

# WINGATE & FINCHLEY FOOTBALL CLUB

Wingate & Finchley vs  
Billericay Town



VS



Saturday 7th  
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 Billericay Town enjoy their stay in N12 this afternoon!**

Our ties against Ricay are always entertaining affairs. Last season we won 2-1 on both occasions; at home on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2023 then away on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024 on our run to the Isthmian Premier playoffs.

The 2022/23 season was less in our favour, however. We lost 3-1 at home on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2022 then won 1-0 away on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

The Essex side spent four seasons in the National League South from 2018 until their 2022 relegation, with two of those being seasons hampered by Covid.

Despite our good form this season, we have had a run of poor form in recent weeks. In our last six games, we have been knocked out of two cups and have taken 4 points from a possible 12 in the league.

A 2-1 loss to Tilbury at home in the Velocity Cup was followed up by a superb 2-0 win away at Whitehawk. We then hosted three successive home games – a 1-1 draw and 1-0 loss to Chatham Town and Horsham respectively, then the less said about our 9-2 loss to Charlton Athletic in the London Senior Cup the better. We were then beaten 4-1 away to Hashtag United last weekend as we know we will be back to winning ways this afternoon!

Our return fixture at the New Lodge is scheduled to take place on Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March.

## **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!

## **Fixture changes**

Please note that our home fixture against Cheshunt on Boxing Day 26<sup>th</sup> December has changed kick off time. It is now starting at 1pm NOT the originally scheduled 3pm!

## **Upcoming fixtures**

Somehow it is already December! The festive fixtures are upon us again ...

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>: **Cray Valley PM. (A)**  
(Isthmian League)

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>: **Lewes (H)** (Isthmian League)

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup>: **Cheshunt (H)** (Isthmian League) (1pm kick off)

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>: **Folkestone Invicta (A)**  
(Isthmian League)

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025 **Potters Bar Town (A)** (Isthmian League)

## **Cray Valley PM**

Next Saturday we travel to Cray Valley PM in our penultimate away day of 2024! Join the Blues on their travels:

The Arctic Stadium, Badgers Sports,  
Middle Park Avenue,  
Eltham  
SE9 5HP

## **Top scorers 2024/25**

Competitive first team games only.  
Total games: 18 league, 7 cup:

	Lge	Cup	Tot.
Obi	16	3	19
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

# 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

Welcome to Billericay - three facts about the fine Essex town, but only one is true. But which one? Answer at the end of the article:

- *Alexander Armstrong of 'Pointless', was born in Billericay*
- *In 1620. Four Billericay residents were aboard the Mayflower and were among those who set up the first English settlement in North America*
- *Billericay Railway Station is believed to have been the inspiration for the Simon and Garfunkel song 'Homeward Bound'*

There is clearly a lot more to Billericay than Ian Dury and the Blockheads. In fact, he was born in Harrow and spent part of his childhood in Mevagissey in Cornwall, where I once had my only sea fishing experience, coming back with a few mackerel. By the way, do you know the only London Underground station not to share any of its letters with the word 'mackerel'? Another answer at the end of the article. At this rate, the answers will be longer than the article, which may be no bad thing, especially as I appear to have gone off at a slight tangent.

After a couple of league defeats, we are aiming to get back on the horse, as it were, today. Billericay are always tough opposition and like us, are one of the teams challenging towards the top of the table.

I have only been to their ground once, on a cold winter afternoon. Having arrived a little while before kick-off, we noticed that cars were beginning to park in a lane a short way from the ground and decided to join them. Emerging from the vehicle, we fell into conversation with a man leaving another car who, having greeted us heartily despite the colours we were wearing, asked what route we had taken to get there.

The honest answer would have been 'no idea, we got hopelessly lost after leaving the M25' but not wanting to appear foolish (some hope, ed), we mentioned the names of a couple of villages through which we

## A VIEW FROM AFAR

had passed. Further confusion was cast when he realised that we had not travelled from North London but, as ever, from leafy Mid Sussex.

Having clarified the facts he responded ‘you don’t want to go that way’, in true Harry Enfield style. He promised that at the end of the game, we could follow him and he would guide us back to the motorway. This is always dangerous, as Jonathan Agnew, the BBC cricket correspondent discovered as a boy, when his parents stopped to ask someone the way to Heathrow Airport. ‘I live near there’ said the pedestrian, ‘give me a lift and I’ll show you’. Half an hour later they dropped him off with the information that the airport was a mile down the road; they were actually in Wood Green.

Anyway, at the end of the match, we strolled back to where we had left the car, only to find that he had long disappeared and the promise was unfulfilled. So it was that a tour of some of the remote lanes of Southern Essex ensued, the lights of what we thought were the BP oil refinery on the Isle of Grain shining beacon like to guide us home. When I say ‘what we thought were’, I subsequently discovered that it closed in 1992.

Still, we made it home eventually and can now look forward. I mentioned earlier, in a rare reference to football, that the Blues have suffered two league defeats in a row, but of course it could be worse – we could be Manchester City.

*Which fact is correct? It’s the Mayflower. Alexander Armstrong wasn’t born in Billericay, but Richard Osman was and ‘Homeward Bound’ was allegedly inspired by Widnes Station.*

*Talking of stations, the only London Underground station not to share any letters with ‘mackerel’ is St Johns Wood.*

**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 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.

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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\*\*\*Match Day Tickets £12, Conc-£8, U18 £5  
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\*\*Concessions over 65 and Students  
\*\*\*Match Day Tickets £12, Conc-£8, U18 £5



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# BILLERICAY TOWN CLUB HISTORY

Billericay Town Football Club was formed in 1880 making it the 11th oldest club in Essex. It moved into the Romford & District League in 1890 competing in this league until 1914.

After the 1st World War, BTFC entered the Mid-Essex League where they remained until 1947. Between 1947 and 1966 they played in the Southern Essex Combination League. In 1966 they became founder-members of the Essex Olympian League.

Five years later, in 1971, Billericay Town Football Club became founder-members of the Essex Senior League and the clubs six-year stay in that competition saw them win the Championship three times and be Runners-Up twice (and third the other season). The League Cup was won four times and they were Finalists once. In addition, they won the League Challenge Cup the only time that it was competed for.

Whilst members of the Essex Senior League, the club won the FA Vase in 1976 beating Stamford 1-0 after extra-time at Wembley Stadium. The following season, 1976/1977, the club again reached the FA Vase Final. After a 1-1 draw at Wembley, the replay was played at Nottingham Forest F.C. Billericay Town emerged victorious with a 2-1 victory over Sheffield.

Billericay Town also became the first Non-League club to win the Rothmans Merit Award in 1978 for "having made a worth-while contribution to the wide spectrum of the game in 1977/78" - the only club previously to have won this Award was Liverpool, the previous season, when they were the European champions

Progressing to the Athenian League in 1977, Billericay won the Championship and the League Cup in their first season. They became Champions again in 1978/1979 and were promoted into the Isthmian League.

Billericay Town became the first club to win the F.A.Vase for a third time in 1979 when they defeated Almondsbury Greenway 4-1. This match was notable for a hat-trick by Doug Young - the first hat-trick in a Cup Final at Wembley Stadium since Geoff Hurst's in the 1966 World Cup Final.

After their success in the Athenian League, Billericay's league successes continued in the Isthmian League when in their first season they won the Division 2 title with a winning margin of 17 points, scoring 100 goals in their 36 league matches. The following season, in Division 1, they finished as runners-up to Bishops Stortford - the first time in the history of the Isthmian League that a club had won promotion in two successive seasons on entry into the League.

Billericay then had five seasons in the Premier Division before being relegated in 1986. They then spent two years in Division One before again being relegated - this time into Division Two North. Following re-organisation of the League, Billericay finished in third place in the newly formed Division Two and so gained promotion to Division One. That season, 1991/1992, they finished the season winning the Essex Thames-Side Trophy.

Promotion back to the Premier Division was obtained in 1998. The club finished runner-up in 2004.2005 before losing in the playoffs, they again reached the play-offs in 2006/2007. In what probably ranks as the most remembered game in recent years, Billericay beat local rivals Chelmsford in the semi-finals on penalties in front of a crowd of over 2,000. The final however

# BILLERICAY TOWN CLUB HISTORY

ended with a less successful penalty shoot-out and defeat to Bromley.

In November 2007, the club staged its biggest ever competitive game at New Lodge – reaching the First Round Proper of the FA Cup for the third time, Billericay finally drew league opposition for the first time in the form of Swansea City. The Blues took a first half lead before going down to two late goals.

The 2010/11 season saw much local success. The first team lifted the Essex Senior Cup for the first time in 35 years and the club were in fact triple County winners as the youth development programme was rewarded with the Under 18 and Under 16 sides also winning their respective County Cup competitions. This success was built on in 2011/12 as the club finally secured promotion to the Blue Square Bet South as Ryman League Champions.

However, it proved to be a one season stay, despite a good start, the second half of the season was blighted by poor weather and despite hanging on until the penultimate game, a return to the Ryman league beckoned.

Subsequent seasons have seen the club steadily rebuild itself. A mid-table finish in 2013/14 was followed in 2014/15 by a respectable 8<sup>th</sup> place finish in the league. And appearances in the final of the Essex Senior Cup and the semi-final of the League Cup. The 2015/16 campaign saw the club enter April in the play-off places, eventually finishing 9<sup>th</sup>.

The club's profile changed in 2016 with new owners leading a push for the play-offs that just fell just short but Town lifted the League Cup with a record 8-3 victory in the Final. This however provided a springboard to the clubs most successful season ever – runs to the first round proper of the FA Cup and to the last 8 of the FA Trophy were followed by a treble – retaining the Isthmian League, Essex Senior Cup, and finally in the 74<sup>th</sup> of 75 competitive game, the Isthmian league title to secure promotion.

2018/19 saw the club lead the National League South Division early on in the season and remain in the play-off places all season until the final day where they eventually finished 8<sup>th</sup>. The club also reached the 1<sup>st</sup> Round of the F.A. Cup earning a 1-1 draw at Chesterfield before losing the replay 3-1 at New Lodge.

2019/20 saw the club taken over by a consortium of local businessmen. Once again the club reached the first round of the F.A.Cup where they were beaten by League Two side Forest Green at The New Lawn Stadium.

2021/22 saw the club win the Essex Senior Cup for a fourth time when they beat Bowers & Pitsea 1-0 in the final at Colchester United. However, the clubs five-year spell in the Vanarama National League South came to an end as they finished bottom of the table and were relegated back into the Isthmian League.

The 2022/23 season saw the club finish in a disappointing 10<sup>th</sup> position in its first season back in the Isthmian League. Last season with manager Gary McCann appointed manager during the summer the club just missed out on the play offs finishing in 6<sup>th</sup> position despite being in the top 5 for most of the season.

# BILLERICAY TOWN PLAYER PROFILES

**GARY McCANN** – Now in his second season as manager having been appointed at the end of April 2023 having previously been manager of Hampton & Richmond Borough for four years in the National League South. Previous to that spent 13 years in the Isthmian League at Hendon where he was manager and a player making just under 200 appearances in goal for the Dons. Was with Fulham at U18 level before moving onto Enfield and then Dulwich Hamlet. Also had a loan spell in goal for Slough Town between 2001 -2002.

**DANNY GREEN** – Joined the club in the summer of 2023 having previously been a player coach at Concord Rangers where he had been for a number of seasons. As a player began his early career at Charlton Athletic before moving on to Northampton Town and then Nottingham Forest. Dropped back into non-league football and had a season at Bishops Cleeve before moving back into the football league with Dagenham & Redbridge where he helped them win the League two play off at Wembley scoring the 2<sup>nd</sup> goal. Was then sold to Charlton Athletic for 350,000 in July 2011 and helped them win the League One title. From there spells at MK Dons, Luton Town and Chelmsford City followed before ending up at Concord Rangers in 2018.

**MARK FINDLEY** – Sports physio therapist and strength and conditioning coach. Has worked with manager Gary McCann for the past 16 years at Hendon and Hampton and Richmond Borough.

**FABIO VALENTI** – First team head coach and former manager of Edgware Town. Has been with Gary since their Hendon days. As a player played for Harrow Borough, Enfield Town and Hemel Hempstead Town.

**JAMES SMITH** – Goalkeeping coach having most recently been at Brentwood Town. He has also worked for Concord Rangers and Welling United.

**ADE AZEEZ** – Striker who joined the club in the summer of 2023 having spent the previous season at National League South side Welling United scoring 15 goals. Started his career at Charlton Athletic at the age of 14 and whilst there had loan spells at Wycombe Wanderers, Leyton Orient, Torquay United and Dagenham & Redbridge. In 2014 he joined AFC Wimbledon and soon become popular with the club's fans with his pace often panicking defenders. Previous other clubs include Partick Thistle in the Scottish Premiership, Cambridge United, Newport County, Dover Athletic and Dartford. Has also represented England at U19 level on three occasions back in 2012.

**TOM BENDER** – 6ft 3 defender who was a product of the Colchester United Academy and made his senior debut aged 16 in 2009. Whilst at Colchester, Tom went out on loan to Accrington Stanley and Chelmsford City. A season at Millwall followed and then spells at Welling United, Dartford and Forest Green Rovers. In 2015 he joined St Albans City and made over 250 appearances for them before moving onto Hanworth Villa for the 2022/23 season in the Isthmian League South Central Division where he captained the side to 4<sup>th</sup> position and a place in the play offs. Born in England he chose to represent Wales and has represented them at every level from Under 15 to Under 21.

**SAM DONKIN** – 24 year-old goalkeeper who signed in the summer from Leiston where he had been for the past five seasons making over 150 appearances. Previous other clubs include St Albans City, St Neots Town, Corby Town, Stamford, Whitehawk and Biggleswade Town.

**TOMMY DAVIS** – 21 year old who made 18 appearances last season for the club having signed from National League South Aveyley in January. Came through the ranks of Southend United and has also had loan spells at Welling United and Hampton & Richmond Borough where he first played for manager Gary McCann.

# BILLERICAY TOWN PLAYER PROFILES

**MOSES EMMANUEL** – Returned to the club at the start of 2023/24 season having previously been a major part of the side during the 2018/19 campaign scoring 25 goals in 44 appearances which included the equalizing goal at Chesterfield in the F.A. Cup 1st Round. The following season scoring 5 more goals before leaving for Welling United in November 2019. Started his footballing career at Croydon Athletic before joining Brentford. From there he went on to play for Woking, Eastleigh, Dover Athletic, Bromley, Sutton United, Maidenhead United, Wealdstone and Hayes & Yeading United.

**ANSU JANNEH** – Joined the club from Hastings United where the 25-year-old made 18 appearances last season. Also spent time on loan at Tonbridge Angels. Following spells with Walton Casuals and Wingate & Finchley. In March 2022 Janneh made the move to Dagenham & Redbridge before going out on loan at Braintree Town and Havant & Waterlooville.

**MATT JOHNSON** – Experienced midfielder who joined the club in the summer of 2023 having won the Isthmian League Premier Division with Bishops Stortford. rejoins the club having made 33 appearances, scoring 2 goals during the 2016/17 season. Previous other clubs include Rushden & Diamonds, Braintree Town, Ebbsfleet United, Margate, Chelmsford City, Hornchurch and Enfield Town.

**CAIN KELLER** – 20 year old striker who joined the club after a successful trial period during pre-season. Started his career at Stevenage academy and then moving on to Hendon on loan. Has also spent time at Biggleswade Town, Kings Langley and more recently Royston Town.

**ARJANIT KRASNIQI** – Currently on loan from Maidstone United, and in his second spell with the club. Arj played for Town after his initial release by Colchester in 2019. He then played in Finland and since returning Braintree, Dover and Chelmsford have appeared on his CV.

**MONTEL McKENZIE** – 26 year old defender joined the club at the start of the season having been a regular for Hemel Hempstead Town in the National League South last season. Previously played for Woodford Town and has spent time playing out in the United States of America.

**FRANKIE MERRIFIELD** – Another summer signing from 2023 who was also at Bishops Stortford and won a League winners medal as well as being voted supporters player of the season. Came through the youth ranks at AFC Wimbledon and made his Football League debut in 2012 for the Dons. The midfielder / striker has also featured for Harrow Borough, Hayes and Yeading United, Chelmsford City, Canvey Island, East Thurrock United and has had two spells at Bishops Stortford.

**TODD MILLER** – On loan from Wealdstone, Todd spent his early career at Brighton before moving to Doncaster Rovers where he gained EFL experience. He also played 13 games for Bromley last season as they gained promotion, before a short loan spell at Kidderminster ahead of his move to Stones.

**TYRELL MILLER-RODNEY** – Experienced midfielder joins the club having spent last season at National League South Dartford. Prior to that spent some time at Havant & Waterlooville. Was a member of Garry McCann's Hampton & Richmond Borough side where he was captain and made over 100 appearances. Previous other clubs include



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Staines Town. Canvey Island, Hayes & Yeading United. As a youngster started out at Brentford.

**JONAS MUKUNA** – Recently arrived wide player who has been at QPR and Walsall. After spells at Farnborough and Havant & Waterlooville, Jonas made his first team debut against Bowers & Pitsea recently.

**ASHLEY NZALA** – Striker signed from Chatham Town in the summer where he scored 14 goals in 44 appearances. Previous other clubs include Dulwich Hamlet, Canvey Island, Brentwood Town, Cheshunt, and Great Wakering Rovers. Before that also played for Hanwell Town, Burgess Hill Town and Southall.

**CHARLIE PANTON** – Versatile player who has come through the club's youth and reserve section to make his first team debut this season.

**JACK PAXMAN** – Another player who returned to the club in the summer having previously signed in 2019 going onto make 42 appearances scoring 2 goals before his departure to Ebbsfleet in September 2022. Started his career at Southend United and has also represented Chelmsford City, Thurrock, Witham Town. In 2015 signed for Maidstone United winning back to back promotions with the club during a five year period. After Ebbsfleet United joined Eastbourne Borough and last season ended up playing at Ramsgate.

**ARON POLLOCK** – 25-year-old 6ft tall defender who joined the club in the summer from Concord Rangers where he had been for the previous five seasons. Started his footballing career at Leyton Orient and made his debut in the football league in 2016. Loan spells followed at Wingate & Finchley, Wealdstone & Leatherhead with Sammy Moore making the loan a permanent move at Leatherhead and then followed Moore to Concord Rangers.

**JAYPORTER** – 30-year-old experienced left back who made 38 appearances last season. Joined the club from Bishops Cleeve in the summer of 2023 where he had helped them win the Isthmian League championship. Previous other clubs include Braintree Town, Margate, Enfield Town, Hornchurch, Dartford and Thamesmead Town.

**DE'CARREY SHERIFF** – 26-year-old striker who joins the club having spent last season at National League South Eastbourne Borough, Started his career at League Two Colchester United and had loan spells at Maldon & Tiptree, Dulwich Hamlet and Needham Market. Has also played for Concord Rangers and spent three seasons at Kettering Town in the National League north.

**BEN STEWARD** – 22-year-old defender who spent last season at Concord Rangers. Prior to that was at Aveley and East Thurrock United. Started his footballing career at Bowers & Pitsea.

# 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

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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



**Manager:** Gary McCANN

**Coaches:** Danny Green, Fabio Valenti

**Goalkeeping Coach:** James Smith

**Physio:** Mark Findley

**Tyrece Briscoe**

**Toby Byron**

**Billy Cracknell**

**Jaiden Drakes-Thomes**

**Ben Frempah**

**Rhamar Garrett-Douglas**

**Brian Garzon**

**Andronicos Georgiou**

**Fergal Hale-Brown**

**Loic Hernandez**

**Arthur Ionnton**

**Ryan Lowe**

**Zack Newton**

**Tommy Roberts**

**Ogo Obi**

**Ferdinand Oko**

**Khristopher Oti**

**Camilo Restrepo**

**Ayo Tanimowo**

**Bobby Webb**

**Ade Azzeez**

**Tom Bender**

**Sam Donkin**

**Tommy Davis**

**Moses Emmanuel**

**Ansu Janneh**

**Matt Johnson**

**Cain Keller**

**Arjanit Trasnqi**

**Montel McKenzie**

**Frankie Merrifield**

**Todd Miller**

**Tyrell Miller-Rodney**

**Jonas Mukuna**

**Ashley Nzala**

**Charlie Panton**

**Jack Paxman**

**Aron Pollock**

**Jay Porter**

**De'Carrey Sheriff**

**Ben Steward**

#### **NEXT UP IN N12:**

Lewes (ILP) – 21/12/2024

Cheshunt (ILP) – 26/12/2024

#### **MATCH OFFICIALS**

**Referee:**

**Assistants:** ,