

# WINGATE & FINCHLEY FOOTBALL CLUB

Wingate & Finchley vs  
Dulwich Hamlet



VS



Saturday 10th  
August 2024

Isthmian  
Premier Division

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# WINGATE & FINCHLEY FC

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

Ah, another season of following The Blues! After the heartbreak of our playoff semifinal defeat at the hands of Enfield Town back in May, we go again and hope to go one better this season – let's make 2024/25 a promotion season!

This season we see many new faces in our playing squad, many of whom have featured throughout our preseason campaign, though more on them later...

Fixtures against our opponents from south of the river have always been entertaining affairs – who can forget *that* FA Trophy game back in 2018 or the final day of the 2016/2017 season when we secured our first ever Isthmian Premier playoff place!

Remembering back to last season, Hamlet visited Summers Lane on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October, claiming a 3-2 win, with Reuben Carvalho and Anointed Chukwu scoring for us. The return tie at Champion Hill saw the Blues beaten again, this time by a 3-0 scoreline. We seek to avenge these defeats this afternoon!

Here's to another incredible season ahead!

**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

## New teams to the division

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

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

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

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

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

## Leaving the division

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

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

**Hornchurch** join them having won the league

**Concord Rangers and Haringey Borough** relegated and join the Isthmian North

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

## Cup draws

The league campaign has barely started, and somehow we already have the first two cup ties of the season upon us!

**FA Youth Cup** – Our under 18s face a trip to Fisher FC in the extra preliminary round on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> August, 7.30pm kick off. St Pauls Sports Ground, SE16 6NT

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

## New vice chairman

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

## 'Gaffer of the Season'

Over the summer, our very own Ahmet Rifat collected the 2023/24 'Gaffer of the Season' award, presented by Ball Hour and UrFreshTVSport during their end of season showcase back in June.

## Upcoming games

We are away at Carshalton Athletic this Monday evening, before hosting Folkestone Invicta here at the Maurice Rebak next Saturday. Next is a trip to Canvey Island on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> then a local derby vs Potters Bar on Monday 26<sup>th</sup>. August is completed on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> with an FA Cup 1<sup>st</sup> qualifying round tie.



# 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

It's a new season, so why not add something to these wistful pieces of admiration and nostalgia? Ok, I thought, a brain teaser to start the process. On 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1976, which of these events took place?

- In a game between Blackpool and Port Vale, one of the crossbars broke and had to be replaced, causing a 32minute delay in the match. Blackpool won 2-0, with one of the goals going in off the new crossbar!
- Dave Wagstaffe, formerly of Wolves and Manchester City but now of Blackburn Rovers, became the first player in English football to receive a red card, in a game against Leyton Orient.
- Kenny Dalglish, in his last season at Celtic before moving to Liverpool, scored his final hat-trick for them in a match against Morton. Celtic won 5-2.

*Answer at the foot of the column*

And now, back to business. It's not a bad first game back, after the excitement at the end of last season. Dulwich Hamlet have a touch of something about them, with their colourful kit, their impressive marketing and their appearance in just about every book about non-league football ever written. It's a good place to visit too, with plenty of people drinking beer and eating vegan hamburgers.

Our last home league game back in April was at home to Carshalton and an early goal settled nerves and set us on the way to a 3-0 victory that sealed our play-off place. The game was most notable for the lady wife and I though, as the first game of football where we had been accompanied by our dog. It was a fairly late decision as, our dog walker not being available, we decided to accept the kind invitation to attend the end of season awards and bring the hound with us.

This was a high risk strategy as, a) he might break free from his lead and invade the pitch and b) he might decide that all of the awards were for him and cause chaos during the evening. As contingency, once the game ended, we sneaked the car into the ground and took the space vacated by the departing referee, who had escaped entirely unscathed. The canine could take refuge inside the vehicle if necessary.

To everybody's amazement, the dog behaved impeccably! He stood or sat quietly through most of the match, had a fuss made of him by Mr Chairman and when it came to the presentations, stretched out and had a snooze, causing only minor inconvenience to those stepping forward to receive a trophy and having to step over him.

## A VIEW FROM AFAR

We also decided that, rather than drive home, we would avail ourselves of the hospitality of an hotel on the site of which stood, in my youth, The Thatched Barn. All went well until early the next morning when the dog decided that he needed to make a brief visit outside. As we were in a room some way from the main entrance, it was pleasing to discover that there was an unalarmed fire exit not too far from our room, through which we stepped and relief was taken (by him, not me).

What we hadn't realised was that the courtyard in which we found ourselves, could only be exited via a gate, which was alarmed, or back through the door we had just used. Sadly, this had closed behind us and was not openable from outside. At this time of the morning, no guests seemed to be walking the corridor and I didn't fancy banging on the windows of any of the rooms, for fear of inviting the interest of His Majesty's Constabulary.

It was now that I realised that, in a rare moment of foresightedness, I had picked up my phone when leaving the room. I could call the hotel and make a complicated explanation or chance that the lady wife would be out of the shower and have her own phone switched on. I tried the latter and for once, the stars aligned.

Thus, Buster's first footballing weekend ended successfully, we are already looking forward to a repeat performance this season.

*What happened in October 1976?*

The correct answer is that Dave Wagstaffe was the recipient of the red card. They had been introduced to English football that day

**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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# 2024 PRE-SEASON REVIEW

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



**Watford U23 (H) – Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2024**

All photos by Martin Addison

\* BL – Barnet Lane training ground



# DULWICH HAMLET FC

The Hamlet are back in the Isthmian League for the 2023-24 season for the first time since 2018 following five years in the National League South. Those five seasons playing at Step 2 represented the highest level achieved during our 130-year history, but would end in heartbreak on the final day of last season. Only needing a point to avoid the drop against Chippenham Town, the side would lose 1-0 in front of a sell-out 3,334 at Champion Hill, with other results elsewhere condemning them to a return to the Isthmian League, which we have spent 111 years of our existence playing in.

The club with the famous pink and navy-blue shirts can boast an illustrious past. Indeed, between the two World Wars, they were among the giants of amateur football. The Dulwich Hamlet story began back in 1893, during the closing years of Queen Victoria's reign. Towards the end of the summer that year, Lorraine Wilson was handed the princely sum of one shilling and eight pence (less than 10 pence in today's coinage) by a couple of keen young footballers and asked to start a Dulwich Hamlet Football Club. 'Pa', as he was affectionately known, tackled the task with great relish and over the next thirty years, he helped to build Dulwich into a powerful force.

Life in the early days was fairly tough. The club's original ground in Woodwarde Road had no changing facilities. On match days the players used to walk half a mile through the streets of Dulwich Village to get from their dressing room to the pitch. Usually they had to carry the goalposts, crossbars, and corner flags with them. One consolation was that the players' route took them through the gardens of the local inn where no doubt they paused on their return journey for a post-match drink or two!

Dulwich made their debut in competitive soccer when they joined the local Camberwell League in 1894-95. The following season the championship of that league's 'B' Division became the first entry on what has proved to be a long list of honours. Achieving senior status in 1900, the club proceeded from strength to strength and in 1904-05, they won the Surrey Senior Cup for the first time. They have now won the Surrey Cup a record 16 times, most recently in 1975. In 1907, Dulwich gained election to the Isthmian League, where they have remained ever since.

During the First World War, the legendary Edgar Kail joined Dulwich. In his brilliant fourteen-year career with the Hamlet, Kail scored 427 goals (including a club record of 53 goals in the 1925-26 season). He also played three times for the full England International side, scoring twice on his debut against France. Kail helped Dulwich to the Isthmian League championship in 1920, 1926 and 1933, two FA Amateur Cup triumphs in 1920 and 1932, and the London Senior Cup in 1925. Another Hamlet legend of that era was goalkeeper Bert Coleman who gained a full England cap in 1921, keeping a clean sheet against Wales. Dulwich's other major successes during their heyday between the wars were two more FA Amateur Cup wins in 1934 and 1937, and another London Senior Cup victory in 1939; they were also runners-up in the Isthmian League five times. Incidentally, their 7-1 win over Marine in 1931/32 equalled the record score for an FA Amateur Cup Final.

# DULWICH HAMLET FC

Dulwich were quickly into their stride after the Second World War and in 1949 they were Isthmian League champions for a fourth time. In 1950 they lifted the London Senior Cup again, and it was in the same season that fullback Reg Merritt embarked upon a long career with the Hamlet during which he made a club record 576 appearances. One of the most popular players of the immediate post-war period was flying left-winger Tommy Jover whose career goals tally for Dulwich has only been bettered by Edgar Kail. Tommy completed more than seventy years magnificent service to the club, as player, official and latterly club President from 1985 until his death at the grand age of 91 in 2008. The club's main stand is now named in his honour.

Dulwich then went through a very lean spell during the 1960s and 70s, which, apart from three good seasons in the mid-1970s, culminated in relegation from the top division. However, they bounced straight back under manager Alan Smith, winning the Division One championship at the first attempt in 1978. Midfield dynamo Chris Lewington was an ever-present that season and he repeated the feat in each of the next four seasons to complete a remarkable 290 consecutive appearances, another club record.

Since the phasing out of amateur football and the end of the FA Amateur Cup in 1974, Dulwich have been a semi-professional club and compete in the FA Trophy. Their best run so far in the competition was in 1979-80 when they reached the quarter-finals, losing to Boston United in a replay. This was repeated in 2016-17 when they would be knocked out by National League Macclesfield Town, again after a replay.

However, as the 1980s progressed, the club fell on hard times again and despite a London Senior Cup success in 1984 they struggled in the Isthmian League, being relegated to Division One at the end of 1990. This time it took them two years to get back to the top flight - an exciting finale to the 1991-92 campaign saw the Hamlet win their last seven league games to pip Boreham Wood for a promotion place on the final day of the season.

It was most appropriate that Dulwich were able to celebrate their centenary by moving into a new Champion Hill Stadium. Their famous old ground, situated on the same site, opened in 1931 and for a long time was the mecca of amateur football. Numerous Amateur Internationals and other important matches were staged there, including the FA Amateur Cup Final between Kingstonian and Stockton in 1933 that attracted a record crowd of 20,744. Sadly, the old ground fell into disrepair over the years and in order to satisfy safety regulations several alterations had to be made which reduced the capacity considerably. Eventually, in 1991, the stadium was totally demolished as part of Sainsbury's redevelopment of the area.

The 1990s would bring ups and downs, with Frank Murphy transforming us into championship contenders again, before the decade would end with a run to the FA Cup First Round under Dave Garland in the autumn of 1998, losing to an own goal in a 1-0 loss at home to Southport, before the club lifted the London Challenge Cup at the end of that season, beating Uxbridge 2-1 at the Valley.

# DULWICH HAMLET FC

Relegation occurred again in 2001 with just four league wins all season, which brought a long spell back in Division One. A Premier Division spot was almost regained under chairman/manager Martin Eede in 2004, however a 4-5 penalty loss to Wealdstone in a promotion play-off ended those dreams. Three days later, a brace from Omari Coleman handed us our fifth and most recent London Senior Cup title, as we beat old rivals Tooting & Mitcham United at Hendon.

Eede was succeeded first by Wayne Burnett and then Craig Edwards, before the arrival of former players Gavin Rose and Junior Kadi in the summer of 2009 as manager and assistant gave the club a huge upturn in fortunes.

After a mid-table finish in their first year, the duo took the side to the Division One South play-off final in 2011, beating Bognor Regis Town in the semi-final after finishing 31 points behind them, before leading Leatherhead 3-1 with minutes to go in the final, only to lose 4-3 after extra time. Dulwich also reached the final of the League Cup for the first time, but lost 0-2 to Wingate & Finchley at Imber Court.

Rose would reach the final again 12 months later, where Bognor Regis exacted their revenge for the previous year, winning 1-0 at Nyewood Lane, but undeterred, 2012-13 would bring incredible joy to the club. Blending a mixture of experience in the likes of Peter Adeniyi, Kevin James and Phil Wilson with exciting youngsters such as Nyren Clunis, Ellis Green and Xavier Vidal, the Hamlet were involved in a scintillating title race with Maidstone United. The arrival early in the season of magician Erhun Öztümer and then striker Danny Carr added incredible skill and firepower, with the season going right to the final weekend. Against Burgess Hill Town at home, a second half strike from Vidal earned the point we needed to secure the title, one point clear of the Stones.

Back in the Premier Division, it was a series of disappointments for the side in the next few years, missing out on the playoffs in 2014 by a point, before losing in the semi-finals a year later at Margate. Two successive final losses followed, with a 3-1 defeat at East Thurrock United in 2016 followed by a 2-1 loss at Bognor Regis Town 12 months later.

However, 2017-18 brought more success, as a side containing the likes of Clunis, Preston Edwards, Ashley Carew, Kenny Beaney, Nathan Green, Reise Allassani and Sanchez Ming went toe-to-toe with high-spending Billericay Town, finishing with a club-record 95 points in second place. This was made even more impressive by the fact that we had been evicted from Champion Hill in March 2018, with home games at Tooting & Mitcham United, and the club relying on fan donations and fundraising throughout the season to keep playing. In the play-offs, a Carew free-kick beat Leiston in the semis, before Hendon awaited at Imperial Fields in the final. On a baking May Bank Holiday, an equaliser from Gavin Tomlin sent the game to extra-time and then penalties, with goalkeeper Amadou Tangara saving two Hendon efforts before Dipo Akinyemi struck the winner to send us to the National League South.

# DULWICH HAMLET FC

Life at Step 2 was a rollercoaster for the Hamlet, with a brief flirtation with the drop easily avoided in the end during 2018-19 as we finished 14th in our debut season at the level. The following year brought an appearance in the FA Cup First Round, televised live on BBC1 against Carlisle United, as well as the Covid-19 pandemic, which may have ultimately saved us from relegation, with the following season ended prematurely too. 2021-22 brought a stunning first half of the season in which we looked like strong contenders for the playoffs, before faltering after Christmas to end 10th, the highest position in the club's history.

Last season, the club parted company with Rose after 13 years in charge, with Paul Barnes replacing him at the helm. However, a run of one point from ten games in the spring saw another managerial change, as Hakan Hayrettin came in, but despite keeping us in the running for survival, that defeat to Chippenham on the final day condemned us to the drop.

The Hamlet have also had a Women's side since 2019. During that summer, the club merged with AFC Phoenix, who had been in existence since 2010 and who had gradually risen up through the regional London leagues to reach Step 5 and the London & South-East Regional Women's League.

Manager Farouk Menia sadly passed away just months after the merge following a long illness, with Ryan Dempsey taking the reins, and the Hamlet would enjoy two excellent seasons, only for the pandemic to intervene, and deny them promotion to Step 4. 2021-22 was a more inconsistent campaign, with a fifth-placed finish lower than the previous two seasons, but the side reached their first cup final under the Hamlet banner, losing 2-0 to Ashford Town in the final of the Capital Senior Cup at Dorking Wanderers Meadowbank.

2022-23 would bring more history, with the side reaching the proper stages of the Women's FA Cup for the first time, eventually bowing out in Round 2 to Gillingham in front of a record 631 at Champion Hill, with the side improving on the previous season to finish fourth in the league.

# GAFFER OF THE SEASON

**Ahmet Rifat has been awarded the 2023/24 'Gaffer of the season' award by Ball Hour and UrFreshTVSport at their end of season showcase!** The accolade is no more than is deserved after Rifat transformed the Blues' fortunes, taking us into the playoffs for the first time since 2016/17 in his first full season in charge at the Maurice Rebak Stadium. Further to this, it was a record points haul for the Blues as we amassed 76 points in our 42 matches this season, before narrowly missing out in the playoff semi-final to eventual playoff winners Enfield Town.

Speaking when collecting his award, Rifat said that it was a privilege to win this award, against number of other managers who had achieved a lot last season. There were 6 nominees for the award including Hornchurch manager Daryl McMahon who saw his Hornchurch side crowned champions of the Isthmian Premier League, Steve McKimm of Cray Valley PM who reached the FA Cup first round proper as well as pipping Ramsgate in a very competitive Isthmian South East title race.

Jermaine McGlashan was nominated for managing AFC Croydon Athletic to playoff success in the Combined Counties Premier South division. Marcus Bartley saw his Marlow FC side promoted from Isthmian South Central division via playoffs and finally Paul Johnson managed Farnham Town FC to the Combined Counties Premier South title, winning 35 and drawing 3 of their 38 games in the process.

All at the club would like to congratulate Ahmet on this award, and look forward to further success under his leadership in the future!





# SEASON TICKETS 2024/25



## EARLY BIRD

EQUIVALENT PRICE PER MATCH

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

\*EARLY BIRD AVAILABLE UNTIL 31st JULY

\*\*Concessions over 65 and Students.

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

## FULL PRICE

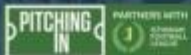
EQUIVALENT PRICE PER MATCH

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

\*FULL PRICE FROM 1st AUGUST

\*\*Concessions over 65 and Students

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



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**Manager:** Ahmet Rifat

**Coaches:** Ruben Gaspar, Jonny Georgiou, Ricky Machel

**Goalkeeping Coach:** Gavin King

**Analyst:** Michael Smith

**Physio:** Kim Harris

**Kit Manager:** Pete Barker

**Prince Adegoke**

**Toby Byron**

**Billy Cracknell**

**Luke Deslandes**

**Evangelos Empochontsif**

**Ben Frempah**

**Rhamar Garrett-Douglas**

**Brian Garzon**

**Andronicos Georgiou**

**Fergal Hale-Brown**

**Loic Hernandez**

**Arthur Iontton**

**Ryan Lowe**

**Zack Newton**

**Michael O'Donoghue**

**Tommy Roberts**

**Ogo Obi**

**Ferdinand Oko**

**Destiny Oladipo**

**Khristopher Oti**

**Lonit Talla**

**Ayo Tanimowo**

**Bobby Webb**



**Manager:** Hakan Hayrettin

**Assistant Manager:** Terry Harris

**Coaches:** Alex Balaskas, Erdal Yoruk

**Physio:** Sid Bullett

**Sports Scientist:** Hernan Rivero

**Kit Manager:** Freddie Clasper

**Alfie Allen**

**Jerome Binnom-Williams**

**Sean Bonnett-Johnson**

**Craig Braham-Barret**

**Michael Chambers**

**Adrian Clifton**

**R'Avan Constable**

**Preston Edwards**

**Kaya Hansson**

**Harrison Hatfull**

**Anthony Jeffrey**

**Kreshnic Krasniqi**

**Will Lakin**

**Danny Mills**

**Manny Parry**

**Dwight Pascal**

**Richard Pingling**

**Mark Ricketts**

**Ryley Scott**

**Ademola Shokunbi**

**Luke Wanadio**

### **MATCH OFFICIALS**

**Referee:** Adam Steele

**Assistants:** Oliver Hind and Dele Sotomirin

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

Folkestone Invicta (ILP) – 17/08/2024

Potters Bar Town (ILP) – 26/08/2024

TBC (FAC) – 31/08/2024

Chichester City (ILP) – 21/09/2024