

the Seaside

THE OFFICIAL 2023/2024 MATCHDAY PROGRAMME

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v Grays Athletic FC



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SATURDAY 24TH FEBRUARY 2024, 3PM
ISTHMIAN LEAGUE NORTH

VICE CHAIRMAN: **ANDY CLARKE**



Good afternoon everyone and a very warm welcome to the AGL Arena for today's visit of Grays Athletic.

Today is the start of the final quarter of the season in what looks to be an incredibly interesting run in for ourselves.

The month of March could be pivotal with us having to play the league leaders, along with those currently occupying the fourth and fifth spot respectively. Throw in a local Derby and a Premier Cup semi final and we have the recipe for the most important and exciting month to come.

Being in the hunt at this time of year on more than one front is what football is all about and if I'm a 100% honest I can't wait, albeit a little nervous.

It's not a surprise to me that we are where we are in the league, however at the start of the season it was all about GOALS, GOALS, GOALS. How the tide has turned, with our defensive record of late being superb. Only conceding one goal in six games is an incredible achievement at any level and it's by no means a fluke (although the one goal

we conceded at Wroxham certainly was).

The Walthamstow game was a great example of how we have come on, with us not being intimidated by what shall we say, their larger than average players, not being bullied and sticking to the game plan. This platform formed by the back five gave the boys the confidence needed to go on and win the game.

At the start of the season we may not have expected to see so much of some of those currently occupying the defensive positions, but due to injury, form and suspension we have now gotten used to seeing Lamell filling the right back birth, a position for the last few years that had been cemented by Callum Bennett and the ever green Ainsie senior rolling back the years and filling the left back role. New keeper Josh has arrived and settled well. That coupled with Jack and Joe forming a great partnership at the centre of defence we have looked an extremely strong unit.



This form was continued at Brightlingsea. With all our opponents hard work and endeavour (and this was in abundance) they never looked like troubling us and to be fair we could of played another 90 minutes

and I don't think they would have found a way past us. Goals from Josh Mayhew and Henry Barley on a blustery wet night saw us comfortably take the all important three points. On another night that was all about work rate and commitment to the cause rather than the beautiful game.

On to last Saturday and Wroxham proved to be a more even affair with our opponents taking a surprise lead scoring from a long distance cross, against the run of play it has to be said. We got a goal back through Charlie before half time and went into the break all square at 1-1.

The second half was about the result and not flowing football on a very heavy pitch. The boys worked their socks off and we got our slice of luck with Charlie scoring direct from a corner (I'm sure I heard him saying

that he meant it LOL!)

The scoring was completed late on this Josh Hitter getting his goal at the back post.

The wonderful thing was the amount of supporters that witnessed the game, as again I'm sure more and more are travelling and following the team away from home. It must give the lads a massive lift to see so many of you at the away grounds and hear you giving your support. I firmly believe that together you can make a major difference in the run in of the season.

Enjoy the game and let's hope we are celebrating another three points along with England beating the sweaty socks on the Rugby pitch, come the end of Saturday.

Cheers
Andy

PUBLICATION OF OWNERSHIP:

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FROM THE DUGOUT:
STUART BOARDLEY



Good afternoon to you all and a warm welcome to our visitors Grays Athletic.

What a start to the year it has been! It doesn't seem five minutes since we were in the middle of a sticky patch during December but all credit must go to the players for digging themselves out of it and putting together a fine run of form. I can now finally mention the clean sheet record (I hadn't before for fear of losing it). Over 500 minutes without conceding is some feat and the 'back to basics' approach we adopted following our December's form, without doubt paid dividends and we now find ourselves with just 10 games to go with us being right in the hunt at the sharp end of the table. Again, credit to all the players, each and every one of them for defending well as a group but I must highlight two (I have mentioned Mr Blunkell's contribution previously) who have really played a huge role in the record. Jack and Joe at the heart of the defence have formed a fantastic partnership, both not your traditional Step 4 centre halves and probably known better within the group for their ball playing but they have done the dirty work as well as starting the play off for us incredibly well over the last 6 weeks so long may that continue.

I have to say, Grays have been one of the surprise packages for me this season. I really fancied that they would be contesting in the



top half of the table so to see them toward the bottom was indeed that - a surprise. That said, they have some talented individuals with Aron Gordon being a real thorn in our side over the last few seasons so we know they still pose a significant threat to our unbeaten run in 2024.

Lastly, I'd just like to say THANK YOU! Thank you for your incredible support both at home but particularly away. We know how much time and effort goes into following us on our travels and your support has been loud, in numbers and it's made a huge difference believe me! Please continue to be our 12th man for the final games and hopefully we can get over the line!

Enjoy the game

Boards





SEASIDER PHIL GRIFFITHS



Not many people know this...

Speaking to a regular supporter in town a few days ago he was telling me how much he and his friends enjoyed their Saturday afternoons spent at the ground watching the Seasiders, and I of course told him, as I tell all that ask, how much the club enjoy their support, none more so than the players themselves.

Chris Daynes, the man who makes it all work off the field, is continually looking for ways to improve the supporter experience, ably supported by a small army of volunteers.

On the playing side, Stuart 'The Boss' and his sidekick Andy think they have got the answer... score more goals than the visiting

opposition, celebrate each one and enjoy it as it's a sure-fire winner.

CURRENT AVERAGE ATTENDANCES

Bury Town	557
Lowestoft Town	413
Felixstowe & Walton	373
Walthamstow	315
Stowmarket Town	308
Bowers & Pitsea	285
Heybridge Swifts	274

Our current target should be 27th April 2024 New Salamis attract a home crowd of over 413.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

"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."

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ISTHMIAN NORTH DIVISION TABLE 2023/24

POS		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Lowestoft Town	25	19	2	4	68	28	+40	59
2	Felixstowe & Walton United	26	17	5	4	61	29	+32	56
3	Bowers & Pitsea	26	15	4	7	49	37	+12	49
4	Bury Town	24	14	5	5	62	36	+26	47
5	Brentwood Town	24	14	5	5	45	23	+22	47
6	Basildon United	24	13	3	8	48	36	+12	42
7	Maldon & Tiptree	26	13	3	10	52	44	+8	42
8	Heybridge Swifts	25	12	5	8	40	34	+6	41
9	Walthamstow	24	11	6	7	39	35	+4	39
10	Brightlingsea Regent	24	10	2	12	41	42	-1	32
11	Gorleston	22	8	6	8	33	30	+3	30
12	Witham Town	25	7	7	11	35	46	-11	28
13	Wroxham	23	6	7	10	33	36	-3	25
14	New Salamis	23	6	7	10	37	52	-15	25
15	Redbridge	22	5	6	11	33	45	-12	21
16	Grays Athletic	24	4	6	14	30	48	-18	18
17	Ipswich Wanderers	23	5	3	15	21	43	-22	18
18	Enfield	23	5	3	15	24	55	-31	18
19	Stowmarket Town	25	0	5	20	26	78	-52	5

LAST UPDATED: TUESDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2024 AT 21:43:48

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE NORTH FIXTURES

FRIDAY 23RD FEBRUARY

New Salamis v Ipswich Wanderers

SATURDAY 24TH FEBRUARY

Basildon United v Bury Town
 Brentwood Town v Bowers & Pitsea
 Brightlingsea Regent v Wroxham
 Felixstowe & Walton Utd v Grays Athletic
 Lowestoft Town v Redbridge
 Stowmarket Town v Maldon & Tiptree
 Walthamstow v Heybridge Swifts
 Witham Town v Gorleston





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MATCH PHOTOS

PHOTOS
BY STEFAN
PECK

SATURDAY 10TH FEBRUARY ISTHMIAN LEAGUE NORTH Felixstowe & Walton Utd 2 Walthamstow 0

Felixstowe & Walton United secured their fourth win in a row and their fourth consecutive clean sheet with an impressive home victory over playoff chasing Walthamstow. **Sam Ford** opened the scoring on 18 minutes, twisting and turning in the box and slotting past the keeper superbly. The Seaside's could have been two or three in front with Callum Harrison and Charlie Warren having the better of the many chances that came the home sides way, whilst at the other end Josh Blunkell was in inspired form with two brilliant saves before the break. Felixstowe had less chances second half but still looked the likely scorers when pressing forward, Ford and Josh Hitter came close to a second and Walthamstow were kicking themselves after squandering two rare chances that came their way. **Josh Hitter** eased the nerves around the stadium in the 89th minute, finding the net with a clinical finish to confirm the three points.



HOW WE LINED UP

1. Joshua Blunkell
2. Lamell Howell
3. Stuart Ainsley
4. Noel Aitkens
5. Jack Ainsley
6. Joe Whight
7. Henry Barley
8. Josh Hitter
9. Sam Ford
10. Callum Harrison
11. Charlie Warren

SUBS

12. Callum Bennett
20. Josh Mayhew
15. Ivanildo Da Costa
16. Zak Brown
17. Billy Holland











OUR SQUAD

Introducing the Felixstowe & Walton United playing squad and management team of 2023/2024.



STUART BOARDLEY MANAGER

Stuart started his footballing career at Ipswich Town leaving in 2004 after 10 years. He went on to play for Torquay United, Sudbury, Leiston and Felixstowe. In 2018 he was appointed as Manager of Leiston but left in 2019 to become Manager of Felixstowe & Walton United.



ANDY CRUMP ASSISTANT MANAGER

Andy returned to Felixstowe & Walton United as Assistant Manager following the appointment of Stuart Boardley in 2019. Having enjoyed success in previous spells at the club as both player and First Team Coach.



DANNY POTTER GOALKEEPER COACH

A former pro footballer/TV star, Danny was cast into the Sky TV programme 'Dream Team' where he played for the fictional team Harchester United. Danny boasts clubs such as Torquay, Colchester and Cambridge as former employers. Recently appointed as Goalkeeper Coach, Danny brings a wealth of experience, knowledge and professionalism to Stuart's management team.



STUART STEVENSON COACH

After hanging up his boots Stuart joined Felixstowe Utd as a fitness coach/physio, then on to Trimley to help coach his son's team from the U8s-U16s. Stuart rejoined the Seasiders to coach the U18s which lead him on to being part of the first team staff. Stuart is an FA level 2 coach and an FA level 1 mentor.



CHARLOTTE LONG SPORTS THERAPIST

Charlotte graduated from the University of Worcester in 2014 with a BSc (Hons) in Sports Therapy. She had previously worked with Leiston FC before joining the Seasiders in 2019. Her main focus is overseeing the recovery programmes of injured players through her private practice.



DOUG FRENCH **KIT MAN**

Doug started his career in 1986 and played for East Anglian Customs, Walton United, Felixstowe United and Tattingsstone, breaking his leg four times in the process. Whilst playing for Ipswich Wanderers vets, Doug finally hung up his boots. Having found his vocation in washing players dirty pants, Doug is excited for a new challenge with the Seaside.



JOSHUA BLUNKELL **GOALKEEPER**

Josh joined the club in January 2024. The former AFC Sudbury keeper signed a professional contract with Wycombe Wanderers after impressing in Sudbury's televised FA Cup in 2021. Previous clubs also include AFC Sudbury, Bowers & Pitsea, Braintree Town and Kettering Town.



STUART AINSLEY **LEFT BACK**

Stuart joined the club for his second spell in 2014 from Lowestoft Town. Previous clubs include Chelmsford City and AFC Sudbury. Stuart spent 10 years at Ipswich Town, winning the FA Youth Cup in 2005. Stuart has a sweet left foot and a great work ethic.



JOE WHIGHT **DEFENDER**

Joe came through the ITFC Youth system before playing for the likes of Needham, Bury and most recently AFC Sudbury where he captained their side. A left sided defender, Joe offers composure, a wonderful left foot and a toughness and desire to defend to the back line.



CALLUM BENNETT **RIGHT BACK**

Callum is in his second spell at the club having re-joined in late 2018. An attacking full back with one of the best ball deliveries in non-league football. Callum has plenty of experience from his time at Ipswich U18s, Stoke City U21s and Notts County.



JACK AINSLEY **DEFENDER**

Rejoins from Stowmarket. Jack played professionally for ITFC after coming through their academy and went on to make 4 appearances playing under Roy Keane. Jack went on to have spells at Step 3 Lowestoft and Leiston but finds himself back at the Seaside where many describe him as a "Rolls Royce" type of player who can play in any position for the team.



TOM BULLARD **DEFENDER**

Another who joins us from Stowmarket. 'Bully' has experience across Step 3 and 4 with long and successful spells as captain at both Leiston and Bury Town. Tom is a serial winner who's experience, defensive qualities and leadership skills will add to an already impressive back line.



BILLY HOLLAND **MIDFIELDER**

Billy started life at Ipswich Wanderers and has had spells at Needham, Leiston and AFC Sudbury. He's established himself as a mainstay in the centre of midfield. Players player and Supporters player of the year last season has led to him being appointed captain for the forthcoming year.



NOEL AITKENS **MIDFIELDER**

Noel's signing for the club in 2020 caused a stir amongst the non-league world, joining from step 3 Leiston and being described by manager Boardley as "the best midfield player in this area". Noel is quick, strong, can tackle, is athletic and can really play football!



LEON OTTLEY-GOOCH **MIDFIELDER**

Leon signed for the club in 2020 and is another vastly experienced player at step 3 and 4 level. Previous clubs include Leiston, Bury Town, Hadleigh Utd and Stowmarket Town. Leon is very versatile but is predominantly a dynamic midfield player.



JOSH HITTER **MIDFIELDER**

Josh signed for us in 2021 having played his football at Step 3 side Leiston for the previous three seasons and gained a vast amount of experience at that level. Josh is a dynamic attack minded player who likes to arrive in the box late and score goals.



CALLUM HARRISON **MIDFIELDER**

Former Colchester United, Needham, Sudbury and more recently Chelmsford midfielder joined the Seasiders for the 22/23 campaign. A highly sought after creative and technically gifted midfielder that loves to get forward and provide the team with both goals and assists.



IVAN COSTA **MIDFIELDER**

Promoted into the first team squad from our Academy after a strong pre-season. Ivan is an industrious central midfield player whose work ethic and attitude is second to none.



KUBI KUSSAN **MIDFIELDER**

Another young player promoted to the first team squad from our Academy. Kubi is a technically gifted midfield player who enjoys moving with the ball. He has an edge to his game that has impressed the management throughout pre-season.



HENRY BARLEY **MIDFIELDER/FORWARD**

Henry signed for the club in 2019 following his contract expiring at Ipswich Town. Another popular young player who had also been on loan from the then EFL Championship club the previous season.



LAMELL HOWELL **MIDFIELDER/FORWARD**

Lamell signed from Brightlingsea Regent in 2020. He can play on both wings or in the number 10 position and brings pace and trickery to the side. He has previously played for Stowmarket Town, Debenham FC and Brantham Athletic.



CHARLIE WARREN **MIDFIELDER/FORWARD**

Having initially joined on loan from Needham Market, Charlie made an instant impact on his debut in the FA Trophy win at Hastings. Following a number of impressive performances, manager Boardley moved quickly to secure the permanent services of one of Suffolk's brightest young players.



ZAK BROWN **FORWARD**

A sought after and highly rated young striker with blistering pace and a great goal scoring record. At just 17, Zak penned a two year pro contract with ITFC where he was a regular marksman in the U23's. Zak started life in the Seasiders Youth sections and has returned to lead the forward line as the clubs No. 9.



SAM FORD FORWARD

Having spent a successful period with Arbroath last season that saw them just miss out on promotion to the Scottish Premiership, Sam spent the Summer with Hume City FC in Australia before returning to Felixstowe. Coming through ITFC and later West Ham's academy, Sam is a local talent who will provide real firepower in front of goal.



JOSH MAYHEW FORWARD

Josh joins us from promotion winners AFC Sudbury. An experienced front man who has been prolific at Step 4 and 5 with an impressive spell at Stowmarket yielding 136 goals in 173 games. Josh's physical presence will bring a focal point to our attack as well as a being natural finisher who is a proven goalscorer at this level.



NEXT UP AT THE AGL ARENA

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MATCH PHOTOS

PHOTOS
BY TOM
BRADFORD

TUESDAY 13TH FEBRUARY ISTHMIAN LEAGUE NORTH **Brightlingsea Regent 0 Felixstowe & Walton Utd 2**

The Seasideers were making the trip to Brightlingsea Regent, and as usual the Teydal sponge beat off anything the weather could throw at it to get the go ahead. Regent had lost six in a row coming into this one, results which had badly hampered their promotion dreams, and needed to stop the rot - but they'd have struggled to find more difficult opponents against whom to get back to winning ways. A goalless first half was followed by an opener for the visitors on fifty eight minutes, **Josh Mayhew's** eleventh of the season - one every two matches - giving his side the lead; and once they got one they quickly added another, **Henry Barley** doing his best Peter Lorimer impression (ask your...grandad) to make it two-nil.

Unsurprisingly given their defensive record, the Seasideers held onto that advantage, and kept the pressure on the leaders whilst keeping their title hopes firmly alive.

Match report courtesy of Ian Townsend (Isthmian.co.uk)



HOW WE LINED UP

1. Joshua Blunkell
2. Callum Bennett
3. Stuart Ainsley
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9. Josh Mayhew
10. Callum Harrison
11. Zak Brown

SUBS

12. Lamell Howell
14. Sam Ford
15. Charlie Warren
16. Kubi Kussan











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THE OTHER SIDE: GRAYS ATHLETIC



Although the formation of Grays Athletic is officially 1890, its origins can be traced back to 1888, when the Grays Amateur Athletic Club, which was primarily a cricket and athletic club, formed an association football branch. The modern club can be traced back to the Grays Juniors side formed in 1902, who in 1904 changed their name to Grays Athletic and who in 1906 took over the Grays Recreation Ground, the club's spiritual home for the next 104 years. Senior Status was granted in 1909, whilst in 1912 the club became a founding member of the Athenian League. Over the last hundred years, the club has experienced a roller-coaster ride. Plenty of highs, along with lows, which at times have threatened the clubs' existence.

During the 1920's the club experienced its first boom period, winning the London League three times (1922, 1927 and 1930), as well as two Essex Senior Cup triumphs (1921 and 1923), to add to their first in 1915. Towards the end of World War Two, the club experienced its next successful era, led by centre-forward, Harry Brand, who went on to become the club's record scorer with 269 goals scored between 1944 and 1952. Inspired by his goals, the Blues won the East Anglian Cup and another Essex Senior Cup in 1945. The club also won the inaugural, Corinthian League Championship, a league which as well as being founder members they were instrumental in forming.

The club re-joined the Athenian League in 1958, which gradually heralded a decline in fortunes. During the late 1960s and 1970s, the club was locked in a struggle with the trustees of the Recreation Ground to secure the venue's future. This was finally sorted in 1981 when club patron Ron Billings was persuaded to buy the ground by then club director Bryan Coker and Jeff and Fred Saxton who were the club's joint





managers at the time. With the future of the ground secured the club was about to enter another period of success. Businessman Jim Myers, owner of the Boys from Rathbone Street retail chain, was persuaded to come aboard as the new chairman. He set a target of Isthmian Premier Division football, within five years (it would take six). The first step in getting there was achieved in 1983, when the club finished as runners-up in the Athenian League, earning promotion to Division Two of the Isthmian League. Just when it seemed the club's troubles had gone, disaster struck when the 400-seater wooden stand was burned to the ground after gracing the Rec for over sixty years. This led Mr Billings to undertake ground improvements, which included new changing rooms, an indoor ballcourt and bar development.

The 1984-85 season saw the Blues secure the Isthmian League Division Two South title. Three years later promotion to the Isthmian Premier Division was achieved after finishing as runners-up to Marlow, despite gaining 100 points during the season. The club enjoyed a nine-season stay in the Premier Division, with two fifth places, in their first two seasons at that level being the highest. In 1992 the Isthmian League Cup was won, defeating league runners-up Enfield 3-1 in the final held at Dagenham's, Victoria Road Ground. Sadly in 1997, the Blues were relegated back to Division One, with the final match of the season seeing long-standing managers Jeff and Fred Saxton step down from their roles and the playing retirement of the holder of the club appearances record, Phil Sammons (748 appearances) after fifteen seasons with the Blues.

The club's most successful period came in the early to mid-2000s, with the arrival of Mick Woodward as a director. When former Tottenham Hotspur midfielder, Mark Stimson, stepped up as manager in 2002, it would herald a period of success, that no one at the club had dared to dream. The Blues were founder members of the new Conference South in the 2004-05 season and were its first champions, securing promotion to the top level of the non-league game, for the first time in its history. For good measure, the FA Trophy was also won, when Hucknall Town were defeated 6-5 on

penalties, after extra-time had ended 1-1, in the final held at Villa Park.

With players such as Jamie Stuart, Stuart Thurgood, Aaron McLean and Michael Kightly the Blues finished their first top-flight season in third place. The end-of-season play-offs were reached, but unfortunately, a poor display in the first twenty minutes of the first (away) leg of the semi-final, saw the Blues' dream of EFL football ended by Halifax Town, 5-4 on aggregate. The FA Trophy was retained, with the Blues winning it the hard way, by going through the entire competition, only facing Conference National opponents. The final, which was held at West Ham's, Boleyn Ground, saw nearly ten thousand Blues fans in the attendance of 14,000. First-half goals from Michael Kightly and Glenn Poole would send them home happy, with Grays defeating Woking by two goals to nil.

Shortly after the 2005-06 season had ended, Mark Stimson and his assistant manager, Scott Barrett, stepped down from their roles. They were replaced by former Leeds United player Frank Gray, although his reign was short, lasting only until October, when he was sacked shortly after a defeat by Bromley, in the FA Cup. It was a season where the star players of the previous few years moved on, with the club being involved in a fight against relegation from Christmas.

By the season's end, former Tottenham defender, Justin Edinburgh was in charge and the Blues just avoided relegation on the final day of the season. By the 2009-10 season, Mick Woodward had stepped down as Chairman, though still owned most of the shares. Former West Ham midfielder John Moncur became the new Chairman, joined by his friend and local businessman, Andy Swallow, who became vice-chairman. Woodward started the season as CEO, but ended his involvement in the club by November. Andy Swallow stepped in to keep the club running. By the end of the campaign, the club finished bottom. Faced with a substantial rent increase, the club vacated its home ground of the Recreation Ground after 104 years.

Rather than dropping to the Conference South, the club sought to drop a further division



to the Isthmian Premier Division. Being Grays Athletic though, nothing is ever smooth! When the league allocations were revealed, Grays were initially placed in the Essex Senior League. After an appeal to the FA held at Wembley Stadium, the Blues eventually were placed in the Isthmian North Division, a drop of three levels.

Since then, the club has led a nomadic existence, sharing first at East Thurrock United's, Rookery View Ground (2010–2012). For a season the club held the lease at the former Ford United stadium at Rush Green, which was owned by West Ham, but this deal ended in acrimony after a single season. Somewhat against the odds, the club won the Isthmian League North Division and promotion back to the Premier Division in 2013. For the last ten seasons, Aveley F.C. hosted the club's matches.

Firstly, at their old Millfield ground, then at their new Parkview Stadium. Since 2016 the club has been supporter owned, after Andy Swallow agreed to end his interest in the club and pass them to the fans to run the club. For the past seven seasons, long-time Grays supporter, Steve Skinner has been Chairman, with another long-standing supporter, Glyn Jarvis being vice-chairman. Last season under former captain Lewis Dark, Grays reached the Isthmian North Division play-off semi-final and were runners-up in the Essex Thameside Trophy.

This season sees Grays Athletic ground sharing with our oldest rivals Tilbury, at Chadfields. Mark Stimson has returned as manager and Lee Vehit and Gavin Holland, taking over the roles of Chairman and his deputy.

Shortly before the start of the 2023–24 season, Grays Athletic received good news. A joint application with a developer, to bring the former Thurrock F.C.'s ground at Ship Lane, Purfleet, back into football use alongside a pre-delivery inspection car area was granted by Thurrock Council. There still remain two stages of re-affirmation for the development to be finally approved, but Grays Athletic could finally have something it has never had before in its history - a ground which it owns. Along with a strong commitment to the local community, everyone at the club intends for it to be around for many more years.



MATCH PHOTOS

PHOTOS
BY TOM
BRADFORD

SATURDAY 17TH FEBRUARY
ISTHMIAN LEAGUE NORTH

Wroxham 1 Felixstowe & Walton Utd 3

Second place Felixstowe and Walton United were seven matches unbeaten, and had won their last five without conceding a single goal, but that mean defence was breached by hosts Wroxham on sixteen minutes as Travis Dodsworth put them ahead - although perhaps he didn't mean to, there are suspicions that his effort was actually a cross! The Seasiders hit back just before the half hour mark, **Charlie Warren** with the equaliser, and after applying enormous pressure the visitors finally went ahead nine minutes from time, **Warren** again doing the damage. Into the last four minutes and **Josh Hitter** added a third, and that was that, six wins in a row for the Seasiders, three points still the gap from second to first.

Match report courtesy of Ian Townsend (Isthmian.co.uk)



HOW WE LINED UP

1. Joshua Blunkell
2. Lamell Howell
3. Stuart Ainsley
4. Noel Aitkens
5. Jack Ainsley
6. Joe Whight
7. Henry Barley
8. Josh Hitter
9. Sam Ford
10. Charlie Warren
11. Zak Brown

SUBS

12. Callum Bennett
14. Callum Harrison
15. Archie Dunne
16. Kuni Kussan
20. Josh Mayhew













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LAST SIX MATCHES: FORM GUIDE

Felixstowe & Walton	W 3-0 v LOWE..	W 1-0 v BASI..	W 1-0 v REDB..	W 2-0 v WALT..	W 2-0 v BRIG..	W 3-1 v WROX..
Bury Town	D 2-2 v BOWE..	W 2-0 v REDB..	W 4-1 v STOW..	W 4-2 v MALD..	W 4-1 v BRIG..	W 3-1 v HEYB..
Lowestoft Town	W 3-1 v WITH..	W 2-0 v GRAY..	D 2-2 v WALT..	W 1-0 v BREN..	W 2-0 v ENFI..	W 3-1 v BOWE..
Brentwood Town	W 3-1 v MALD..	W 3-1 v REDB..	W 2-0 v WALT..	W 3-2 v GORL..	L 1-0 v LOWE..	W 2-1 v HEYB..
Gorleston	D 1-1 v STOW..	W 1-0 v REDB..	W 3-0 v ENFI..	L 3-2 v BREN..	D 1-1 v BOWE..	W 4-2 v MALD..
Bowers & Pitsea	D 2-2 v HEYB..	W 1-0 v IPSW..	W 3-1 v STOW..	D 1-1 v GORL..	L 3-1 v LOWE..	W 3-2 v REDB..
Walthamstow	L 2-0 v BREN..	W 2-0 v ENFI..	D 2-2 v LOWE..	W 2-0 v WROX..	L 2-0 v FELI..	W 4-0 v GRAY..
Basildon Utd	W 4-2 v STOW..	L 1-0 v IPSW..	L 1-0 v FELI..	W 4-0 v WITH..	L 2-1 v WROX..	W 2-1 v MALD..
Madon & Tiptree	W 2-0 v BRIG..	L 4-2 v BURY..	W 1-0 v ENFI..	W 4-2 v REDB..	L 4-2 v GORL..	L 2-1 v BASI..
Grays Athletic	W 4-1 v IPSW..	L 2-0 v LOWE..	W 3-1 v WITH..	D 1-1 v WROX..	L 3-2 v NEW..	L 4-0 v WALT..
Wroxham	W 3-2 v STOW..	L 1-0 v ENFI..	D 1-1 v GRAY..	L 2-0 v WALT..	W 2-1 v BASI..	L 3-1 v FELI..
Witham Town	L 3-1 v LOWE..	W 3-0 v HEYB..	L 3-1 v GRAY..	L 4-0 v BASI..	D 2-2 v IPSW..	W 2-1 v NEW..
New Salamis	L 5-0 v BURY..	W 4-3 v STOW..	D 2-2 v WALT..	L 2-1 v HEYB..	W 3-2 v GRAY..	L 2-1 v WITH..
Ipswich Wanderers	L 2-1 v MALD..	W 1-0 v BASI..	L 4-1 v GRAY..	L 1-0 v BOWE..	D 2-2 v WITH..	D 1-1 v STOW..
Redbridge	L 2-0 v BURY..	W 2-1 v HEYB..	L 1-0 v FELI..	L 4-2 v MALD..	D 1-1 v BRIG..	L 3-2 v BOWE..
Heybridge Swifts	D 2-2 v BOWE..	L 3-0 v WITH..	L 2-1 v REDB..	W 2-1 v NEW..	L 3-1 v BURY..	L 2-1 v BREN..
Enfield	L 3-0 v GORL..	D 2-2 v STOW..	W 1-0 v WROX..	L 2-0 v WALT..	L 1-0 v MALD..	L 2-0 v LOWE..
Stowmarket Town	L 4-3 v NEW..	D 2-2 v ENFI..	L 3-2 v WROX..	L 4-1 v BURY..	L 3-1 v BOWE..	D 1-1 v IPSW..
Brightlingsea Regent	L 2-1 v LOWE..	L 3-2 v WALT..	L 2-0 v MALD..	L 4-1 v BURY..	L 2-0 v FELI..	D 1-1 v REDB..

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE NORTH: LEADING GOALSCORERS

1	Jake Reed	Lowestoft Town	22	11	Ryan Curtis	Gorleston	10
2	Cemal Ramadan	Bury Town	21	12	Adam Hipperson	Lowestoft Town	10
3	Harvey Sayer	Lowestoft Town	21	13	Olly Sotoyinbo	Brightlingsea Regent / Walthamstow	10
4	George Smith	Maldon & Tiptree	17	14	Kai Brown	Basildon United	9
5	Louis Britton	Maldon & Tiptree	13	15	Samuel Ford	Felixstowe & Walton United	9
6	Luke Brown	Bury Town	13	16	Mekhi McKenzie	Brentwood Town	9
7	Callum Harrison	Felixstowe & Walton United	13	17	Charlie Warren	Felixstowe & Walton United	9
8	Ben Williamson	Bowers & Pitsea	13	18	Luke Johnson	Gorleston	8
9	Samir Ali	Basildon United	11	19	Jack Adlington-Pile	Heybridge Swifts	7
10	Matt Price	Bowers & Pitsea	11	20	Derek Asamoah	New Salamis / Brightlingsea Regent	7



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FIXTURES 2023/24

AUGUST

SAT 12	MALDON & TIPTREE <i>Holland, Hitter</i>	A	3PM	LEAGUE	D 2-2	ATT 211
SAT 19	WELLINGBOROUGH <i>Ford, Harrison, Holland, Warren</i>	A	3PM	EMIRATES FA CUP	W 4-1	ATT 135
SAT 26	BURY TOWN <i>Ford, Harrison, Hitter</i>	H	3PM	LEAGUE	W 3-0	ATT 401
MON 28	STOWMARKET TOWN <i>OG, Ford</i>	A	3PM	LEAGUE	D 2-2	ATT 433

SEPTEMBER

SAT 2	WOODFORD TOWN <i>Holland, Brown, Hitter, Aitkens</i>	A	3PM	FA CUP FIRST QR	W 4-1	ATT 225
SAT 9	BRENTWOOD TOWN <i>Whight (P), Aitkens</i>	H	3PM	ISUZU FA TROPHY	W 2-0	ATT 371
SAT 16	ENFIELD TOWN	A	3PM	FA CUP SECOND QR	L 3-0	
TUE 19	BOWERS & PITSEA <i>Warren, Harrison, Ford</i>	H	7.45PM	ISTHMIAN LEAGUE	W 3-2	ATT 263
SAT 23	HERTFORD TOWN <i>Harrison (2), Holland, J Ainsley, Barley, Mayhew</i>	H	3PM	ISUZU FA TROPHY	W 6-3	ATT 225
WED 27	LAKENHEATH <i>Mayhew, Warren (2), Barley</i>	A	7.45PM	SUFFOLK PREM CUP	W 4-1	
SAT 30	BASILDON UNITED <i>Whight, Bullard, Warren, Brown</i>	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 4-2	ATT 112

OCTOBER

SAT 7	BILLERICAY <i>Mayhew (2), Ford</i>	A	3PM	ISUZU FA TROPHY	L 4-3	ATT 527
TUE 10	BRIGHTLINGSEA REGENT <i>Mayhew (3), Ottley-Gooch, Ford</i>	H	7.45PM	LEAGUE	W 5-3	ATT 402
SAT 14	WALTHAMSTOW <i>Mayhew</i>	A	3PM	LEAGUE	D 1-1	ATT 434
TUE 24	REDBRIDGE <i>Warren (2), Ford, Harrison</i>	H	7.45PM	LEAGUE	W 4-0	ATT 313
SAT 28	GRAYS ATHLETIC <i>Aitkens, Brown, Hitter</i>	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 3-0	ATT 226

NOVEMBER

SAT 4	ENFIELD <i>Harrison (3), Warren, Ford</i>	H	3PM	LEAGUE	W 5-1	ATT 360
WED 8	HADLEIGH UNITED <i>Hitter, Warren</i>	H	7.45PM	SP CUP QF	W2-1	ATT 208
SAT 11	HEYBRIDGE SWIFTS <i>Warren, Harrison (2)</i>	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 3-2	ATT 310
TUE 14	WROXHAM	H	7.45PM	LEAGUE	L 2-0	ATT 467
SAT 25	WITHAM TOWN <i>Harrison (2)</i>	A	3PM	LEAGUE	L 3-2	ATT 168

DECEMBER

SAT 2	GORLESTON <i>Ford, Hitter, Warren, Harrison</i>	H	3PM	LEAGUE	W 4-0	ATT 223
SAT 9	NEW SALAMIS <i>Harrison</i>	A	3PM	LEAGUE	D 1-1	ATT 78
SAT 16	MALDON & TIPTREE	H	3PM	LEAGUE	L 1-0	ATT 341
SAT 23	IPSWICH WANDERERS <i>Ford, Barley</i>	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 2-1	ATT 232
SAT 30	BOWERS & PITSEA <i>Holland</i>	A	3PM	LEAGUE	L 2-1	ATT 302

JANUARY

MON 1	STOWMARKET TOWN <i>Holland, Whight</i>	H	3PM	LEAGUE	W 2-1	ATT 561
SAT 6	BRENTWOOD TOWN <i>Aitkens, Mayhew</i>	A	3PM	LEAGUE	D 2-2	ATT 246
SAT 13	LOWESTOFT TOWN <i>Mayhew, Holland, Harrison</i>	H	3PM	LEAGUE	W 3-0	ATT 431
SAT 27	BASILDON UNITED <i>Whight</i>	H	3PM	LEAGUE	W 1-0	ATT 340

FEBRUARY

SAT 3	REDBRIDGE <i>Bullard</i>	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 1-0	ATT 83
SAT 10	WALTHAMSTOW <i>Ford, Hitter</i>	H	3PM	LEAGUE	W 2-0	ATT 373
TUES 13	BRIGHTLINGSEA REGENT <i>Mayhew, Barley</i>	A	7.45PM	LEAGUE	W 2-0	ATT 128
SAT 17	WROXHAM <i>Warren (2), Hitter</i>	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 3-1	ATT 181
SAT 24	GRAYS ATHLETIC	H	3PM	LEAGUE		

MARCH

SAT 2	ENFIELD	A	3PM	LEAGUE		
SAT 9	HEYBRIDGE SWIFTS	H	3PM	LEAGUE		
SAT 16	BRENTWOOD TOWN	H	3PM	LEAGUE		
SAT 23	LOWESTOFT TOWN	A	3PM	LEAGUE		
SAT 30	BURY TOWN	A	3PM	LEAGUE		

APRIL

MON 1	IPSWICH WANDERERS	H	3PM	LEAGUE		
SAT 13	WITHAM TOWN	H	3PM	LEAGUE		
SAT 20	GORLESTON	A	3PM	LEAGUE		
SAT 27	NEW SALAMIS	H	3PM	LEAGUE		

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PITCHING IN ISTHMIAN LEAGUE NORTH ROUND UP

BY IAN TOWNSEND, TAKEN FROM WWW.ISTHMIAN.CO.UK

Lowestoft and Felixstowe continue to battle for top spot, Brentwood climb to fourth, Walthamstow and Gorleston get four, and Witham win in North London



Leaders **Lowestoft Town** had seen their lead at the top of Pitching In isthmian North cut to three points, and they had a tricky trip to fourth place **Bowers and Pitsea** latest on their schedule. The Trawler Boys were five unbeaten and looking for a third successive win, but the Bowers unbeaten run went back even further, eight matches, and they'd won six of their last seven at the Len Salmon so would have been full of hope - hope which would have slipped a little when Jake Reed put the visitors ahead after just eight minutes. Ten

minutes after half time Bowers challenge became rather more difficult, Luke Reeve seeing red and Harvey Sayer stepping up to make it two-nil from the spot, but they did get a goal back through Matt Price eleven minutes from time. Sadly for the home fans that just spurred the visitors into action, Sayer making it three-one with eight minutes left, and that was that - a Lowestoft double over their hosts. Image from **Shirley Whitlow**.

Brentwood Town, starting the day in fifth spot, travelled to take on the side two places and three points behind them, **Heybridge Swifts**. The Blues hadn't played since a late, late goal saw them defeated by Lowestoft on February 6th, but prior to that were eight games unbeaten and would have been confident of starting another positive run, particularly as Swifts had lost three of their previous four, and they went ahead after just four minutes, Jesse Olukolu with his first blue goal in his sixth blue match. Swifts levelled at the start of the second half, Jack Adlington-Pile with his seventh goal in seventeen since returning to the club, but the next blow was blue, George Sykes restoring the visitors lead twenty minutes from time. This time the Blues held onto their advantage, and climbed to fourth - although had Swifts not missed a penalty the outcome may have been somewhat different.

Maldon and Tiptree hoped to win at **Gorleston** and for neighbours Heybridge

Swifts to do them a favour at Brentwood, but they couldn't manage the former so the latter became irrelevant. The Greens went ahead on twenty five minutes through Ismael Fatadjo, and six minutes later it was two-nil, Jacek Zielonka with the second. Gorleston added a third ten minutes after the break, Ryan Curtis with that one, but then the Jammers finally decided they should try to get out of this particular jam, and quickly got two goals back, Jayden Randell and George Smith giving them hope. That hope dissipated a little when Curtis added a fourth for the Greens twenty one minutes from time, but a red card for Gorleston's George Keys with six minutes left might have made a difference. It didn't, and Gorleston are eleventh.

Grays Athletic and **Walthamstow** met at Tilbury. Stow started the day eight points away from the top five, but with only three defeats from ten were in decent form, and it showed as they charged into a commanding lead. First, Brian Moses put them ahead on eleven minutes - and Moses had another eight minutes before the break, but that was the third, a Ryan Herval goal on thirty two minutes the meat in that particular sandwich. It was four-nil by half time, an own goal adding to the rout, and although Athletic kept out the visitors after the break it really didn't help much, the damage was already done. Walthamstow close the gap on the top five to seven points.

It feels like **Brightlingsea Regent**, in tenth at kick off, were challenging for a play off place only a few weeks ago, but they travelled to **Redbridge** with thirteen points between them and the top five, which perhaps demonstrated the depths which they had dived of late. The Motormen broke the deadlock in the early stages of the second half, Lewis Clark with the opener, but deep, deep into added time at the end of the match Kurt Smith popped up to earn Regent a point. They stay tenth, Redbridge are fifteenth, and both games between the sides this season have ended level.

New Salamis played host to **Witham Town**, fourteenth v thirteenth. The hosts got back to winning ways last time out, defeating Grays Athletic three-two, but their performances this season had ranged from woeful to wonderful and just about everything in between, so we had no idea what to expect - and given you could very much say the same about their visitors it was difficult to know what to expect. What we got was a speedy start from Witham, an own goal and a Shakeel Morris effort making it two-nil after just eight minutes, but the hosts made a game of it when Christos Batzelis got a goal back with nineteen minutes to go. The visitors held out, however, and took the points back to Essex.

Finally, we had nineteenth v eighteenth and a bunch of travelling bananas (headline image- Sarah Merritt) as **Stowmarket Town** and **Ipswich Wanderers** met at Greens Meadow. There may have been only one place between the sides but that statistic was accompanied by thirteen points, and Stow hadn't yet managed to find a win all season - but they did go ahead in this one, Ewan Gordon-Clement scoring on twenty one minutes. They couldn't hold onto that advantage for long, a Matt 'Steak Bake' Blake spot kick levelling for the visitors seven minutes later, and that turned out to be that. Stow are thirteen points from safety.

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SUPERSTARS OF THE SUBCONTINENT

BY MARTYN GREEN, THE UNTOLD GAME

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One of football's great mysteries is the struggle of the subcontinent to make an impact on the global game. India now has the biggest population in the world, nearly 1.5 billion people, and yet the nation has been unable to find 11 individuals to get them to a level where they can even take part in a World Cup, let alone compete for one. Of course, football fights a losing battle for popularity with cricket in India, but perennial underachievement didn't have to be the expectation. There was a time when the future of Indian football looked bright, and they reached the summit of their continent's elite.

The Asian nation had shown promise in the previous decade, taking on France in an infamous barefooted performance at the 1948 Olympics and losing by a single goal. The appointment of Syed Abdul Rahim brought a focus on tactics rather than endurance. As the 1950s progressed, he adopted the successful Hungarian style that brought them so close to the World Cup in 1954, and saw his team grow in stature.

India reached the semi-finals of the 1960 Olympics with impressive victories against Hungary and France. But the 1962 Asian Games in Jakarta were nearly missed altogether. The Indian government almost didn't provide the finances for the team to travel to Indonesia, and then, under pressure from some countries, the Indonesian government refused to provide visas for Israeli and Taiwanese athletes.



Guru Dott Sondhi, the Indian member of the International Olympic Committee, suggested the games be renamed the Jakarta games, if not every nation in Asia were able to compete. There was uproar.

India's team arrived in Indonesia to jeers that would continue throughout the tournament. Players had to sit on the floor of the team bus to avoid missiles. The offices of the Indian High Commission were ransacked by baying mobs. Not the best preparation for a talented team.

And the team was talented. Peter Thangaraj had been voted the best goalkeeper in Asia just a few years before. Jarnail Singh was a powerful centre-back who had won international acclaim in the Olympics. Yusuf Khan was a beautifully versatile midfielder who gave the team whatever they needed. And Chuni Goswami, the best footballer India has ever produced, and a prolific inside-forward.

He turned down a trial with Tottenham to stay at home, such was his talent. The omens were promising.

But the atmosphere was not. India wilted under the Indonesian pressure in their first game, against South Korea, who they had never beaten. They slumped to a disappointing 2-0 defeat, with nobody doing themselves any credit. The only superstar who avoided criticism was Thangaraj; the goalkeeper was absent with 'flu.

The second match required a response, and after some harsh words from Rahim, India certainly provided it. Goswami opened the scoring in a 4-1 victory, but Jarnail Singh picked up a head injury toward the end of the match. India's confidence was up, though, and they cruised to a fairly comfortable 2-1 victory over Japan in their final group game, despite a late scare.

In the semi-finals, India would have to overcome a South Vietnam side who were quietly having a very good tournament, having scored 9 and conceded just 1 in the group stages. Rahim brought Jarnail Singh back into the team after missing out against Japan, but decided to reintroduce him as a striker.

India took the lead in the 12th minute, and ran riot in the first half, hitting the post before Jarnail Singh added a second just before half time. But South Vietnam were not overawed, and came out for the second half fighting. They reduced the deficit with a penalty, and then equalised just past the hour. India responded, and upped their attack again. On 75 minutes, Goswami scored a cheeky lob to reestablish their lead. It would turn out to be the winner.

In the final, India's opponents would be South Korea once again. The night before, unable to sleep, the squad went for a walk. They encountered Rahim, smoking in the darkness. With quiet calm, he asked them to win the gold for him.



India flew out of the blocks, and on 17 minutes Goswami danced around a couple of defenders to set up PK Banejee for the lead. Three minutes later, Jarnail Singh - playing as a forward again - headed home a free kick. His move forward confounded the Koreans.

But India didn't extend their lead, and near the end of the game South Korea found a consolation. But the Indian defence held firm, and gave Rahim the gold he had wanted so desperately. As the players celebrated, and the disappointed crowd booed, they found their inspirational manager sitting quietly in the dressing room, crying with joy.

The country and the government were ecstatic, but that joy was short. Having achieved his gold, Rahim - a chain smoker - passed away from lung cancer the following year. His replacements, ever since, have focussed on the physical side of the game, to India's detriment.

As one of his players said, Rahim took Indian football with him to the grave.

Enjoy the game.



MATCHDAY SQUADS

Isthmian League North
Saturday 24th February 2024, 3pm



Felixstowe & Walton Utd FC

Manager: Stuart Boardley

Assistant Manager: Andy Crump

🟡	🟡	🟡	Jack Ainsley
🟡	🟡	🟡	Stuart Ainsley
🟡	🟡	🟡	Noel Aitkens
🟡	🟡	🟡	Henry Barley
🟡	🟡	🟡	Callum Bennett
🟡	🟡	🟡	Joshua Blunkell (GK)
🟡	🟡	🟡	Zak Brown
🟡	🟡	🟡	Tom Bullard
🟡	🟡	🟡	Sam Ford
🟡	🟡	🟡	Callum Harrison
🟡	🟡	🟡	Josh Hitter
🟡	🟡	🟡	Billy Holland (C)
🟡	🟡	🟡	Lamell Howell
🟡	🟡	🟡	Josh Mayhew
🟡	🟡	🟡	Leon Ottley-Gooch
🟡	🟡	🟡	Charlie Warren
🟡	🟡	🟡	Joe Whight

red/yellow - goals - played

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Grays Athletic FC

Manager: Darren Manning

Assistant Manager: Joe Gadsdon

🟡	🟡	🟡	Giani Ashley
🟡	🟡	🟡	Joao Carlos
🟡	🟡	🟡	Kien Connolly
🟡	🟡	🟡	Codey Cosgrave
🟡	🟡	🟡	Billy Crook
🟡	🟡	🟡	Omar Dacas
🟡	🟡	🟡	Michael Finneran
🟡	🟡	🟡	Andy George
🟡	🟡	🟡	Julian Gibson
🟡	🟡	🟡	Aron Gordon
🟡	🟡	🟡	Kyan Gulliver
🟡	🟡	🟡	Jack Humphrey
🟡	🟡	🟡	Alejandro Machado
🟡	🟡	🟡	Kevin Manuel (GK)
🟡	🟡	🟡	Rohat Matyar
🟡	🟡	🟡	Marcus Milner
🟡	🟡	🟡	Troy Osei-Bobie
🟡	🟡	🟡	Jordan Peart
🟡	🟡	🟡	Phil Roberts
🟡	🟡	🟡	Danny Sambridge
🟡	🟡	🟡	Elliott Sartorius
🟡	🟡	🟡	Charlie Stimson
🟡	🟡	🟡	Malaki Toussaint
🟡	🟡	🟡	Bobby Unwin

MATCH OFFICIALS:

Referee: Mr Thomas Harvey **Assistant Referees:** Mr Cameron Saunders and Mr Louis Lofts