



proudly supports

THE TRIDENT TRUST FUND

Providing access to grants and funding for your club, in your community

@PitchingIn_



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 Hashtag enjoy their stay in N12 this afternoon!

The Blues go into this match off the back of a disappointing 3-0 Home defeat to Chatham Town, with Ahmet Rifat's side still chasing their first 3 points of the league campaign.

The Tags earned their first win since opening day with a 2-1 away victory at Cray Valley PM. Both of their two victories this season have come away from home, with the Tags picking up just one point at Parkside.

The Blues will hope to put Saturday's defeat behind them and take full advantage of an out-of-form Hashtag United side to kick-start their season, though they have yet to beat the tags since the latter's formation in 2016.

Nevertheless, Ahmet Rifat will hope to take 3 points into Saturday's mouth-watering tie away at National League South Dorking Wanderers in the FA Cup.

As a result of both the Blues' and Folkestone Invicta's progression in the FA Cup, our home tie against them has been postponed and will now be played on Tuesday 30th September.

Highlights from Tonight's game will be available to watch on Our YouTube Channel tomorrow.

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:

£14 adults, £9 concession, £5 for ages 10-16, under 10 free *Advance purchase discounts are available online

Chairman & Owner: 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: Jonny Georgiou,

Diogo Nobre, Ola Williams
First Team Goalkeeping Coach:

Gavin King

First Team Physio: Israel Ozangbo

Kit Manager: Peter Barker Head Groundsman: Andy Ward Welfare Officer: Jonny Georgiou Bar Manager: Lorraine Coleman Matchday Hospitality: Tony Ward

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 – by Peter Brown

As today is September 9th, three statements about events on this date. One is untrue, but which one? Answer at the foot of the column.

- \cdot In 1513, James IV of Scotland became the last ruling British monarch to die in battle, at the Battle of Flodden
- · In 1970, Feyenoord of Amsterdam won the Club World Cup
- · In 1998, Wimbledon beat West Ham 4-3 at Upton Park, having been 3-0 down inside 30 minutes

An evening game in early September, a time when it feels as if the new football season is starting to settle into the year like a comfortable pair of gardening trousers. The weather is still mild and the light is fading earlier in the evening, but here at Summers Lane and elsewhere across Planet Isthmian, things are beginning to take shape. Tonight we welcome one of the oldest and most traditional clubs in the country (better check that, ed) as Hashtag United come to North London from their current home at Aveley.

The Lady Wife and I did visit their ground last season and were greeted most civilly by the mother of the club's founder and owner; it was nice to be approached and welcomed in such a way—I assume she mistook us for somebody important - and I trust their travelling fans will appreciate the hospitality here tonight. In fact, we have seen Hashtag already this season, on the opening day when they won 2-0 at Lewes. It was an impressive performance and bore the signs of a team of players who actually knew each other, which is not always the case at the beginning of the season.

Speaking of being mistaken for somebody important, I wouldn't dream of using this column to tell the tale of the occasion when, some years ago, I was mistaken at a charity swimming event in Southgate for the Scottish Olympic 200 metre breaststroke champion, David Wilkie (younger readers may have to do some research here). It would be quite wrong to take valuable space here by recounting how I was part of a team raising money for the charity he supported, but for some reason I was unable to attend at the same time as the others, so

A VIEW FROM AFAR

popped along during my lunch break, where found myself with a crowd of schoolchildren.

David Wilkie was present and part of the process was that each swimmer began by having their photo taken with him, before reporting to one of the lanes, giving their name and then swimming as many lengths as possible. I was surprised when the lady with her clipboard greeted me warmly and didn't ask my name, so off I went with my finest aquatic splashing. On climbing out – obviously, I'd have continued much longer but had to return to work – a different lady was holding the clipboard. I looked at it and there, crossed out, was the name David Wilkie. Well, he was a fine looking fellow and I did have a moustache then, but perhaps my breaststroke wasn't quite of his class. Anyway, as I've said, I wouldn't dream of telling that tale here. Totally out of place.

Which statement is untrue? Feyenoord did win the club world cup, but would be extremely insulted to be associated with Amsterdam – they are proudly from Rotterdam. The other two statements are true.



PLAYER PROFILES

CHARLIE GRAINGER - 29 - GK

Previous clubs: Hastings Utd, Dulwich Hamlet, Hampton & Richmond Borough, Farnborough, Histon, Cray Wanderers, Leyton Orient. Entering his second season as the Blues' number one, Charlie is a strong shot-stopper with experience in abundance!

FERGAL HALE-BROWN - 25 - GK

Previous club: Norwich City (youth). Fergal is our current longest-serving player. He continues to provide strong and reliable backup for Charlie in the Blues' goal!

BILLY CRACKNELL - 23 - CB

Previous clubs: Bishop's Stortford, Colchester Utd, Cheshunt, Maldon & Tiptree. Our club captain and ever-present at the back, Billy is fast becoming part of the furniture at Summers Lane!

KYRON HORSLEY-MCKAY - 20 - CB

Previous clubs: Carshalton Athletic, Hastings Utd, Ashford Town, Millwall. A former Jamaica youth international, Kyron brings a big physical & vocal presence from the backline and can also play as a right-back!

MACKYE TOWNSEND-WEST - 22 - CB

Previous clubs: Ware, Royston Town, Stevenage. Left-sided centre-back Mackye represents Montserrat at international level and is full of pace and aggression!

LOIC HERNANDEZ - 25 - LWB

Previous club: Barnet. A crucial figure in the Blues' squad over the past few seasons, Loic adds an injection of pace, energy and versatility to the side. Often used as an impact player, he can do a job almost anywhere on the pitch!

CAIN KELLER - 21 - RWB

Previous clubs: Billericay Town, Royston Town, Kings Langley, Biggleswade Town. Hugely versatile and exciting, Cain has recently made the shift to a more defensive role, regularly featuring as a wing-back for the Blues!

MARK CHIDI - 21 - CB

Previous clubs: Heybridge Swifts, Fisher, Reading (youth), West Bromwich Albion (youth). Another big physical and energetic presence at the back, Mark will be a handful for any striker he comes up against!

CASEY SHANN - 21 - LB

Previous clubs: Queens Park Rangers (youth), Brighton & Hove Albion (youth), Sutton Utd (youth). Casey brings more international experience to the team, having represented Slovakia at youth level. He is a left-back who is never afraid to push forward and create chances!

PLAYER PROFILES

CHARLIE STALLARD - 21 - LB

Previous clubs: Bedford Town, Enfield Town, Sutton Common Rovers, Watford, Cambridge Utd. Charlie adds a huge burst of pace and explosiveness to the side, causing fellow full-backs havoc whenever he bursts forward with the ball at his feet!

ALKEO BANI - 24 - CM

Previous clubs: Hendon, Haringey Borough, St Albans City, Basildon Utd, NK Lokomotiva Zagreb (youth), Watford (youth), Fleetwood Town (youth). Also back for another stint in Blue & White, Alkeo is a highly composed and technical midfielder, who is always looking to dictate games through the middle!

ROMEO AKINOLA - 26 - CAM

Previous clubs: St Albans City, Haringey Borough, Hendon, Queens Park Rangers U23. Romeo brings years of Step 2 experience to the side, as well as a strong injection of pace in behind our forward line!

JOHNNY ALLOTEY - 21 - LW / RW

Previous clubs: Ware, Harrow Borough. Direct and pacey winger Johnny adds extra firepower to our frontline, after reaching 22 goal involvements for Ware, last season!

CAMILO RESTREPO - 22 - FWD

Previous clubs: Hashtag Utd, Bloomsbury Football, Romford. Ballers League star Camilo has recently worn the number 9 shirt on a number of occasions, adapting exceptionally well to the striker's role and showcasing extreme versatility!

ADA OKOROGHEYE - 24 - ST

Previous clubs: Uxbridge, Beaconsfield, Amherst College. Ada is a hard-working, fierce frontman who scores goals in abundance. He is ready to embrace Step 3 after spearheading Uxbridge to promotion in the 24/25 season.

ALFIE CUE - 26 - ST

Previous clubs: Hashtag United, Sutton Common Rovers, Concord Rangers, Cheshunt, East Thurrock Utd, Hertford Town, Hitchin Town, VCD Athletic, Dartford. Another striker with a real eye for goal, Alfie is a physical number 9 with bundles of experience!

ISAAC STONES - 23 - ST

Previous clubs: Hadley, Loughborough Dynamo, Kettering Town. Having netted on 50 occasions for Hadley across the past two seasons, whilst proving a handful for many defenders in the process, Isaac is now ready to embrace life in Step 3!

GIANLUCA BOTTI - 24 - ST

Previous clubs: Horsham, Tonbridge Angels, Lewes, Whitehawk, Chertsey Town, Camberley Town, Leatherhead. Gianluca's exceptional goalscoring record speaks for itself. The Italian is a hugely exciting addition to our attacking roster!

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

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.

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.

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 $4^{\rm th}$ position with a record hall 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 new revamped side, and a manager and coaching squad with that extra year's experience and they completed a successfully stable mid-table finish.



TODAY'S VISITORS - CLUB HISTORY

Hashtag United actually owes its existence to another football team, Carmichael-Browns Athletic, which was set up by Spencer Carmichael-Brown when still at school. When highlights of a memorial match for two of his former CBA players proved popular in early 2016, Spencer was spurred on to take his team of mates – and brothers – on an incredible journey.

For the next two years, Hashtag played exhibition matches in an innovative league format devised by Spencer and his brother Seb. Taking inspiration from the FIFA game, the team would be set points targets for a group of games, and if the targets were achieved, they would be rewarded by "The Chairman" and would progress to the next level. The team played against the likes of pro football staff teams, fellow YouTube creators, sponsor teams, non-league and Sunday sides. It took the boys from Essex, to tours in Spain and the USA, and even to Wembley, with highlights playing to millions of viewers on YouTube.

The squad was bolstered in the early days by the addition of YouTube creators Theo Baker and Charlie Morley, and then graduates of the first "Hashtag Academy", a football talent series which ran on Spencer's channel. Several thousand applicants were whittled down until 16-year-old Scott Pollock emerged victorious. After impressing for Hashtag, Scott joined Northampton Town, earned a pro contract, and played for them in League 2.

In 2018 the club applied for entry into the FA's National League System, looking to make the transition from exhibition team to a competitive club in the 10th tier of English football. They were granted a place in the Eastern Senior League Division 1 (South) for the 2018/19 season and appointed experienced non-league manager Jay Devereux to lead the transition, with home games being played at Haringey Borough. Devs brought in some trusted

TODAY'S VISITORS - CLUB HISTORY

non-league faces to play alongside the remaining Hashtag originals, and despite a tough start, the new-look Hashtag eventually found their stride, going on two long winning runs and ending the season as champions. Perhaps fittingly, the new boys won the league at the Old Spotted Dog, one of London's most historic non-league grounds.

The squad for the club's Essex Senior League campaign in 2019/20 was further strengthened by the addition of more experienced non-league players and several from the second Academy series including winner Joshua Osude. The team adapted well to new surroundings at Tilbury, and when the season was voided they sat second with games in hand over the league leaders, and in two cup semi-finals.

During the extended break from football in 2020, Hashtag completed mergers with AFC Basildon Women and Forest Glade, turning what was two men's teams into a club that now has over 50 teams providing football for boys, girls, men and women from age 5 upwards.

With a new home at Bowers & Pitsea FC, the men's first team again led the league when the season was halted, luckily not before they were able to make a very dramatic FA Cup debut! A run of 3 wins saw the boys play live in front of the BBC cameras and then experience heartbreak as National League South side Braintree Town equalised from kick-off after it looked as if we had snatched victory in the last minute. Another penalty shootout win wasn't to be, but club history and incredible memories had been made.

In May 2021 the team was awarded promotion to the Isthmian League North, based on PPG record over the two curtailed seasons. The debut Isthmian North season in 2021-22 saw the

TODAY'S VISITORS - CLUB HISTORY

team finish just outside the play-offs in a creditable 8th, but a year later we were crowned Champions after a mammoth 21-game winning streak, amassing a total of 97 points!

The 23-24 season saw us finish a respectable 13th position, almost exactly mid-table, in our first season at the level, whilst the season after saw us finish a respectable 8th.



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.

The Trident Leagues and Pitching In's online Volunteer Hub is the place where you can find opportunities and contact your local football club.

Please visit

Pitchinginvolunteers.co.uk

to find out more













Manager: Ahmet Rifat

Coaches: Diogo Nobre, Jonny Georgiou, Ola Williams

Goalkeeping Coach: Gavin King

Physio: Israel Ozangbo
Kit Manager: Pete Barker

Manager: Jay Devereux
Assistant Manager: Joe Keith
Coaches: Larry Bayford, Paul Prosser
Goalkeeper Coach: Ben Sewell
Head Physio: Tyler Overton

Romeo Akinola **Johnny Allotey** Alkeo Bani Ore Bello Gianluca Botti Mark Chidi Sam Cornish Billy Cracknell (C) **Alfie Cue Rhamar Garrett-Douglas Charlie Grainger (GK)** Fergal Hale Brown (GK) Loic Hernandez **Kvron Horslev-Mckav** Cain Keller **Rvan Lowe** Caoilan Mcgettigan Ada Okorogheye

Camilo Restrepo

Casey Shann

Charlie Stallard Isaac Stones Mackye Townsend West Beniamin Watt

Jack Giddens Tom Anderson Jermaine Anderson Harry Haysom **Nathan Smith Jason Ring Nathan Wilson** Josh Ruskoe Matthew Wooldridge **Praise Oseghale Ogbedor Max Cornhill** Joe Christou **PK Humble Kegan Caull** Misha Djemaili **Evans Kouassi Emmanuel Robe Bradley Sach Toby Aromolaran Andronikos Georgiou** Luke May-Parrott

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: Stuart Smith

Assistants: Benjamin Twitchings, Luke Burford