Cray Wanderers, Potters Bar and Margate. Ethan joins us following a successful season with South Park Reigate FC.

Peter Ojemen – The 23-year-old has plenty of Isthmian Premier League experience, having joined Corinthian-Casuals in 2021 and then Margate a year later. He has since had stints at Dover and Dulwich Hamlet, before moving to Folkestone in the summer of 2024, where he made eight appearances. Now the left-back, who can also play in the centre of defence, joined in October 2024.

Alfie Allen – Promising central midfielder Allen came through the Millwall academy and was an integral member of their 2022/23 Professional Development League South Division championship winning side, playing 25 out of 28 games. Allen played in both the semi-final and final ties as his Millwall side overcame Hull and Sheffield United to become overall champions. He joined Dulwich Hamlet in the summer of 2023, going on to make 16 appearances in all competitions.

Matty Warren – A combative and energetic midfielder, Warren started his career at Chipstead before moving to Cray Valley PM. He then moved on to Sittingbourne where

LEWES PLAYER PROFILES

he collected both the Players' and Managers' player of the year award in 2022/23. Warren joined Sevenoaks Town at the start of 2023/24, departing The Oaks in March 2024 to join Ramsgate's ultimately unsuccessful push for promotion.

Parish Muirhead – Muirhead joined the Rooks from Glebe, where he was an integral part of new manager, Craig Nelson's team. Parish, 24, is a technical holding midfielder and made 42 appearances last season for Glebe's promotion challenging side.

Marcus Sablier – Marcus first joined the club on loan from Bromley in September 2023 and made an instant impression, scoring in two of his first three games. His goal against Lowestoft in the FA Trophy victory was later rewarded with the Goal of the Season award. Sablier's impressive start was halted in late October following an injury away to Carshalton. Marcus returned to the side at the start of 2024, making 26 appearances in total across the season with a return of 4 goals and joined permanently in the summer of 2024.

Eddie Allsopp – Experienced at this level having played for Herne Bay, Bowers & Pitsea, and most recently Chatham Town and Folkestone Invicta where he spent his time in the 23/24 season. He played through the youth ranks at Charlton Athletic before a permanent move to Faversham Town in the 21/22 season but quickly made a step up to the National League South joining Eastbourne Borough.

Hamilton Antonio – A Portuguese-born central midfielder, Hamilton has previously represented Corinthian-Casuals, Walton Casuals, Sutton Common Rovers, Herne Bay, Enfield and Hendon.

The 27-year-old was a crucial part of Herne Bay's Isthmian South East play-off success during the 2021-22 season. Antonio joins us following a season with Uxbridge.

Danny Bassett – Bassett began his career at Staines Town, before joining Egham, Godalming and Tooting & Mitcham where he scored 64 goals in 3 seasons. Danny then joined Hampton & Richmond in the National South for the 2020-21 season, briefly joining Braintree Town that same season. He transferred to Carshalton for the 2021-22 season and finished top scorer for the Robins with 20 goals. He was again top scorer for Cray Wanderers in the 2022-23 season before returning to the Robins in 2023-24, finishing with 11 goals for the season.

Malachi Morris – A very highly rated young player, as a teenager Malachi signed for Dulwich Hamlet when they were in the National League South, and had spells on loan at South Park, Sittingbourne, and Merstham in the Isthmian South East. Joins the Rooks in the summer of 2024 from Glebe.

LEWES PLAYER PROFILES

Nabeel Ghannam – Adept at playing across the attacking midfield positions, 21-year-old Nabeel joins us from Three Bridges where he was a crucial part of the team that made it to the play off final against Chichester City in April 2024, scoring 16 goals in all competitions.

Shae Hutchinson – 23-year-old forward Shae progressed through the youth ranks at Norwich, making a total of 18 appearances for their Premier League 2 side with a return of 6 goals. Shae departed Norwich in March 2022 going on to join Braintree and Farnborough before injury disrupted his progression. The forward has been with the Rooks in pre-season and scored in the 1-2 defeat against Eastbourne Borough.

Josh Williams – A pacey and direct winger who can play off either wing, Josh joined us in August 2024 following his release from Hampton & Richmond Borough. Josh joined The Beavers from Whitstable Town after a terrific 23/24 season with the Oysters, notching up an impressive 18 goals and 11 assists in all competitions. Made an instant impression on his second appearance for The Rooks with a spectacular match winning goal against Whitehawk.

Tolu Ladapo – The pacey winger came through the youth system of Charlton Athletic and signed his first professional contract with the club on 11 July 2022. He made his professional debut for Charlton on 31 August 2022, coming off the bench in the 85th minute of a 3-0 EFL Trophy victory at home against Gillingham. Joined The Rooks in August 2024.

12 DAYS OF GROUNDHOPPING CHRISTMAS

SOMEHOW it is December already! Where has the time gone? To start getting us into the festive mood, Tom Salinger has penned his annual 12 days of groundhopping Christmas:

12 away supporters

11 new grounds ticked off

10 programme bundles

9 fixture changes

8 home fans moaning

7 bars card only

6 hoppers chatting

5 GOLDEN GOALS

4 flags hanging

3 games unbeaten

2 pints a tenner

And an error on the team sheet

By Tom Salinger

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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

Tyrece Briscoe

Toby Byron

Billy Cracknell

Jaiden Drakes-Thomes

Ben Frempah

Rhamar Garrett-Douglas

Andronicos Georgiou

Fergal Hale-Brown

Loic Hernandez

Arthur Iontton

Ryan Lowe

Zack Newton

Tommy Roberts

Ogo Obi

Ferdinand Oko

Camilo Restrepo

Lonit Talla

Ayo Tanimowo

Bobby Webb



Manager: Craig Nelson

Assistant Manager: Danny Oakins

Coaches: Bryan Nzinga, Frankie Sawyer, Arron Fray

Goalkeeping Coach: Sheikh Ceesay

Alfie Allen

Eddie Allsopp

Hamilton Antonio

Danny Bassett

Toby Bull

Jack Enkh

Nabeel Ghannam

Shane Hutchinson

Tolu Ladapo

Malachi Morris

Ben Mundele

Ethan Kaiser

Peter Oiemu

Jerry Puemo

Parish Muirhead

Marcus Sabluer

Matty Warren

Josh Williams

NEXT UP IN N12:

Cheshunt (ILP) – 26/12/2024

Cray Wanderers (ILP) – 04/12/2024

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: Lawrence Torz-Brown

Assistants: Nigel Owen, Matthew Leaning