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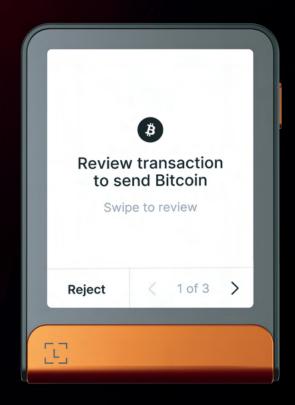
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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

I'd like to welcome you all to The Ledger Stadium, including the players, manager, committee, and supporters of North Leigh. We've thoroughly enjoyed our time in Step 4 so far and have had the pleasure of meeting some fantastic people running teams across the league.

Reflecting on the mixed weekend of results, it was tough to see us come away with a defeat against Welwyn Garden City. Despite dominating the game and taking the lead, a brief five-minute spell turned the match in their favour. Credit to Welwyn for the way they played; we wish them all the best for the rest of the season.

It's clear now that we're in Step 4, and it's a significant step up for everyone involved - not just the playing team and staff but my team too, who are working hard to keep up with the increase in administrative tasks, ground development, and ensuring our match days are enjoyable for all fans, both home and visiting.

Our women's' team kicked off their National League campaign with a commanding 3-0 win over Ashford Town. While the scoreline was impressive, it could and should have been even more. The hard work they're putting in is paying off, and given time, they're going to make a real statement in the league. I'd like to highlight some big upcoming games for them: a home League Cup

match against MK Dons on Wednesday, August 28th, and an exciting trip to Loftus Road to play QPR on September 1st. Playing in a men's stadium is a fantastic opportunity, and we're hoping for a big travelling crowd to support the team.

I'd like to welcome Seb Hendrix as our new media manager. Seb stepped in at short notice and has already added tremendous value to our media offering. A big thank you as well to Mudge, who has worked incredibly hard over the summer – and indeed the last two years – to improve the pitch. Alongside them, I'd like to extend my gratitude to our honorary secretaries, Andy and Lui, for their support since we took over the club.

To our fans, thank you for your incredible support early in the season. Our average crowds are already ahead of last season, and we've seen record season ticket sales. It's amazing to think that when we first took over, we had 30 to 40 people, mainly family and friends, coming to games. Now, we're seeing hundreds at every match, along with a strong traveling support. Your presence really makes this all worthwhile.

I also want to give a special shoutout to our international fans. We had around 800 people tune in to the men's and women's live streams last weekend, which is a significant and muchappreciated Your support is very important, no matter where you are in the world.

Finally, I wish everyone a fantastic day here at McMullen Park, and let's hope we can start another winning run today.

CHAIRMAN



Botanix Labs is proud to be Real Bedford FC's partner.



MANAGER'S NOTES



Firstly, I want to give a warm welcome to the manager, staff, players, and directors of North Leigh Football Club. We're looking forward to a good match today and hope both teams can put on a great display for you all.

Reflecting on our last match against Welwyn, the boys put in a fantastic performance, and on the balance of play, we certainly deserved more from the game. However, credit where it's due – Welwyn stayed resilient and managed to get the result they were after. It's a reminder that we need to be clinical and maintain our focus until the final whistle.

We're in the midst of a tough schedule, with two games in the space of 48 hours over the bank holiday. It's going to test the lads, and this is where everyone needs to step up. We'll be relying on the entire squad, and I'm confident that each player will have a crucial role to play in getting us through this period successfully.

Unfortunately, it's not all good news on the injury front. It's looking like Mo Ahmed and Jack Snelus -

will both require surgery, which is a tough blow for us. However, we've got some positive news too – Archie Jones is progressing well and should be back in training within 4-6 weeks. A big thank you to Lottie and Alfie for their continued hard work with the injured players. Their efforts are making a real difference in helping the lads recover as quickly as possible.

Lastly, I want to express my gratitude to our amazing fans. Your support means everything to the team, and it was fantastic to see so many of you, especially the BPR youth, at the last game. It's also great to see some new faces in the crowd—we hope you enjoy the match and continue to support the team throughout the season.

MANAGER

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CAPTAIN'S NOTES



Welcome back to McMullen Park! It's hard to believe we're already into our fifth game of the season. The lads have been working hard this week, and we're all keen to get back on the pitch.

Last week's defeat to Welwyn Garden City was a tough one to swallow. We were all gutted, especially after taking the lead, only to switch off and let an experienced side take advantage. It wasn't the result we deserved, but it's a good reminder of what it means to play Step 4 football. The teams we face now are more ruthless, and we must maintain our focus and concentration throughout every minute if we want to have another successful season.

This week, the lads have put in the hard yards, heads down and fully focused on bouncing back this weekend. We all want to show a reaction, and with two games in three days, it's going to be a real test for us. First, we have North Leigh here today, and then we quickly turn our attention to Stotfold on Monday.

Last season was incredible, and securing a second Championship was something special. But we know that in Step 4, there are no easy games, and with just a day between matches, we'll need to be at our best all weekend.

Looking ahead, we've got another big challenge next weekend as we head to Walthamstow in the FA Trophy. After the disappointment of losing to St Neots in our first FA Cup game, we're keen to make a mark in the FA Trophy and hopefully go on a bit of a run.

Thank you for your continued support—it means the world to the lads. Enjoy the game today, and hopefully, we'll see a bunch of you on Monday at Stotfold as well.

Up The Pirates!

CAPTAIN

THE BIG INTERVIEW WITH JACK MORRELL

THE LEDGER STADIUM
LEAGUE • 17TH AUGUST 2024



Q: How have your first couple of months at Real Bedford been?

A: It's been really good. The team has been fantastic, and the Gaffer has welcomed me with open arms. I'm genuinely enjoying it here, and I have no complaints. We're playing great football, and everything is going well.

Q: Last year, you won the league with Biggleswade. How will that experience benefit the squad this season?

A: Having that experience has definitely brought more knowledge—both about the league itself and the teams we're up against. Plus, having the experience of winning is invaluable; it gives us that extra edge, knowing what it takes to come out on top.

Q: What does it take to win at Step Four?

A: Consistency is key—specifically, not dropping points when we shouldn't. Early in the season, it might not seem like a big deal, but later on, you

realise how costly those dropped points can be. It's all about maintaining focus and capitalising on every opportunity.

Q: Is that a reference to the Welwyn game?

A: Yes, it definitely is. That match really got under my skin.

Q: What went wrong in that game?

A: We had a 15 to 20-minute spell where we just lost our way. There was confusion on the pitch—some of us were trying to play short, others were going long. It just wasn't working. In hindsight, one of us should've taken charge and steadied the ship, but we didn't, and it cost us the game.

Q: Do you think we'll see a reaction to that?

A: Absolutely. We've got something to prove on Saturday, and we're going to go out there and make a statement

Q: What do you know about North Leigh?

A: To be honest, I didn't play against them early last season when they had a stronger squad. They've had some issues with their ground, which led to losing a few players, but they're still a decent side. They're young and hungry, so it'll be a tough game, but I'm confident that if we play our game, we'll be fine.

Q: You scored your first goal for the club against Barton. How did that feel?

A: It was unexpected, to be honest. I was supposed to be blocking Drew's runner, but suddenly, the ball was right in front of me, so I just headed it in. I was buzzing inside, even though I didn't celebrate much—I just turned around and ran back. But yeah, I was very happy.

Q: Do you usually score many goals?

A: Not really, just a couple each season. Nothing too crazy.

Q: What are your hopes for this season?

A: At the very least, promotion. Ideally, I'd like us to win the league. That's my goal, and I hope it's the goal for everyone else too.







FOLD

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TEAMMATES

CALLUM NICOLSON

Who is most likely to be late for training?

Shaheim. He's only been here a few times, but he's always late.

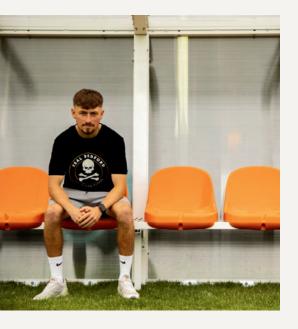
Who is the most skillful player in the squad?

Ben Stevens, without a doubt. I've known him for a long time, and his technical skills are unreal.

Who has the best hair in the squad?

Brett Longdon. He's nearly 30, and he's still got a great head of hair.





Who has the worst dress sense?

Jack Morrell, he has terrible clobber.

Who is the biggest coach's pet?

Lee Watkins. He's always hanging around the coaches.

If you were stranded on a desert island, which teammate would you most likely be stuck with?

Ben Stevens. I've known him the longest—he's my mate.

Who is the messiest in the changing room?

Eddie. He's always leaving his stuff in my space.

Who is most likely to become a manager? Woody, for sure.

WELWYN GARDEN CITY COME FROM BEHIND TO BEAT REAL BEDFORD

THE LEDGER STADIUM
LEAGUE • 17TH AUGUST 2024





Real Bedford dominated early and took a deserved lead through Isaac Galliford in the 55th minute. However, Welwyn Garden City responded with two late goals from Bradley Wadkins and Bailey Stevenson to secure a 2-1 comeback victory. The defeat ended Bedford's pursuit of a third consecutive win.

On another hot day at the Ledger Stadium, Real Bedford faced Welwyn Garden City, hoping to secure their third consecutive victory in the league.

The Pirates took control early, dominating the first half with a confident display of confident possession football while stifling Welwyn's long-ball approach.

The first real opportunity came in the 17th minute when Isaac Galliford threaded a perfect through ball to Ben Stevens. The forward drove into the box but could only direct his shot straight at the Welwyn keeper, missing a golden opportunity to take the lead.

The Pirates continued to press and nearly found the breakthrough in the 26th minute. Josh Setchell, who was lively throughout, broke into the box and delivered a low cross that found Galliford, but his low drive was blocked on the line by the Welwyn defense.

Despite Bedford's dominance, the first half ended without a goal, with Welwyn struggling to create any meaningful chances.

Second Half

The second half started in a similar fashion, with Bedford controlling possession and Welwyn on the back foot. The breakthrough finally came in the 55th minute. Setchell once again caused problems down the left, breaking into the box after an excellent ball from Joey Evans. He delivered a cross which found Galliford, who made no mistake this time, drilling the ball home to give the Pirates a deserved lead.

The goal, however, galvanised Welwyn Garden City, who came into the game, pushing back The Pirates as they pressed for an equaliser. Their efforts paid off in the 73rd minute when Bradley Wadkins capitalised on a low cross, wrong-footing Bedford's keeper, Tyler McGregor, to level the score with the referee waving away protests regarding a clear foul on Morrell in the build up.

The momentum had shifted, and just three minutes later, Welwyn took the lead. A mix-up between Galliford and Joey Evans gifted possession to the visitors, who launched a long ball into the box. Bailey Stevenson rose highest to head the ball over McGregor, completing the turnaround.

Despite their efforts, Real Bedford couldn't find a way back into the game, and the match ended 2-1 in favor of Welwyn Garden City

RBFC: McGregor, Morrell, Kpohomouh, Richardson, Longden, Watkins, Nicolson (Corbit '80), Galliford (Agehoh-Davies 80'), Stevens, Setchell, Evans.

Unused Subs: Wood, T. Ward, S. Ward





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PLAYER PROFILE

SHAHEIM WARD

What is your nickname?

Shams.

Where were you born?

Milton Keynes.

What clubs have you played at previously? MK Irish. Potton. Barton Rovers.

Who's your favourite team?

Arsenal.

Who's your favourite player, all time? Van Persie.

Most memorable footballing moment? Winning the County Cup.

Most memorable Arsenal moment?

Van Persie's volley against Charlton.

Occupation?

Coaching.

Hobbies?

Football, that's it, football.







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Non-League Paper Programme Column

Bv Matt Badcock

WHERE else in the world do players in the ninth and tenth tiers get the chance to play at the country's national stadium?

That's actually a genuine question as I'd be intrigued to know but the FA Vase has always felt totally unique.

This weekend the long road to Wembley begins for clubs in both the Isuzu FA Vase and Non-League's other premier cup competition, the Isuzu FA Trophy.

The Vase has always had a place in my Non-League heart. I've never seen my team win it, but it was the first ever trip to Wembley - a 4-4 thriller between Guiseley and Gresley Rovers back in 1991.

Those were the days of finals going to replays and Guiseley eventually ran out winners at Bramall Lane.

But that was the first taste of the competition and since then I've been lucky to see finals won by Diss Town, Tiverton Town (twice) the years away from Wembley where AFC Sudbury were unfortunate to be beaten three years in a row by Brigg Town, Winchester City and Didcot Town, before much later joining The NLP to cover it as a 'job'.

From Whitley Bay's all-conquering side as part of the Northern League's dominant years to Romfordlifting the 50th edition last season, it's a competition that throws up wonderful stories every year.

If you haven't checked out Phil Annets' @favasefactfile page on X - formerly Twitter - then I highly recommend you do. It's packed with stats and facts about the famous competition first won in 1975 by Hoddesdon Town.

In total 595 teams will enter the competition this year. By the end of the first round qualifying, 187 will be one step closer. Only eight more rounds to go before the final in May!

Thanks to Phil's stats we know there are 51 Step 6 clubs guaranteed of progression with 44 all Step 5 ties. There are 92 ties with the chance of an upset.

The competition shows the vast depth of football in this country. Just think how many players will be representing their club in the Vase this weekend, with more to join as the early rounds continue.

Ultimately, in nine months' time, two sides will battle it out on the hallowed turf at Wembley. Now that is special.





North Leigh Football Club, founded in 1908, began to establish itself in the Witney and District League following World War II. The club dominated the 1950s, winning the Witney and District League Premier Division title seven times and achieving success in the Oxfordshire Senior Cup. The 1980s saw a resurgence in their winning ways, securing five consecutive Witney and District League titles, which earned them a place in the Hellenic League Division 1 for the 1990/91 season.

North Leigh had a strong debut season in the Hellenic League, finishing 4th and becoming the division's highest scorers, aside from champions Cinderford Town. The following season, they repeated their 4th place finish, averaging two points per game and scoring 84 goals. In their third season, they finished runners-up to Tuffley Rovers in Division 1, earning promotion to the Hellenic League Premier Division.

In the 1997/98 season, the club reached the second round of the FA Vase for the third time but were eliminated by Elmore. They ended the season 4th in the Hellenic League Premier Division and reached the Oxfordshire Senior Cup final, where they narrowly lost to Witney Town 1-0 after extra time.

The 2001/02 season was the most successful in the club's history up to that point. North Leigh, after a season of high performances and fierce competition with Gloucester United and Yate Town, secured their first Premier Division title. They also reached the finals of both the Oxfordshire Senior Cup and the Hellenic League Challenge Cup.

In 2002/03, the club went one step further by retaining the Premier Division title with a 10-point -

margin over Yate Town and local rivals Carterton, despite facing stronger opposition and having a smaller squad than the previous year. However, their ground did not meet the standards required for promotion. In 2003/04, although they finished a disappointing 8th in the league, they had an impressive run in the FA Vase, reaching the last 32.

The 2004/05 season saw North Leigh finish 7th in the league, but the highlight was their memorable FA Cup run. They defeated Deal Town, Walton Casuals, and Edgware Town before narrowly losing to Conference South side Newport County in Wales after a draw at Eynsham Park.

In 2005/06, after leading the table early in the season, the club narrowly missed promotion to the Southern League, finishing 4th after a disappointing late-season run. The 2006/07 season was another near miss, as North Leigh finished just behind Slimbridge in a tight contest. Despite a strong finish, including home and away wins against Slimbridge, the club was disappointed to learn that they could not be promoted, even though their ground had finally received FA approval.

The 2007/08 season, marking the club's centenary, mirrored the previous year with another push for promotion. In a dramatic finish, North Leigh overtook long-term leaders Almondsbury Town in the final league game to win the title and secure promotion on goal difference. The season also saw the club win the Oxfordshire Senior Cup for the first time, defeating Oxford United in the quarterfinals and Banbury United in the final. This achievement elevated the club to its highest position in the non-league pyramid as they joined the Southern League South & West in 2008. Over the next eleven years,



North Leigh consistently finished in the top ten each season, with only one exception.

Major changes occurred in 2016 when long-serving manager Mark Gee departed, and John Brough, who had just won the league with Cinderford Town, took over. Brough's first season was successful, leading the club to its best-ever FA Cup and Trophy runs and narrowly missing out on a playoff place.

In 2018/19, North Leigh faced significant challenges both on and off the pitch, including financial struggles that threatened the club's survival in the Southern League. With John Brough's departure, joint managers Craig Dore and Darren James took charge, despite having a limited budget and facing tough results, including an 8-1 home defeat to Corby Town. Despite being in the relegation zone for most of the season and trailing by 8 points with six games remaining, the Millers managed a great escape, securing survival with a final-day draw against league champions Peterborough Sports.

After a season of restructuring, the Millers started the 2019/20 season in a much-improved position. With familiar faces returning and key additions strengthening the squad, the team hovered around mid-table and looked poised for a late push toward the playoffs before the season was abruptly curtailed. Despite the season's early end, the club deemed it a success, highlighted by reaching the Second Qualifying Round of the FA Cup and young star Henry Landers scoring all five goals in an away victory at Bedford Town.

The 2020/21 season was severely disrupted, with only a handful of matches completed before proceedings were halted in November 2020. The club sat second from the bottom of the league, having struggled early on, including an early FA Cup exit at Marlow. However, the highlight was an FA Trophy run that saw the club reach the First Round Proper, equalling their best performance in the competition.

Throughout 2020 and 2021, North Leigh focused on consolidating and safeguarding the club's future during the COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts were made to ensure financial stability and to continue modernizing the club in preparation for the 2021/22 season. There was a renewed sense of optimism around the club, with excitement about the opportunities ahead.

The 2021/22 season proved to be historic for North Leigh. Under the leadership of Eddie Odhiambo, in his first season as a manager, the Millers secured promotion via the playoffs, bringing Step 3 football to Eynsham Park for the first time in the club's history. Their playoff spot was only confirmed after the last game of the season due to Welwyn Garden City's exclusion over ground grading issues. North Leigh's semi-final victory at Berkhamsted and the final win at Ware, with two injury-time goals from Jefferson Louis, capped a remarkable season. Unbeaten in Oxfordshire derby matches and with only two road defeats all season, the only thing missing was a deep run in the FA competitions.



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REAL BEDFORD WOMEN SHINE IN 3-0 NATIONAL LEAGUE DEBUT WIN

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Real Bedford Women kicked off their National League campaign with a commanding 3-0 victory over Ashford Town. Goals from Abbie Bensted, Trisha Gould, and Milly Hayes secured the win, with Bedford controlling much of the game.

The new-look Real Bedford Women's side made their debut in the National League at the Ledger Stadium, hosting Ashford Town.

Following a summer of significant changes, which saw the arrival of Charlie Bill as manager and a host of new faces from MK Dons, all eyes were on how the Pirates would fare in the National League. Erin Price was the only player from last season's squad to remain, anchoring as part of the defence as the team embarked on their latest campaign.

The opening 10 minutes of the match were a tense and cagey affair. Both teams seemed to be testing the waters, with neither side able to create any clear-cut chances in front of goal.

As the first half wore on, Real Bedford began to assert their dominance, pushing Ashford Town back with wave after wave of attack. The first real opportunity came when Trisha Gould broke down the left wing, cutting inside the box only to see her shot drift narrowly wide of the post.

The breakthrough came in the 26th minute. A well -

taken corner from Gemma Biggadike was delivered deep into the box, finding the head of Sofia Stovold. Stovold directed her header into the ground, and as the ball bounced up, it was met by the head of Abbie Bensted, who looped it over the Ashford goalkeeper and into the back of the net. The Pirates had the lead.

Ashford Town responded by pushing for an equaliser, but Real Bedford's defence, marshaled expertly by Stovold, remained resilient. Ashford's best chance came from a long-range effort by Brogan Morgan in the 40th minute, but her shot sailed high and wide, leaving Bedford's lead intact.

Just before the break, Real Bedford nearly doubled their advantage. Chiara Meola, who was a constant threat throughout the game and eventually named Player of the Match, danced past a defender and into the box, only to see her shot drift agonisingly wide of the far post. The Pirates went into the break with a slender 1-0 lead

Second Half

The second half saw Real Bedford continue to press for a second goal. In the 60th minute, Abbie Bensted had a golden opportunity to score grab a brace when Hannah Warren delivered a pinpoint cross into the box. However, Bensted could only direct her header straight at the Ashford goalkeeper, keeping the visitors in the game.

Four minutes later, the Pirates finally found their second goal. Trisha Gould, who had been a constant menace on the left flank, collected the ball from Emily Wilson and charged towards the box. After a neat one-two with Bensted, Gould found herself in front of goal, and though it took her three attempts, she finally slotted the ball home. Unfortunately, the goal came at a cost as

Ashford's goalkeeper, Emma Vigolo, was injured during the play, leading to a lengthy delay.

Late in the game, substitute Alex Dicks entered the fray and showcased why the Pirates were so keen to secure her signature. Twice she broke through the Ashford defense, only to be let down by a heavy touch. A cross from Meola was well saved by Ashford's replacement goalkeeper, but Dicks' energy and potential were clear for all to see.

As the match neared its conclusion, the Pirates had one final chance to put the game beyond doubt. Substitute Milly Hayes, set up brilliantly by Dicks, spotted the goalkeeper off her line and produced a sublime chip to seal the match at 3-0.

RBFC Women: Guy, Warren (Newman '89), Puddick, Biggadike, Price (Evans '89), Stovold, Mitchell, Wilson (Dicks 84'), Bensted (McLean '79), Gould (Hayes '84), Meola



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FIXTURES

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24	NORTH LEIGH	H April	25	WELWYN GARDEN CITY	А
26	STOTFOLD	Α			16
	SEPTEMBER '24			FEBRUARY '24	
7	WALTHAMSTOW **	Α	1	FLACKWELL HEATH	н
14	LEVERSTOCK GREEN	Α	8	KIDLINGTON	Α
28	WARE	H	15	ENFIELD	н
			22	BIGGLESWADE FC	А
	OCTOBER '24			MARCH '24	
1	LEIGHTON TOWN	H	8	HADLEY	А
5	KINGS LANGLEY	A	15	NORTHWOOD	16
12	THAME UNITED	H	22	BERKHAMSTEAD	А
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9	BIGGLESWADE FC	H	12	KINGS LANGLEY	н
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30	NORTHWOOD	A	21	AFC DUNSTABLE	Н
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7	BERKHAMSTEAD	Н	7		
14	BEACONSFIELD TOWN	A			
21	AYLESBURY UNITED	H		*	FA CUP
26	AFC DUNSTABLE	Α		** FA T	ROPHY
28	BARTON ROVERS	H.		*** BEDS SENIOR COUNT	TY CUP

TABLE

Southern League - Central Division One

2	CLUB	P	W	D		GF	GA	+/-	PTS	
1	FLACKWELL HEATH	3	3	.(-	-	12	3	9	9	
2	BERKHAMSTED	2	2			8	0	8	6	
3	REAL BEDFORD	3	2		1	7	2	5	6	
4	BEACONSFIELD TOWN	2	2			6	2	4	6	
5	AYLESBURY UNITED	2	2			4	0	4	6	
6	WELWYN GARDEN CITY	2	2	<u>/-</u>	-	5	2	3	6	
7	HADLEY	2	1	1		7	2	5	4	
8	ENFIELD	2	1	1		3	2	1	4	
9	KINGS LANGLEY	2	1	1		2	1	1	4	
10	WARE	2	1		1	6	4	2	3	
11	THAME UNITED	2	1		. 1	3	6	-3	3	
12	AFC DUNSTABLE	2	1		1	2	7	-5	3	
13	BARTON ROVERS	3	,1		2	2	9	-7	3	
14	LEIGHTON TOWN	1		1		1	1	0	1	
15	BIGGLESWADE FC	2		1	1	1	4	-3	400	
16	HERTFORD TOWN	3		1	2	3	7	-4	1	
17	KIDLINGTON	2			2	2	5	-3	0	
18	LEVERSTOCK GREEN	2			2	1	4	-3	0	
19	NORTHWOOD	2			2	1	4	-3	0	
20	NORTH LEIGH	3	1-1	-	3	3	7	-4	0	
21	STOTFOLD	2			2	1	8	-7	0	

MATCHDAY SQUADS



BEDFORD

TYLER MCGREGOR (GK) ALFIE MUMFORD (GK) JACQUES KPOHOMOUH DREW RICHARDSON TOM WOOD OLLIE SWAIN JACK MORRELL BRETT LONGDEN SHAHEIM WARD EDDIE CORBIT **ENIOLA AGEMOH-DAVIES** CALLUM NICOLSON LEE WATKINS © TY WARD ISAAC GALLIFORD ARCHIE JONES BEN STEVENS JACK SNELUS



NORTH LEIGH

MONTY MARRIOTT (GK) GABRIEL OSEI AMADIAH NOAH PARSONS GEORGE CHRISTIAN NASSOR ABDALLA ZION NDITI CASEY GROVES THOMAS TAYLOR GEORGE RUSHTON LUCA JAMES RILEY COTTER LOUIS MATHIAS FINN BAKER ANDRE BROMFIELD **CONNOR BARRETT** MEKHI THOMAS VIKTOR ALIVIZU HERNANDEZ ADAM SMITH CALVIN NJOROGE



MO AHMED

HARRISON KNIGHT JOSHUA SETCHELL JOEY EVANS

MANAGER Michael Hopkins