

# WINGATE & FINCHLEY

## MATCHDAY | CRAY WANDERERS

SAT 20 DEC 2025 | 12.30 | MAURICE REBAK STADIUM

ISTHMIAN PREMIER DIVISION



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Hello and welcome to the Maurice Rebak Stadium! We hope that everyone associated with the club, the match officials and the staff, as well as the players and officials of Cray Wanderers enjoy their stay in N12 this afternoon.

Today's game marks the halfway point of Wingate & Finchley's Isthmian Premier Division campaign, and is the club's 20<sup>th</sup> and final home game of 2025.

Of these 20 (for those of us interested in that sort of thing) the Blues won 7, drew 5, and lost 8.

One of those 7 wins was against today's opponents – Ahmet Rifat will hope that his side can repeat the feat and bounce back from

Saturday's disappointing 4-1 away defeat at Cray Valley (PM).

That particular result continued an unwelcome run of form for the Blues, who are now winless in five league outings.

Cray Wanderers were twice visitors to Summers Lane last season, once in the FA Cup and then later in the league. Both those games finished 1-0; Cray triumphing in the cup and Wingate finally ending a long winless run on a cold January night in the league.

As ever, highlights from today's match will be available to watch on our [YouTube channel](#) in the coming days, where you can also find a half-season interview with Ahmet Rifat.





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## **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."



# A VIEW FROM AFAR – PETER BROWN

*As ever this season, three statements only two of which are true. Which is the imposter? Answer at the end of the article.*

- *Football matches began typically kicking off at 3pm on a Saturday, following the passing of the Factory Act in 1850*
- *Evening games in England were obviously not possible before floodlights, apart from the odd friendly. The first floodlit league game in England was between Portsmouth and Newcastle in 1956*
- *The last league club in England to install floodlights was Barrow, in 1967, some 5 years after those at Summers Lane*

At what point do you give up on a game? I'm not talking here about the day when you are 6-0 down at home to Crawley, with ten minutes plus whatever allowance 'the fourth official has indicated there will be a minimum of left to play. Instead I refer to a discussion that the Lady Wife and I had just last Saturday, when after a week of mounting excitement, we were at last on our way to see the mighty Wingate and Finchley play at the ground of today's neighbours, who may be set between hills and produce the material on which this programme is not printed.

We had visited Cray Valley Paper Mills last season and were looking forward to a reversal of fortunes. It had been a busy week and the Saturday afternoon entertainment promised a spell of much needed delight and relaxation. The serenity began to waiver as we headed north on the M23, to be faced with an overhead warning that there was a 30 minute delay between junctions 6 and 5 on the M25, our proposed route. Having allowed plenty of time, we were quite sanguine, suggesting that we would turn off at junction 6 and wind our way through the Badlands of south-east London.

But then it appeared that a few others, not all of whom were going to the match, had the same idea and the queue for the exit was at a standstill, while the motorway continued to flow. It was at this point that a voice beside me was first heard to say 'I think we may have to reconsider'. Obviously, I took this to mean 'stay on the M25', so did, until the real queue brought us to a halt about a mile further on. The rather irritating lady on SatNav began to suggest, without any sense of regret or apology, that our arrival time would now be 2.48, then 3.01, 3.10 and finally 3.18. In saying this, she didn't even take into account people heading for Bluewater Shopping Centre.

# A VIEW FROM AFAR – PETER BROWN

Murmurs from my left were growing stronger that we ought to turn around and head for home and had we not been stationary on a four lane motorway, I might have done just that. As it was, there was little option but to sit and wait while we inched towards the next exit, with me still thinking, 'if the road suddenly clears and we have luck with the traffic lights, and there is a space remaining in the car park, we might still be there in time for the second half. Who knows, there may have been a delayed kick off due to crowd congestion'.

Sadly, it was not to be and it was beyond half time at the commentary match on the radio, when we finally had the chance to leave the M25 and head home, which naturally only took about half an hour. It was fortunate that the Lady Wife was not wearing her tee shirt that states 'I may not always be right, but I am never wrong'.

**WHICH STATEMENT WAS INCORRECT? IT WAS CHESTERFIELD WHO WERE THE LAST LEAGUE CLUB TO  
INSTALL FLOODLIGHTS, BUT THE DATES ARE CORRECT. WHEN THE 1850 FACTORY ACT WAS PASSED,  
PREVENTING FACTORIES FROM KEEPING EMPLOYEES AFTER 2PM ON SATURDAY, NEW FOOTBALL  
CLUBS WERE ENCOURAGED IN ORDER TO STOP WORKERS TURNING TO DRINK!**





# IN PICTURES – CRAY VALLEY PM (AWAY)





# IN PICTURES – CRAY VALLEY PM (AWAY)





# UPCOMING ISTHMIAN LEAGUE FIXTURES

**Saturday 27 December 2025**

**Isthmian League – Premier Division**

St Albans City



15:00



Wingate & Finchley

**Saturday 3 January 2026**

**Isthmian League – Premier Division**

Wingate & Finchley



15:00



Potters Bar Town

**Saturday 10 January 2026**

**Isthmian League – Premier Division**

Welling United



15:00



Wingate & Finchley

**Saturday 17 January 2026**

**Isthmian League – Premier Division**

Chichester City



15:00



Wingate & Finchley



















# UP NEXT

27/12 // CLARENCE PARK // 3:00 PM





# LEAGUE TABLE

Rank		GP	GD	P
1	 Folkestone Invicta	21	41	54
2	 Brentwood Town	22	12	43
3	 Chatham Town	20	22	40
4	 Dartford	22	8	34
5	 Burgess Hill Town	21	-3	33
6	 Aveley	18	12	32
7	 Cray Wanderers	22	-3	32
8	 Dulwich Hamlet	22	1	29
9	 Lewes	21	-11	28
10	 Billericay Town	20	5	27
11	 Ramsgate	22	-4	27
12	 Whitehawk	21	-4	27
13	 St Albans City	20	5	26
14	 Wingate & Finchley	20	2	26
15	 Cray Valley (PM)	22	-1	26
16	 Chichester City	19	-4	25
17	 Cheshunt	20	1	24
18	 Carshalton Athletic	21	-5	24
19	 Hashtag United	20	-11	20
20	 Welling United	20	-21	15
21	 Canvey Island	20	-21	14
22	 Potters Bar Town	20	-21	11

# HALF-SEASON REVIEW – WILL SAVAGE

The first half of Wingate & Finchley's 25/26 Isthmian League campaign has been inconsistent, to say the least - the Blues' mid-table position, 6 points away from both the top 5 and the bottom 4, is probably a fair representation of our season so far. Over the course of 19 league games we've enjoyed unbeaten runs and endured long winless streaks, experienced some huge away wins and fallen to some lackluster home defeats.

We started the season just about as badly as we could have done, carrying our poor pre-season form into the league. We lost our first four games, conceded in the dying moments away to local rivals Potters Bar Town (who currently sit bottom of the table), and suffered a disappointing 3-0 home defeat to playoff-chasing Chatham Town. We had to wait until mid-September to record our first league win, a 2-1 victory over Hashtag United, who, incidentally, were also the opponents when we secured our first away victory (this Blues fan is eternally grateful to Hashtag for their service).

Despite the early results, there was a general feeling amongst the fanbase that we had been unlucky, and that things would soon click. This instinct was proved true in October and November as we went eight league games unbeaten, scoring 19 goals in the process and conceding just 5. November began in dream fashion with a 5-0 drubbing of then-league-leaders Brentwood Town on their soil, and - ignoring a 1-1 draw away at relegation-threatened Canvey Island (a forgettable trip at the best of times) - we followed this up with a last-minute winner away at Dartford, followed by successive 3-0 victories away to Dulwich Hamlet and at home to Lewes.

Since then, except for a couple of Velocity Cup wins (which sees us through to the quarter-final of that particular competition), the Blues have failed to continue this form, picking up just 2 points from the previous 4 matches, 3 of which were played on home soil. Just like the start of the season, however, there are some encouraging signs: Wingate came from 2-0 down at home to our opening-day opponents Billericay Town to record a 2-2 draw, and achieved the same result a week later at home to Carshalton (who, it should be said, were the opponents when Wingate secured our first victory of the season in the FA cup first round). Alfie Cue scored his third goal in two games in the dying moments to rescue a point and keep the Blues somewhat in the playoff hunt.

Wingate finish 2025 with four more league fixtures, before a busy January sees us play 5 games and travel over 400 miles to Welling, Chichester, and Folkestone - the team bus will soon feel like a second home! The ever-optimistic Wingate fanbase (check this - ed.) will hope that the six-point gap to 5th can be bridged over the course of the next 5 months or so and that the Blues can put themselves in contention for promotion to Step 2.



# 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.

# WINGATE & FINCHLEY – CLUB HISTORY

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 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 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.



# WINGATE & FINCHLEY – CLUB HISTORY

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!

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.

# WINGATE & FINCHLEY – CLUB HISTORY

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.

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 2023/24 will go down on record as one of our finest if not the finest. Finishing in 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

2024/25 saw a revamped side complete a stable mid-table finish.



# TODAY'S VISITORS – CLUB HISTORY

## 1860 – 1889

The club emerged from lunchtime kick-about between St. Mary Cray villagers and labourers constructing a railway viaduct across the Cray Valley in north-west Kent. Soon a ground was laid out – on what is now Star Lane Cemetery – and matches were played against Army teams and other local villages.

The players would change into their chocolate coloured strip – hence their Victorian nickname, the ‘Chocolates’ – in Barnard’s Coffee Tavern, which stood in the village high street and walk the quarter mile to the ground. The industrial belt around the River Cray, especially the paper mills, provided much of the club’s support up till the 1950s.

Sadly, a lack of archival records means that little else is known about them during this period; that is until the 1880s when local newspaper reports began referring to the club simply as St. Mary Cray. Then in January 1887 the first reference was made to the club being called Cray Wanderers.

This name change could well be attributed to a comment made by one Arthur ‘Bowser’ Price. He remarked after a game: ‘You look like a bunch of wanderers!’ Or it could be because the labourers who helped form the team wandered around the country looking for work. Whatever the reason Cray Wanderers became our official name and from that came the nickname, the ‘Wands’, which remains to this day.

## 1890 – 1914

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 we entered the first ever FA Amateur Cup competition in 1893/94. We also had a spell as a professional club between 1895 and 1907, and were a nursery club for Woolwich Arsenal (better known today as Arsenal FC) during part of this period.

In 1894 Cray Wanderers was one of 14 founder members of the Kent League. Included in this league were teams from Crystal Palace, Charlton Athletic, Millwall and Woolwich Arsenal. We won the League championship in 1901/02 season. The club continued playing in this League, with one or two exceptions until their promotion to the Ryman League, at the end of the 2003/04 season.

The year 1895 saw the club change its colours from chocolate to their now-familiar amber and black. And in 1898 we moved to a new ground called Fordcroft on Cray Avenue in St. Mary Cray (now the site of Allied Bakeries), where we remained until 1936. 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.

# TODAY'S VISITORS – CLUB HISTORY

## 1918 – 1949

After World War One, the club switched to the London League where we remained till 1934, winning the Kent Amateur Cup in 1931.

We re-joined the Kent League in 1934/35 but our stay in that league came to grief when, in 1936, we lost out Fordcroft ground and were forced to drop into a lower level of football. This caused us to drift from one temporary pitch to another. The team struggled badly during this period.

Off the field the club was also struggling to maintain a full complement of committee members which had dwindled to a perilously small number.

## 1950 – 1969

The 1951/52 season 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. We moved to a new ground at Grassmeade in 1955. Our stay there was a very successful period in the club's history. Drawing extra support from the commuter town of Orpington, we played in the London League and then the Aetolian League. We were crowned league champions three times, won the League Cup twice, and also won the Kent Amateur Cup three times.

In 1966/67 we switched to the semi-professional Metropolitan League for five seasons commencing before it was merged with the Greater London league in 1970 to form the Metropolitan London League.

## 1970 – 1989

We lost our Grassmeade ground in 1973 when our landlord sold the ground for redevelopment. We moved to Oxford Road in Sidcup, in time for the 1973/74 season. The 70's proved to be a golden period for us. In 1974/75 Cray won the Met London League and the League Cup. We then joined the London Spartan League and won the league title in 1976/77 and 1977/78.

We returned to the Kent League in 1978/79 and won the league title in the 1980/81 season, having been runners-up the year before. Around this time a powerful team had been developed, under the management of Harry Richardson, and we reached the FA Vase 5<sup>th</sup> round and the quarter-final the following year. After that we only won one more piece of silverware, the Kent League Cup in 1983/84.



# TODAY'S VISITORS – CLUB HISTORY

## 1990 – 2012

After finishing Kent League runners up in 1990/91 the club entered a lean period, with the exception of 1992/93 when we 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 the club was tenants of Bromley FC, having been forced to move by Kent League rules which stipulated that the Oxford Road facilities were not suitable for our level of football.

Once again we tasted success as champions of the Kent League in 2002/03 and 2003/04. We also reached the FA Vase quarter-final for a second time and achieved promotion into the Ryman League South Division. Five years later at the end of 2008/09 season came further promotion into the Ryman Premier League, the highest level of football that the club has played at since the Second World War.

Today we are going through a period of transition which we believe will help us emulate our glories from yesteryear.

## 2013 – 2015

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.

## 2016 – 2017

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.

# TODAY'S VISITORS – CLUB HISTORY

## 2018 – 2019

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 now take their place in the Isthmian Premier next season after a five year absence.

The move to the new ground is taking shape and new grass pitches are being laid for Cray Wanderers youth sides to play on while the main stadium is being built and the club are finally playing football at what will be their new home.

## 2020 – 2022

Cray Wanderers' return to the Isthmian Premier looked to begin with like one of consolidation in 2019-20. However, a 12 game unbeaten run from 1st January, 2020 of nine wins and three draws saw Cray move from 9th place to 2nd on 7th March. There was a much bigger worldwide story though which was to deny further progress with the Covid-19 pandemic and the league was stopped with nine games to play and the records were to be expunged with Cray on the verge of possible National South football for the first time.

The 2020-21 season perhaps in retrospect should never really have begun as the pandemic was still rife and no vaccines then available. The season started later than normal in late September and Cray continued their unbeaten run in 2020 for another five games but despite a record equalling run to the 4th Qualifying Round of the FA Cup, the league was once again curtailed in November 2020 with Cray having played only seven league games.

With the game in limbo for several months, Tony Russell announced his departure from Cray Wanderers in March 2021 after six years and the club appointed former AFC Wimbledon and Gillingham forward Danny Kedwell to rebuild the side for the 2021-22 season. Despite taking Cray Wanderers to the 3rd Round of the FA Trophy for the first time, the club were engulfed in a relegation fight and Danny departed in late 2021 to be replaced by interim manager and former Wand, Grant Basey.

Although results and performances improved, the threat of relegation couldn't be shrugged off. So with just six games of the season to go, ex Bromley manager Neil Smith was brought in to steer Cray through the remaining games and the win against East Thurrock United on 19th April proved enough in the end to preserve Isthmian Premier football for another season.

The club moved to appointed Neil Smith as the club's first ever full time manager in May 2022 with the pending Cray Wanderers Academy part of his remit as the club look for a new exciting future at Flamingo Park and look to prosper on and off the field.



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# Ever thought of volunteering to help your local football club?

There are many different volunteer roles in non-league football and Isthmian League football clubs need your help with them.

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**MANAGER:** AHMET RIFAT

**COACHES:** DIOGO NOBRE, JONNY GEORGIU, OLA WILLIAMS

**GOALKEEPING COACH:** GAVIN KING

**PHYSIO:** ISRAEL OZANGBO

**KIT MANAGER:** PETE BARKER

AYYUBA JAMBANG  
BENJAMIN WATT  
BILLY CRACKNELL  
CAIN KELLER  
CAMILO RESTREPO  
CAOILAN MCGETTIGAN  
CASEY SHANN  
CHARLIE GRAINGER (GK)  
CHARLIE STALLARD  
FERGAL HALE-BROWN (GK)  
GIANLUCA BOTTI  
KYRON HORSLEY-MCKAY  
LOIC HERNANDEZ  
MARK CHIDI  
MACKYE TOWNSEND-WEST  
RHAMAR GARRETT-DOUGLAS  
ROMEO AKINOLA  
RYAN LOWE  
SAM BEEDIE



**MANAGER:** TIM O'SHEA

**ASSISTANT MANAGER:** MARK STIMSON

**FIRST TEAM COACH:** ROY BROOKE

**GOALKEEPING COACH:** ALFIE GEORGE

**PHYSIO:** ALLY MALONEY

HARRY SEADEN  
KEVIN KARDEL  
REMI SUTTON  
PROSPER KETO  
ADRIAN GYAMERA  
FRANKIE MORGAN  
TOM BONNER  
QUADE TAYLOR  
FRANKE RAYMOND  
RALFI HAND  
HARRY WALDOCK  
FREDDIE PRICE  
AYMAN EL-MOGHARBEL  
ASHLEY NZALA  
ALEX HERNANDEZ  
LATEEF ADAJA  
CHRIS DICKSON  
SOUL KADER  
KAREEM ISIAKA

## **MATCH OFFICIALS**

**REFEREE:** NEIL FYFIELD

**ASSISTANTS:** CARL JONES, JAMES CANTWELL