

# HARPENDEN TOWN

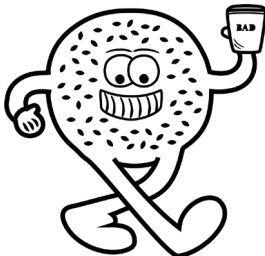
## v REAL BEDFORD

Spartan South Midlands League Premier Division  
3pm Saturday, December 2, 2023



**ONE TEAM  
ONE TOWN**

Photo by Dave Grainger



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# GREEN & GOLD



**HARPENDEN TOWN  
FOOTBALL CLUB**  
Founded 1891

### **CHAIRMAN**

Roman Motyczak  
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### **CLUB SECRETARY**

Stephen Hartnup  
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### **FIXTURE SECRETARY**

Gareth Waldram  
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### **MANAGER**

Micky Nathan

### **ASSISTANT MANAGER**

Steve O'Reilly

### **FIRST TEAM COACH**

Rob Swan

### **COACHES**

Ivan Arapov  
Noah Horwood  
James Ouston (GK)

### **TWITTER**

@Harpenden\_Town

### **INSTAGRAM**

@harpenden\_town\_fc



# Good afternoon and welcome

This afternoon we welcome the league leaders Real Bedford to Rothamsted Park. On Tuesday night they beat Potton United 3-1 at home to extend their run of consecutive league wins to 10 matches.

There'll be a familiar face in Real Bedford colours too – Josh Setchell, who wore the green and gold last season, joined them in the summer and has had a good start to his time there. A warm welcome to Josh and everyone connected with Real Bedford.

There's more football here at Rothamsted Park this weekend because after winning their League Cup tie at Wodson Park 3-1 last Sunday, Harpenden Town Women are in league action tomorrow afternoon against Biggleswade United Reds. Kick-off is at 2pm.

### **Stansted fixtures reversed**

With four more home league games originally scheduled in the next four weeks and only six due to be played between January and the end of the season, we asked Stansted whether they would be willing to reverse our upcoming fixtures.

They agreed and so we will be away to Stansted next Saturday (December 9) with the home match now scheduled to take place at Rothamsted Park on Saturday, February 3. It gives us one more home game to look forward to in 2024 and leaves our fixture list looking a bit less lopsided. Thank you to Stansted and the League for accommodating our request.

Keep an eye on Twitter and Facebook for updates.

**GREEN&GOLD**

### **HONOURS**

**Herts County League Western Division champions**  
1910-11, 1911-12, 1920-21

**Herts County League champions**  
1950-51, 1952-53, 1954-55

**South Midlands League champions**  
1961-62, 1964-65

**South Midlands League Division One champions**  
1989-90

**Spartan South Midlands League Premier Division Cup**  
2017-18

**Herts Charity Shield**  
1967-68



## HARPENDEN TOWN 3 LONDON LIONS 2

An early goal, a string of fine saves from 17-year-old goalkeeper Matt Burch and a strong second half display helped Harpenden Town make it five games unbeaten in all competitions despite a late strike from London Lions last Saturday.

James Ewington's seventh goal of the season got Harpenden off to a flying start after just five minutes, despite protests from the Lions players that it should have been ruled out for offside.

Harpenden could have doubled the lead shortly afterwards but Hadley Gleeson, playing in a more central role than usual, had his shot saved by the Lions keeper.

At the other end, Burch, who was making his home league debut for Harpenden, tipped a looping shot over the bar. That was the first of several smart stops by the youngster, who was stepping up from the under-18s. The next came on the half-hour mark when he saved low down to his left after a neat Lions move and shot.

A spell of pressure from the visitors paid off after 33 minutes when the ball broke for Max Kyte to curl a shot beyond Burch. Another reaction save from Burch kept the

scores level at the break after a fiery end to the half.

In the second period, Harpenden's subs helped change the game. Just after the hour-mark, the hosts regained the lead. Within a couple of minutes of coming on, Isaiah Hilaire attacked down the wing and cut the ball back for Harry Andic to fire home.

Ewington almost made it 3-1 shortly afterwards, then Reece Crowter had a shot saved when he might have squared to Ewington, who was unmarked in the middle.

The Lions caused a scare in the 87th minute when a dangerous corner needed a decisive clearance. Harpenden pushed forward looking for the goal to make the game safe. Andic had a shot that hit the top of the bar. Four minutes into injury time Crowter, making his first appearance in green and gold since joining from Arlesey Town, looked to have earned Harps the breathing space their second half display deserved when he cut inside and fired home.

There was still time for the Lions to set up a nervy finish when Ezra Aaron scored with a fine strike but Harpenden held firm to secure three points.



# WELCOME TO ROTHAMSTED PARK

# REAL BEDFORD



## HONOURS

**Spartan South Midlands League  
Division One champions** 2022-23  
**Bedfordshire Senior Trophy  
winners** 2012-13, 2022-23

**Ground** McMullen Park  
**Nickname** The Pirates  
**Home kit** Orange and black  
**Away kit** White and black



**Manager:** Rob Sinclair  
**Assistant:** Mark Duckett  
**Coach:** Peter Thornes  
**GK coach:** Ian Brown  
**Physio:** Lottie Burton  
**Kitman:** Gerry McCormack

Based in the county town of Bedford, Bedford FC was established in 2002 as a merger of Bedford United and US Valerio.

Bedford United was established in 1957 as a staff team for the printing firm Diemer & Reynolds. In 1971 the club joined Division Three of the United Counties League, renamed Division 2 the following season. They remained in Division 2 until leaving the league in 1979, dropping into the Bedfordshire County League and going on to win Division One in 1979-80.

In 1989 they joined Division One of the South Midlands League, becoming a member of the Senior Division following league reorganisation in 1993. The 1995-96 campaign saw them finish third, earning promotion to the Premier Division.

In 1997 the South Midlands League merged with the Spartan League to form the Spartan South Midlands League, with Bedford United placed in the Premier Division North. After finishing 14th in the league's first season, they were placed in the Senior Division the following season.

A third-place finish in 1999-2000 saw them promoted to the Premier Division.

Bedford United initially played on a pitch at the printers' firm before moving to the nearby village of Cople and returning to Bedford to play at Allen Park. They later played at Fairhill on Clapham Road, where the club's record attendance of 1,500

## Real Bedford The past 10 seasons

Season	League	Step	Position	
2013-14	Spartan South Midlands League Division One	6	3rd / 20	
2014-15	Spartan South Midlands League Division One	6	3rd / 21	promoted
2015-16	Spartan South Midlands League Premier Division	5	22nd / 22	relegated
2016-17	Spartan South Midlands League Division One	6	19th / 21	
2017-18	Spartan South Midlands League Division One	6	12th / 20	
2018-19	Spartan South Midlands League Division One	6	5th / 20	
2019-20	Spartan South Midlands League Division One	6	–	abandoned
2020-21	Spartan South Midlands League Division One	6	–	abandoned
2021-22	Spartan South Midlands League Division One	6	7th / 20	
2022-23	Spartan South Midlands League Division One	6	1st / 20	promoted

*Source: Football Club History Database fchd.info – As Bedford until 2022-23 season*

watched a South Midlands League match against local rivals Bedford Town.

The land was later bought by Sainsbury's supermarket and Bedford United, shared with Kempston Rovers at Hillgrounds in Kempston before moving to McMullen Park in 1996. The ground was named after Jim McMullen, one of the club's founders.

US Valerio, formerly known as Unione Sportiva Valerio, was formed in 1985, the name coming from the Italian for Sporting Union, with the addition of the surname of the founder Mr Nicola Valerio. US Valerio started in the Michael Peters Sunday League achieving relative success over the years. US Valerio won the Harrison & Rowley Cup in 2005-06.

The two clubs merged in 2002 to form Bedford United & Valerio, taking Bedford United's place in the Premier Division of the Spartan South Midlands League. They finished second-bottom of the Premier Division in 2004-05 and were relegated to Division One. In 2006 they were renamed

Bedford Valerio United before being renamed simply Bedford FC in 2007.

In 2014-15 they finished third in Division One, earning promotion to the Premier Division. However, the club finished bottom of the Premier Division the following season and were relegated back to Division One.

In April 2022, the club was taken over by the podcaster, journalist and Bitcoin entrepreneur Peter McCormack, who became chairman and set the goal of getting the team into the Football League and, ultimately, the Premier League.

Before the 2022-23 season, the club changed its name to Real Bedford, adopted orange shirts as their home colours, and revamped the badge to feature a skull and crossbones motif.

Last season – their first as Real Bedford – the team won the Division One title with 99 points, earning promotion to the Premier Division. They also added the Bedfordshire Senior Trophy. This season they have lost just once in the league, to St Panteleimon.



Celebration time for the boys in green and gold after Harry Andic put us 2-1 up against London Lions.

## MEET THE CHAIRMAN

# TEN YEARS AT THE HELM

When Roman Motyczak looks around the transformed Rothamsted Park he can't help but think back to what it was like when he first took over as chairman a decade ago.

The club was on the verge of bankruptcy, the facilities were in a poor state and the team had been frustrated in their attempts to gain promotion from Division One of the Spartan South Midlands League.

'I first got involved with a couple of other people about a year before I actually became chairman,' says Roman. 'We were trying to rescue the club because it was facing bankruptcy. We managed to secure a thousand pounds to see us through to the start of the season. Principally I was programme editor for the first year but then the chairman's work commitments took him away so he resigned and everyone sort of said "why don't you take it on?". So I did.'

'There wasn't a lot of competition to become chairman back then because it was a club with a leaky roof and a muddy pitch. It's a very different place now. Crowds have gone from 30 or 40 to over 150 or nearly 200 quite often. The new pitch and the improvements to the ground have transformed the place but that didn't happen overnight. It's been a lot of work by a lot of people over ten years.'

Roman, who grew up watching his local side Reading at Elm Park, moved to Harpenden in 1996. His wife and three daughters were involved with gymnastics and so he'd often find himself at a loose end on Saturday afternoons and started watching the team. Gradually he got more heavily involved.

Shortly after Roman took over as chairman the manager Simon Andrews left and so his first big decision was to promote assistant manager Danny Plumb to the top job. 'Danny was the manager for the first six years and every year we were improving. We finished eighth in the first season, then sixth, then fourth and then second so we got promoted to the Premier Division,' says Roman.

In 2017-18, Harps finished third behind Welwyn Garden City and Berkhamsted in

their first season back in the Premier Division. 'We had a really good team and possibly should have come second but perhaps we were a bit naive at times,' says Roman. 'There was the excitement of coming into a new league and the team performed really, really well. We possibly could have got promotion and we perhaps should have invested at that time. I don't know if we were ready for it but we'd have taken it.'

After a 14th place finish the following season, Plumb decided to step down at the end of the 2018-19 season. Initially Martin Standen replaced him but he moved on after six months when offered the opportunity to go to Bedford Town as assistant. Roman again promoted from within – appointing Standen's first team coach Micky Nathan in February 2020 only for Covid to stop football in its tracks little over a month later. The following season was also curtailed by Covid and so although Nathan and his management team have been in charge for almost four years they've only had two full seasons.

'While we've made big improvements off the pitch Micky, Steve and the management team are building something too,' says Roman. 'They've laid the foundations and they're looking to push on as well. Players want to play in front of a crowd, they want to hear a cheer when they score a goal, not just a couple of claps. We're now attracting crowds on a par with clubs at Step 4 or even Step 3 clubs and when we score there's a big cheer. Everything is moving in the right direction.'

With the new all-weather pitch, terracing on one side of the ground, seats in the stand and covered standing area, Roman knows the club now has the foundations to operate at a higher level. 'I've heard it said Harpenden isn't a football town but any town with a population of 30,000 people and four secondary schools is a football town. The Colts are one of the biggest youth football organisations in the country so we are a football town,' he says.

The introduction of end-of-season play-



# ROMAN MOTYCZAK

offs at Step 5 have increased the chances of promotion but have also intensified competition.

‘Reaching the play-offs is the goal, if at all possible,’ he says. ‘Everyone in the league has seen the play-offs give them an opportunity and keep the interest going to the end of the season. We’re on the edge of the play-offs now. We’d like to be a bit higher but we can challenge from here and hopefully push on.’

## GREEN & GOLD

When Roman took over as chairman the team played in yellow shirts and blue shirts but in the run-up to the club’s 130th anniversary in 2021, Roman found a poster made in 1919 to commemorate the Harpenden Town players and officials who served in the Great War. It mentions that the club’s colours were green and gold stripes.

‘I liked yellow and blue a lot,’ he says, ‘not least because it’s the colours of the Ukrainian flag.’

Roman’s parents came to Britain from Ukraine after the Second World War, as his surname – pronounced Motachak – suggests. ‘Green and gold stripes is such a unique combination and that really appealed to me. It does cause some issues sourcing the kit because there’s a limited number of manufacturers that do green and gold stripes, but I think it’s something we should stick with because it goes back to our original heritage. I’d like it to stay as our kit and I’d love to see the team playing in it at a higher level.’

The temptation to refer to Rothamsted Park as Roman’s Empire is strong but he’s too modest to take all the credit and is quick to stress running the club is a huge team effort, with dozens of volunteers mucking in. Roman rolls his sleeves up on a weekly basis,



whether that’s heading to the cash and carry to ensure the bar is well stocked, tidying up at the ground or painting the away team dressing room floor, as he did a few weeks ago.

‘Off the pitch is as important as on the pitch,’ he says. ‘When I came here there were holes in the roof and no toilet paper. It’s now a nice place to come. We’re sharing the facilities with others now, we’re partnering with other people, and that brings a different dynamic but it also gives us a lot of opportunities.’

‘I’d love to get to the play-offs this season and work on my transition to hand it over to the next generation of people who’ll look after the club, help it progress and build on the foundations that I and other people have put in place.’

# QUESTION TIME

## RYAN PLOWRIGHT

**Age:** 30

**Favourite playing position and shirt number**  
Midfielder and has to be number 4 because of Patrick Vieira – what a player!

**Where are you from?** Harpenden lad, went to Roundwood Park, a stone's throw from the ground

**Previous clubs** MK Dons, Cambridge United, Hemel Hempstead Town, Kings Langley, St Neots, Banbury, Dunstable Town, Leighton Town

**Harpenden Town debut** Which time? I've had a debut twice but wouldn't have a clue who against – too long ago!

**What did you sing for your initiation at Harpenden Town?** Plan B – Charmaine

**What's your earliest football memory?** Playing for Harpenden Colts

**First match you went to** It was at Highbury. What a ground!

**First football shirt you owned** Arsenal shirt with Robert Pires on the back! I would run off doing his trademark finger-wag celebration

**Who do you support now?** You can probably guess by now – Arsenal

**What's the biggest match you've played in?**  
There's a few cup finals I could choose from but playing at Villa Park with over 15,000 fans has to be up there

**You're hosting a dinner party, which four guests would you invite?**  
Probably a few of my mates – wouldn't bother me having anyone famous

**And what would you cook (or order in)?**  
I cook a decent spag bol

**What's the best thing about Harpenden?**  
The lads – and being able to get to the pub quickly for the late kick-off on TV is a plus

**What do you do for a living?** Site manager

**What are the best and worst things about step five football?** The pitches are best and worst. It's a double-edged sword. Who doesn't love a wet, muddy pitch but we seem to barely have games through some months due to cancellations

**Favourite ground you've played at**

Too many to choose from, all for different reasons

**Best game you've ever attended**

Not the best result but Barcelona away to watch Arsenal. Lost 3-1 but what a day and night!

**Who do you travel to away games with?**

Normally alone or with my old man in the car chewing my ear off about something!

**You're travelling to an away game and you're in charge of the music. What's on the playlist?**

Bit of techno. Let's just say it divides opinions

**Which of your teammates have the best and worse dress sense?**

I'd say JC for best dressed, the fella could wear his Nan's curtains and still pull it off. Worst dressed – the jury is still out on this one

**After football, what other sport are you best at?** Cricket. I've got that reverse sweep on lock

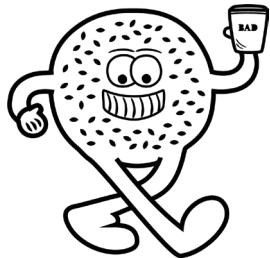
**What's your personal goal for the 2023-24 season?** Playing more than two games in a row without getting injured would be nice

**Can supporters follow you on social media?**  
Instagram @ryanplowright





# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS



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@Stburgerherts



# 2023-24 results & fixtures

## Spartan South Midlands League Premier Division

### August

Tue 1	Tring Town	A	1-1	137	Anthony (pen)
Sat 12	Shefford Town & Campton	A	4-2	91	Younger 2, Oluwatoyin, Gleeson
Wed 16	London Lions	A	4-4	60	O'Leary, Palmer, Andic, Monaghan
Sat 26	St Panteleimon	A	3-2	30	Palmer, Shuttlewood, og
Tue 29	Leverstock Green	A	0-2	118	

### September

Sat 9	Dunstable Town	H	4-0	427	Ewington 2, Gleeson, O'Leary
Tue 12	Potton United	H	2-1	127	Anthony, Locke
Sat 16	Biggleswade United	H	1-3	169	Ewington
Sat 30	FC Romania	H	2-1	167	Plowright, Fitzgerald

### October

Sat 7	St Panteleimon	H	0-1	151	
Tue 17	Crawley Green	A	3-4	40	Gleeson 2, Riley
Sat 28	Arlesey Town	H	2-2	131	Ewington, Rahho

### November

Sat 4	Leverstock Green	H	3-1	201	Ewington, Locke, og
Sat 11	Potton United	A	0-0	101	
Sat 25	London Lions	H	3-2	142	Ewington, Andic, Crowter

### December

Sat 2	Real Bedford	H			
Sat 9	Stansted	A *			
Sat 16	Cockfosters	H			
Sat 23	Arlesey Town	A			
Wed 27	Colney Heath	H			
Sat 30	Milton Keynes Irish	H			

### January

Sat 6	Baldock Town	A			
Tue 16	Sawbridgeworth Town	A			
Sat 27	Aylesbury Vale Dynamos	H			

### February

Sat 3	Stansted	H *			
Sat 10	Real Bedford	A			
Feb 17	Cockfosters	A			

### March

Sat 2	Aylesbury Vale Dynamos	A			
Tue 6	FC Romania	A			
Sat 9	Tring Athletic	H			
Sat 16	Biggleswade United	A			
Tue 19	Crawley Green	H			
Sat 23	Baldock Town	H			
Sat 30	Colney Heath	A			

\* Our fixtures against Stansted have been reversed. We are now away on December 9. The home game is scheduled for February 3. Keep an eye on our social media for all fixture news.  
[twitter.com/Harpenden\\_Town](https://twitter.com/Harpenden_Town)

## April

Tue 2	Milton Keynes Irish	A
Sat 6	Sawbridgeworth Town	H
Sat 13	Shefford Town & Campton	H
Sat 20	Dunstable Town	A

## Cup matches

### FA Cup

Aug 8	Stanway Rovers	A	1-3	Machado
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### FA Vase

Sept 23	Wembley	H	0-4	127
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### Herts Charity Shield

Sept 19	Tring Athletic	A	1-3	Younger
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### Herts Senior Challenge Cup

Oct 10	Ware	H	0-4	92
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### Gladwish Challenge Trophy

Nov 14	St Panteleimon	H	2-2	65	Ewington, Locke
	<i>won 5-4 on penalties</i>				

Jan 23	Potton United	A
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### Premier Division Cup

Dec 12	Cockfosters	A
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## Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
<b>1 Real Bedford</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>46</b>
2 Milton Keynes Irish	16	13	2	1	54	10	44	41
3 Leverstock Green	18	11	2	5	40	32	8	35
4 St Panteleimon	16	10	4	2	36	17	19	34
5 FC Romania	19	10	3	6	48	34	14	33
6 Biggleswade United	16	8	3	5	39	35	4	27
<b>7 Harpenden Town</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>25</b>
8 Cockfosters	16	6	6	4	35	27	8	24
9 Potton United	17	7	2	8	24	32	-8	23
10 Dunstable Town	16	5	5	6	28	29	-1	20
11 London Lions	17	5	5	7	35	38	-3	20
12 Aylesbury Vale Dynamos	16	6	2	9	32	42	-10	20
13 Baldock Town	19	7	1	11	38	47	-9	19 *
14 Tring Athletic	17	5	4	8	25	34	-9	19
15 Colney Heath	16	5	2	9	20	32	-12	17
16 Crawley Green	17	3	4	10	25	42	-17	13
17 Shefford Town & Campton	15	3	4	8	23	46	-23	13
18 Stansted	14	3	3	8	19	32	-13	12
19 Arlesey Town	15	3	3	9	13	37	-24	12
20 Sawbridgeworth Town	15	0	4	11	15	38	-23	4

\*Three points deducted



# HARPENDEN TOWN

Manager: Micky Nathan  
Colours: Green and gold

Eman Olajide (GK)
Jake Collins
Conor Clarke
Archie Locke
Daniel Palmer
Joshua Rodrigues
Ben Spranger
Lewis Williams
Joshua Kassaye
David Keenleyside
Spencer O'Leary
Ryan Plowright
Kyle Rahho
Harry Andic
Elliot Bailey
James Ewington
Hadley Gleeson
Archie McClelland
Reece Crowter
Isaiah Hilaire
Match officials
Daniel Smith
Stephen Meager
Steven Pordes

# REAL BEDFORD

Manager: Rob Sinclair  
Colours: White and black

Tyler McGregor (GK)
Alfie Bozward (GK)
Lewis Burgess
Joe Steele
Curtis Hartley
Tom Wood
Matt Clifford
James Duckett
Ollie Swain
Ben Walsh
Luke Knight
Lee Watkins
Charlie Smith
Ben Stevens
Eddie Corbit
Ben Fitzjohn
Joshua Setchell
Mo Ahmed
Claston Gordon
Drew Richardson
Andy Sinclair
Tom Hitchcock
Archie Jones
Joey Evans

## COMING SOON AT ROTHAMSTED PARK

### MEN'S TEAM

Saturday, December 16  
Cockfosters (League) 3pm  
Wednesday, December 27  
Colney Heath (League) 7.45pm

### WOMEN'S TEAM

Sunday, December 3  
Biggleswade United Reds (League) 2pm  
Sunday, December 10  
Histon (League) 2pm