

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME | 2026/27

MALDON & TIPTREE

FOOTBALL CLUB

#M&TFC CLUB

PITCHING IN
PARTNERS WITH
ISTHMIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE



SATURDAY 15TH AUG | 3PM



ISTHMIAN PREMIER LEAGUE
VS. DARTFORD FC

PITCHING IN

proudly supports

THE TRIDENT TRUST FUND

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

@PitchingIn_



MALDON & TIPTREE

OWNER

ASPEN DREWITT-BARLOW

SPORTING DIRECTOR

MITCHELL COWLING

CHAIRMAN

DAN BARBER

TREASURER

DAVID COMMEY

SECRETARY

GARRY NEAVE-HOUGHTING

WELFARE OFFICER

GARRY NEAVE-HOUGHTING

FIRST TEAM MANAGER

MARK HAWKES

ASSISTANT MANAGER

UGO UDOJI

TACTICAL ANALYST

JASON MAHER

PHYSIO

HARRISON GOODCHILD

EVENTS AND HOSPITALITY

KIRSTY HUTCHISON

HEAD OF MEDIA

JACK BLACKABEE

INSIDE TODAY'S PROGRAMME

4. WELCOME TO THE MALDON STADIUM

5. LEAGUE TABLE AND UPCOMING
FIXTURES

7. MALDON & TIPTREE HISTORY

8. THE NON LEAGUE PAPER

10. DARTFORD HISTORY

IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE 2.13
(OWNERSHIP AND CHANGE OF CONTROL)
OF RULES OF THE ISTHMIAN FOOTBALL
LEAGUE.

LEGAL NAME: MALDON & TIPTREE
FOOTBALL CLUB LIMITED

FORM: PRIVATE LIMITED COMPANY

COMPANY NUMBER: 07479835

OWNER: ASPEN DREWITT-BARLOW



WELCOME TO THE MALDON STADIUM

MALDON & TIPTREE WOULD LIKE TO OFFER A WARM WELCOME TO BOTH DARTFORD FC AND OUR MATCH OFFICIALS DEMETRI ANASTASIOU, LEWIS MOORE AND JOHN MAGILL. AFTER A 1-0 WIN TUESDAY NIGHT AGAINST AVELEY COURTESY OF A FIRST TIME IFFY ALLEN FINISH, EVERYONE AT THE CLUB IS EXCITED FOR ANOTHER AMAZING AFTERNOON OF FOOTBALL



LEAGUE TABLE AND UPCOMING FIXTURES

		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	LEATHERHEAD	2	2	0	0	6	2	+4	6
2	CARSHALTON ATHLETIC	2	2	0	0	4	0	+4	6
3	ST ALBANS CITY	2	2	0	0	5	2	+3	6
4	DARTFORD	2	2	0	0	4	2	+2	6
5	EASTBOURNE BOROUGH	2	1	1	0	5	4	+1	4
6	DULWICH HAMLET	2	1	0	1	7	3	+4	3
7	ENFIELD TOWN	2	1	0	1	5	2	+3	3
8	RAMSGATE	2	1	0	1	4	3	+1	3
9	BURGESS HILL TOWN	2	1	0	1	3	2	+1	3
10	BRENTWOOD TOWN	2	1	0	1	2	1	+1	3
11	CHATHAM TOWN	2	1	0	1	4	4	0	3
12	WELLING UNITED	2	1	0	1	3	4	-1	3
13	MALDON & TIPTREE	2	1	0	1	1	6	-5	3
14	CRAY WANDERERS	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	2
15	CHESHUNT	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
16	AVELEY	2	0	1	1	2	3	-1	1
17	STANWAY ROVERS	2	0	1	1	1	3	-2	1
18	WINGATE & FINCHLEY	2	0	1	1	1	3	-2	1
19	WHITEHAWK	2	0	1	1	0	2	-2	1
20	LEWES	2	0	1	1	0	4	-4	1
21	THREE BRIDGES	2	0	0	2	4	6	-2	0
22	AFC WHYTELEAFE	2	0	0	2	0	5	-5	0

OUR NEXT 10

DATE	OPPONENT	COMPETITION	H/A
21 AUG	LEATHERHEAD	ISTHMIAN PREMIER	A
29 AUG	CRAY WANDERERS	ISTHMIAN PREMIER	H
31 AUG	BRENTWOOD TOWN	ISTHMIAN PREMIER	A
12 SEP	WHITEHAWK	ISTHMIAN PREMIER	H
15 SEP	RAMSGATE	ISTHMIAN PREMIER	A
19 SEP	EASTBOURNE BOROUGH	ISTHMIAN PREMIER	H
3 OCT	BURGESS HILL	ISTHMIAN PREMIER	A
6 OCT	WELLING UNITED	ISTHMIAN PREMIER	H
10 OCT	AFC WHYTELEAFE	ISTHMIAN PREMIER	H
17 OCT	LEWES	ISTHMIAN PREMIER	A



A name you can trust in van hire

Our commercial van rental fleet extends from small courier vans through to large panel vans, long wheel-based vans, Luton vans with tail lifts, tippers, minibuses and single and double cab pickup trucks.



Our range of vehicles include flexibility hire including commercial and private hire, long and short-term hire. Long term rentals may attract preferential rental rates as would customer own insurance rentals.

Our van hire services could not be simpler.

You can call to discuss your wants and needs with a knowledgeable member of staff to check out our competitive prices and availability of the vehicles currently in the Fisk Group Hire's fleet.

For further information, call 01621 731400



www.FiskHire.Group



Hire@FiskHire.group

• Part of the FISK Group, a family-run Essex business for more than 40 years •

MALDON & TIPTREE HISTORY



IN THE SUMMER OF 2010, MALDON TOWN & TIPTREE UNITED AMALGAMATED TO FORM, MALDON & TIPTREE FOOTBALL CLUB, UNDER THE OWNERSHIP OF ED GARTY. AS A RESULT OF THE AMALGAMATION, TIPTREE UNITED WITHDREW FROM THE ESSEX SENIOR LEAGUE. FOLLOWING THE RETIREMENT OF COLIN WALLINGTON, ASSISTANT MANAGER, BRAD KING AND GLEN KNIGHT WERE APPOINTED AS THE CLUBS JOINT-MANAGER. AS THE PAIR'S FIRST MANAGERIAL ROLE, THE NEW CLUB WITNESSED WHOLESALE CHANGES WITH ONLY A HANDFUL OF PLAYERS REMAINING WHO FINISHED THE SEASON WITH MALDON TOWN AND TIPTREE UNITED.

THE 2010-11 CAMPAIGN SAW THE NEW CLUB REMAIN IN OR AROUND THE PLAY-OFF POSITIONS FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE SEASON, FINISHING IN EIGHTH PLACE TO FINISH THE SEASON WITH SIXTY-THREE POINTS. THE 2011-12 SEASON, PROVED TO NOT BE SO SUCCESSFUL AND IN NOVEMBER 2011, KING AND KNIGHT WERE RELIEVED OF THEIR DUTIES. EX-CHARLTON PROFESSIONAL MIKE FLANAGAN WAS APPOINTED AS CARETAKER MANAGER AND REMAINED IN PLACE UNTIL THE END OF THE SEASON, STEERING THE CLUB TO A RESPECTFUL MID-TABLE FINISH, MANAGING THIRTY-THREE GAMES. AT THE START OF THE 2012-13 CAMPAIGN, EX-STANSTED & REDBRIDGE BOSS TERRY SPILLANE WAS APPOINTED AS MANAGER, AND MIKE FLANAGAN DEPARTED THE CLUB. EX TIPTREE UNITED MANAGER, JODY WAS BROUGHT TO THE CLUB AS TERRY'S ASSISTANT MANAGER. THE CLUB FOUND THEMSELVES AT THE TOP OF THE TABLE BUT AN INCREDIBLE RUN BY EVENTUAL CHAMPIONS GRAYS MEANT MALDON HAD TO SETTLE FOR A PLACE IN THE PLAY-OFFS. MALDON WERE DEFEATED IN THE FINAL AFTER LOSING TWO GOAL LEAD TO DRAW WITH THAMESMEAD TOWN, WHO THEN WENT ON TO WIN ON PENALTIES. AFTER A DISAPPOINTING END TO THE PREVIOUS SEASON, TERRY SPILLANE OVERSAW MORE WHOLESALE CHANGES IN THE PLAYING SQUAD. MALDON FINISHED THE 13/14 CAMPAIGN IN NINTH POSITION WITH SEVENTY-SIX POINTS, WINNING TWENTY-ONE GAMES.

MORE CHANGES TO THE PLAYING STAFF, RESULTED IN POOR START TO THE 2014-15 SEASON, AND THE CLUB PARTED WAYS WITH SPILLANE IN SEPTEMBER 2014, WITH CHAIRMAN, ED GARTY TAKING OVER AS CARETAKER MANAGER, FOR THREE GAMES. AT THE END OF SEP 2014, ALAN KIMBLE WAS APPOINTED AS MANAGER AND REMAINED IN CHARGE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SEASON, MALDON FINISHED THE SEASON IN NINETEENTH PLACE WITH ONLY FORTY-NINE POINTS. DURING THE 2014-15 SEASON A VOTE TOOK PLACE FOR THE CLUBS NEW NICKNAME AND WAS FEATURED ON NATIONAL RADIO STATION, TALKSPORT, WITH THE THE JAMMERS WINNING THE VOTE WITH OVER 50%.

FOLLOWING THE COMPLETION OF THE 2015-16 SEASON, THE CLUB LINKED WITH COLCHESTER UNITED. DAVID WRIGHT WAS APPOINTED AS MANAGER, REMAINING IN CHARGE UNTIL DECEMBER 2015 UNTIL HE WAS APPOINTED ASSISTANT MANAGER OF COLCHESTER UNITED. MOVING INTO 2016, EX-LEISTON MANAGER, STEVE BALL WAS APPOINTED MANAGER AND STEERED THE CLUB TO SEVENTH PLACE, ONLY MISSING OUT ON THE PLAY-OFF PLACES BY NINE POINTS. IN THE OFF SEASON, STEVE BALL JOINED COLCHESTER AS THEIR ASSISTANT MANAGER, AND WAS REPLACED BY EX-MANCHESTER CITY MIDFIELDER, KEVIN HORLOCK. FOR THE MAJORITY OF 2016/17, THE JAMMERS SAT AT THE TOP OF THE TABLE BEFORE SLIPPING AWAY TO FINISH IN SECOND PLACE. HORLOCK'S SIDE MANAGED TO REACH THE PLAY-OFF FINAL, HOWEVER LOST TO THURROCK ONE-NIL. THE FOLLOWING CAMPAIGN WAS NOT QUITE AS SUCCESSFUL FOR HORLOCK, WITH MALDON FINISHING JUST OUTSIDE THE PLAY-OFF PLACES IN 7TH.

AFTER MANAGING 112 GAMES, KEVIN HORLOCK DEPARTED IN THE CLOSED SEASON AND WAS REPLACED BY EX-COLCHESTER DEFENDER, WAYNE BROWN. IN BROWN'S FIRST SEASON IN CHARGE, THE 2018-19 SEASON, THE JAMMERS FINISHED IN SECOND PLACE AND REACHED THE PLAY-OFF FINAL, BUT LOST ON PENALTIES AGAINST LOCAL RIVALS, HEYBRIDGE SWIFTS. THE 2019-20 SEASON WAS ONE TO REMEMBER FOR THE CLUB, BUT FOR THE RIGHT AND WRONG REASONS. THE CLUB ACHIEVED GREAT THINGS IN THE EMIRATES FA CUP, REACHING THE SECOND ROUND PROPER AFTER BEING LEYTON ORIENT IN THE FIRST ROUND. IN THE 2ND ROUND, MALDON WERE DRAWN AGAINST FOOTBALL LEAGUE SIDE, NEWPORT COUNTY WITH THE GAME BEING SHOWN LIVE ON NATIONAL TELEVISION — WITH THE JAMMERS ONLY BEATEN BY THE LEAGUE TWO SIDE, WITH A GOAL IN STOPPAGE TIME, WITH THE GAME FINISHING 1-0. A RECORD ATTENDANCE OF 1876 WAS RECORDED.

HOWEVER, THE 2019-20 SEASON WILL ALSO BE REMEMBERED FOR THE WRONG REASONS. THE JAMMERS FOUND THEMSELVES TOP OF THE ISTHMIAN DIVISION ONE NORTH, THIRTEEN POINTS CLEAR WITH FOUR GAMES IN HAND, WHEN COVID-19 ARRIVED, WITH ALL RESULTS FROM THE SEASON BEING EXPUNGED, AND NO PROMOTION OR RELEGATION TAKING PLACE TO, FROM, OR WITHIN THE DIVISION. FOLLOWING THE DISAPPOINTING END TO THE 2019-20 SEASON, WAYNE BROWN REMAINED IN CHARGE OF THE CLUB AND WHOLESALE CHANGES IN THE PLAYING SQUAD OCCURRED AGAIN, WITH A NUMBER OF LAST SEASON'S SQUAD SECURING TRANSFERS TO CLUBS HIGHER UP THE FOOTBALL PYRAMID. IN OCTOBER 2020, ED GARTY STOOD DOWN AS OWNER, WITH GENERAL MANAGER, RON DANGERFIELD BEING CONFIRMED AS THE NEW CHAIRMAN, WITH RICHARD COWLING TAKING OWNERSHIP OF THE FOOTBALL CLUB.

JUST LIKE THE 2019-20 SEASON, THE 2020-21 SEASON WAS TERMINATED WITH PROMOTION AND RELEGATION DENIED FOR ALL THE SIDES COMPETING IN THE DIVISION ONE NORTH. HOWEVER, PRIOR TO THE TERMINATION THE JAMMERS REACHED THE EMIRATES FA CUP FIRST ROUND FOR THE SECOND SUCCESSIVE SEASON AND ACHIEVED THEIR LONGEST EVER RUN IN THE BUILDUP FA TROPHY, BEFORE LOSING TO GLOUCESTER CITY. THE JAMMERS WERE ONLY ABLE TO PLAY THE FIVE LEAGUE GAMES.

HEADING IN TO THE 2021/22 SEASON, WAYNE BROWN REMAINED IN CHARGE OF THE FIRST TEAM AND IS NOW RECORDED AS THE CLUBS LONGEST SERVING MANAGER. MIDWAY THROUGH THE 2021/22 SEASON, BROWN WAS APPOINTED AS INTERIM HEAD COACH AT COLCHESTER UNITED, WITH PAUL ABRAHAMS TAKING OVER AS INTERIM MANAGER. ABRAHAMS STEERED THE JAMMERS WITHIN

TOUCHING DISTANCE OF THE PLAY-OFF SEMI-FINALS, HOWEVER THREE DEFEATS IN THE FINAL THREE GAMES SAW THE JAMMERS FALL SHORT. AT THE END OF THE SEASON, RON DANGERFIELD DEPARTED AND WAS REPLACED BY JERRY CARTER.

IN MAY 2022, WAYNE BROWN DEPARTED ON A PERMANENT BASIS AND WAS APPOINTED AS HEAD COACH AT COLCHESTER UNITED, HAVING MANAGED 141 GAMES AND A WIN PERCENTAGE OF 68%. AFTER A POSITIVE SPELL AS INTERIM MANAGER, PAUL ABRAHAMS WAS APPOINTED MANAGER ON 17 MAY 2022.

OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF SEASONS, MITCHELL COWLING WAS APPOINTED AS GENERAL MANAGER AND DANIEL BARBER, AS CHAIRMAN. ABRAHAMS LEFT THE ROLE AND EX-ENGLAND MANAGER PETER TAYLOR WAS HANDED THE REIGNS AND REMAINED IN CHARGE UNTIL AUGUST 2023. LIAM BAILEY WAS APPOINTED AS TAYLOR'S SUCCESSOR. TO COMMENCE THE 2024/25 SEASON, DAVID HUZZEY WAS APPOINTED BUT DEPARTED THE CLUB AFTER 19 GAMES TO BE REPLACED BY BRETT MUNYARD. IN SIMILAR FASHION TO HIS PREDECESSORS, MUNYARD'S SPELL WAS SHORT AND WAS REPLACED BY BAILEY, WHO WAS ONCE AGAIN APPOINTED AS INTERIM HEAD COACH UNTIL THE END OF THE 2024/25 SEASON.

AT THE START OF FEBRUARY 2025, MALDON & TIPTREE WAS SUCCESSFULLY ACQUIRED BY NEW OWNERS. MITCHELL COWLING WAS HANDED THE ROLE OF SPORTING DIRECTOR, WITH RICHARD COWLING'S TENURE OF OWNER COMING TO AN END. THE NEW OWNERS IMMEDIATELY RE-BRANDED THE CLUB AND COMPLETED A RANGE OF MUCH-NEEDED STADIUM IMPROVEMENTS. BEFORE THE SEASON CONCLUDED, KEVIN HORLOCK RETURNED AS THE JAMMERS FIRST TEAM MANAGER FOLLOWING A SUCCESSFUL SPELL AT NEEDHAM MARKET. HORLOCK GUIDED THE CLUB TOWARDS A MID-TABLE FINISH, WITH PLANS BEING PUT IN PLACE FOR THE 2025/26 SEASON.

2025/26 WAS A VERY SUCCESSFUL SEASON FOR THE JAMMERS, KEVIN HORLOCK TOOK THE TEAM ALL THE WAY TO THE FA CUP FIRST ROUND PROPER WHERE THEY PLAYED PORT VALE, BUT AFTER TAKING THE LEAD EARLY ON, THE TEAM BOWED OUT WITH WHAT RESULTED IN A 5-1 LOSS. THE TEAM FOUGHT HARD ALL SEASON IN THE ISTHMIAN LEAGUE NORTH DIVISION, ONLY LOSING TWO HOME MATCHES ALL SEASON, BUT WITH A STRONG BATTLE FROM FELIXSTOWE & WALTON THROUGHOUT THE SEASON, BOTH TEAM'S FINISHED ON LEVEL ON POINTS WITH A MASSIVE 97 POINTS EACH, BUT THANKS TO THE JAMMERS GREATER GOAL DIFFERENCE THEY TOPPED THE TABLE TO EARN AUTOMATIC PROMOTION TO THE ISTHMIAN PREMIER DIVISION.

THE NON-LEAGUE PAPER



ESSENTIAL READING FOR FOLLOWERS OF THE NATIONAL GAME

To subscribe, visit www.thenonleaguefootballpaper.com/subscriptions

BY JON COUCH

LAST WEEK, WE RECEIVED CONFIRMATION THAT NEW PITCH PERIMETER BARRIER RULES HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED BY THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION FOR NON-LEAGUE CLUBS FOLLOWING ITS REVIEW INTO GROUND SAFETY ACROSS THE NATIONAL LEAGUE SYSTEM.

IT MEANS THAT SOLID BRICK, BREEZE BLOCK AND CONCRETE BARRIERS AROUND PITCHES WILL FINALLY NOW BE A THING OF THE PAST AT GROUNDS ACROSS THE COUNTRY AT STEPS 1-6.

THE FA REVIEW WAS CALLED FOLLOWING THE TRAGIC PASSING OF STRIKER BILLY VIGAR, WHO DIED AFTER SUFFERING A SIGNIFICANT BRAIN INJURY FOLLOWING A COLLISION WITH A PERIMETER WALL WHILE PLAYING FOR CHICHESTER CITY AGAINST WINGATE & FINCHLEY ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2025. HE WAS JUST 21 YEARS OLD.

AFTER VIGAR'S DEATH, A PETITION CALLING FOR A BAN ON BRICK WALLS AROUND FOOTBALL PITCHES ACROSS THE NLS RECEIVED MORE THAN 4,000 SIGNATURES.

IT CAME AFTER BATH CITY'S ALEX FLETCHER SUFFERED A FRACTURED SKULL AFTER COLLIDING WITH A CONCRETE ADVERTISING HOARDING DURING A MATCH IN NOVEMBER 2022.

SIX MONTHS LATER, THEN SPORTS MINISTER STUART ANDREW JOINED FORCES WITH THE PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLERS' ASSOCIATION (PFA) IN WRITING TO THE FA, PREMIER LEAGUE, ENGLISH FOOTBALL LEAGUE AND NATIONAL LEAGUE, CALLING ON THEM TO ADOPT A MORE PROACTIVE APPROACH TO PLAYER SAFETY IN THIS AREA.

NOW, ALMOST FOUR YEARS ON, IT HAS TAKEN THE MOST TRAGIC OF DEATHS TO SPARK ANY KIND OF ACTION. AND EVEN THEN IT TOOK 11 MONTHS TO DELIBERATE AND PASS! I MEAN, WHAT ON EARTH WAS THERE TO DISCUSS?

I'VE BEEN OPENLY CRITICAL OF THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION AND THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES FOR LETTING THIS FESTER FOR SO LONG,

STILL, WE GOT THERE IN THE END AND AT LEAST NOW BILLY VIGAR'S LEGACY CAN GO TO HELPING PROTECT AND PRESERVE PLAYER SAFETY IN YEARS TO COME.

AROUND 160 FOOTBALL CLUBS AFFECTED BY THE CHANGES HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF THE UPDATED REGULATIONS AND WILL BE REQUIRED TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION "WITHIN A REASONABLE TIMEFRAME".

THEY HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT ALL EXISTING BARRIERS THAT DON'T MEET THE CRITERIA MUST BE REMOVED, OR AT THE VERY LEAST COVERED OR PROTECTED.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT WILL BE AVAILABLE TO CLUBS WITH THE FA AND THE PREMIER LEAGUE PROVIDING FUNDING THROUGH THE PREMIER LEAGUE STADIUM FUND.

IN A STATEMENT LAST WEEK, THE FA SAID: "WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN A REVIEW OF PITCH PERIMETER WALLS ACROSS THE NATIONAL LEAGUE SYSTEM AND WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE TO IDENTIFY WHAT IMPROVEMENTS CAN BE MADE TO OUR STADIUM ACCREDITATION CRITERIA THAT WILL HELP CLUBS MITIGATE POTENTIAL SAFETY RISKS AT THEIR GROUNDS AND STADIUMS.

"AS A RESULT OF THIS ONGOING PHASED REVIEW, WHICH HAS BEEN CONDUCTED BY INDEPENDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY EXPERTS, WE HAVE UPDATED OUR STADIUM ACCREDITATION CRITERIA FOR THE 2026/27 SEASON.

"THIS INCLUDES INTRODUCING REVISED CRITERIA RELATING TO PITCH PERIMETER BARRIERS, WHICH NO LONGER PERMITS SOLID BRICK, BREEZE BLOCK OR CONCRETE BARRIERS AROUND PITCHES ACROSS THE NATIONAL LEAGUE SYSTEM FOR MEN [STEPS 1-6], AND THE WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE [TIERS 3-4].

"ANY EXISTING SOLID BRICK, BREEZE BLOCK OR CONCRETE BARRIERS MUST BE REMOVED AS SOON AS REASONABLY PRACTICABLE OR COVERED WITH SUITABLE PROTECTION IF THEY CANNOT BE REMOVED FOR STRUCTURAL REASONS.

"WE HAVE INFORMED THE CLUBS AT THIS LEVEL THAT WILL BE REQUIRED TO TAKE ACTION AS A RESULT OF THESE CHANGES."

FOLLOWING LAST FRIDAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT, A PFA SPOKESPERSON SAID: "FOLLOWING THE TRAGIC DEATH OF BILLY VIGAR LAST YEAR, WE AGAIN HIGHLIGHTED THESE CONCERNS AND MADE CLEAR OUR VIEW THAT THE LACK OF PROGRESS AND LEADERSHIP ON THIS ISSUE HAD BEEN UNACCEPTABLE.

"AS PART OF WORKING GROUPS SET UP BY THE FA FOLLOWING BILLY'S DEATH, WE PUSHED FOR THE FA'S STADIUM ACCREDITATION CRITERIA TO BE AMENDED TO BAN THESE TYPES OF WALLS SO THAT THERE IS A CLEAR AND CENTRALISED POLICY FOR CLUBS TO FOLLOW.

"GIVEN THAT, IT'S A WELCOME STEP THAT THE FA'S REGULATIONS HAVE NOW BEEN CHANGED TO REFLECT THAT POSITION.

"HOWEVER, IT WILL NOW BE IMPORTANT FOR PROGRESS ON THE REMOVAL OF SUCH WALLS - AND EFFECTIVE MITIGATION OF RISKS AHEAD OF THEIR REMOVAL - TO BE PROPERLY MONITORED, AND FOR CLUBS TO BE GIVEN THE SUPPORT THEY NEED SO THAT THESE CHANGES CAN HAPPEN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. PLAYER SAFETY MUST ALWAYS COME FIRST."

- ✓ No Call-Out Charge
- ✓ Fixed Price Quote
- ✓ Local Engineers
- ✓ Guaranteed Work*
*Subject to T&C's
- ✓ Domestic and Commercial Services



**From Pitch to Home,
we've got it covered —
your Local Experts.**

*From blocked drains to burst pipes,
we're here to help. We're proud to
offer **24/7/365** emergency
response to local communities
across the UK.*

**No matter the problem, you can
count on Dyno-Rod to get your
home or business flowing again.**



Visit dyno.com

Or call us on

0333 305 8390



DYNO-ROD
Plumbing & Drains Services

OFFICIAL PARTNERS OF
THE TRIDENT LEAGUES



THE ISTHMIAN LEAGUE RESPECT STATEMENT

THE ISTHMIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION'S STATEMENT THAT THERE SHOULD BE A ZERO-TOLERANCE APPROACH AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION. ANY INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT TOWARDS 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.

VISITING PARK DRIVE DARTFORD HISTORY



DARTFORD FOOTBALL CLUB HAS A RICH AND FASCINATING HISTORY DATING BACK WELL OVER 130 YEARS.

CURRENTLY PLAYING IN THE ISTHMIAN PREMIER LEAGUE, THE CLUB HAS COMPETED IN THE TOP TIER OF NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL ON THREE SEPARATE OCCASIONS, WITH ITS HIGHEST FINISH, THIRD.

THE CLUB HAS REACHED THE THIRD ROUND OF THE FA CUP ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, THE FA TROPHY FINAL ONCE AND HAS WON THE KENT SENIOR CUP 14 TIMES, WITH ONLY MAIDSTONE UNITED WINNING IT MORE.

THE STORY BEGINS

DARTFORD FOOTBALL CLUB WAS FORMED IN EARLY 1888 BY MEMBERS OF THE DARTFORD WORKINGMEN'S CLUB AND FOR THE FIRST FEW SEASONS, PLAYED ONLY FRIENDLY FIXTURES WITH THE OCCASIONAL FORAY INTO CUP FOOTBALL. A RUN TO THE FINAL OF THE KENT SENIOR CUP IN 1894 ENCOURAGED THE CLUB COMMITTEE TO ENTER DARTFORD AS A FOUNDER-MEMBER OF THE KENT LEAGUE FOR THE 1894-95 SEASON. DARTFORD PLAYED ITS FIRST MATCH IN THE FA CUP IN OCTOBER 1895.

TWO SEASONS LATER, DARTFORD BECAME FOUNDER-MEMBERS OF THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE, DIVISION TWO, WINNING THE CHAMPIONSHIP AT THE FIRST ATTEMPT. OVER THE NEXT FEW SEASONS DARTFORD FLUCTUATED BETWEEN THE SOUTHERN AND KENT LEAGUES BUT A FINANCIAL CRISIS IN THE EARLY 1900S SAW THE CLUB DRIFT DOWN TO THE WEST KENT LEAGUE. AT THE SAME TIME, THE CLUB, WHICH HAD USED SEVERAL PITCHES IN THE AREA, GAINED THE USE OF SUMMERS MEADOW IN LOWFIELD STREET ON A LONG LEASE.

IN 1908-09, DARTFORD WON BOTH THE WEST KENT LEAGUE AND CUP 'DOUBLE' AND GENERATED ENOUGH ENTHUSIASM FOR THE CLUB TO RE-JOIN THE KENT LEAGUE, RETAINING MEMBERSHIP UNTIL THE OUTBREAK OF THE 1914-1918 WAR. IN 1913, DARTFORD UNDERTOOK A SHORT TOUR OF NORWAY, WHICH ENDED WITH A 6-1 WIN OVER A NORWAY XI.

AFTER THE WAR, FOOTBALL IN THE TOWN WAS SLOW TO GET UNDERWAY AS THE SUMMERS MEADOW GROUND WAS NO LONGER AVAILABLE. HOWEVER, LOCAL BUSINESSMEN APPRECIATING THE VALUE OF A GOOD-CLASS FOOTBALL TEAM BEARING THE TOWN'S NAME, COMPLETELY RE-STRUCTURED THE CLUB AND, FROM 1921 ONWARDS, DARTFORD FC WAS RUN AS A PUBLIC LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY, UNIQUE IN ENGLISH FOOTBALL UNTIL TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR FOLLOWED SUIT SOME FIFTY YEARS LATER. A SITE WAS FOUND IN WATLING STREET IN THE NEIGHBOURING PARISH OF STONE, WHICH WAS TO REMAIN THE CLUB'S HOME UNTIL A MAJOR FINANCIAL CRISIS FORCED THE SALE OF THE GROUND IN 1992.

DARTS CONTINUED THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH THE KENT LEAGUE, WINNING THE LEAGUE CUP IN 1923-24, BEFORE SWITCHING TO THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE IN TIME FOR THE 1926-27 SEASON. AT THE START OF THE 1930S, THE DARTFORD BOARD APPOINTED THE SUCCESSFUL KETTERING TOWN MANAGER, BILL COLLIER, AS MANAGER. THE SCOT CONTINUED HIS PATTERN OF SUCCESS WITH DARTFORD AND WON TROPHIES BY THE SHOAL-LOAD DURING THE DECADE LEADING UP TO THE 1939-45 WAR.

VISITING PARK DRIVE DARTFORD HISTORY



DARTFORD WON THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE EASTERN SECTION TITLE IN 1930-31 AND 1931-32 (MISSING A HAT-TRICK BY JUST ONE POINT THE SEASON AFTER) AND THE OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE LEAGUE WAS WON WITH VICTORIES OVER THE WESTERN SECTION WINNERS EXETER CITY RESERVES 7-2 AWAY AND YEOVIL & PETTERS UNITED 2-1 AT HOME, RESPECTIVELY. IN COUNTY FOOTBALL, DARTFORD WON THE KENT SENIOR CUP FOUR TIMES IN FIVE SEASONS AND THE KENT SENIOR SHIELD THREE TIMES.

IN ADDITION, DARTFORD GAINED A REPUTATION NATIONALLY BY BECOMING THE FIRST CLUB OUTSIDE THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE TO REACH THE FA CUP THIRD ROUND PROPER IN SUCCESSIVE SEASONS. IN 1935-36, DARTFORD LOST TO A STAR-STUDDED DERBY COUNTY (THEN SECOND IN DIVISION ONE) BY 3-2 AT THE BASEBALL GROUND HAVING LED 2-0. LEADING PLAYER FRED DELL WAS TRANSFERRED TO WEST HAM FOR A REPORTED £2,000 IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE GAME. THE FOLLOWING SEASON SAW DARTFORD LOSE 1-0 AT HOME TO DARLINGTON AT THE SAME STAGE. TOWARDS THE END OF THE DECADE MR COLLIER, WHO HAD BROUGHT A DISTINCTIVE SCOTTISH FLAVOUR TO DARTFORD, RESIGNED TO TAKE OVER A BUSINESS IN SCOTLAND AND THE PERIOD WAS SEEN OUT IN A COMPARATIVELY QUIET VEIN.

POST-WAR STABILITY

FOR A DECADE AND A HALF FOLLOWING THE 1939-1945 WAR, DARTFORD HAD LITTLE TO SHOW FOR ITS EFFORTS APART FROM A SPARKLING KENT SENIOR CUP WIN OVER BROMLEY IN 1947. AT THE SAME TIME, BROMLEY VIED WITH BISHOP AUCKLAND AS THE PREMIER AMATEUR CLUB IN THE LAND AND THE LILLYWHITES LOOK A 2-0 LEAD IN THE FINAL BEFORE DARTFORD STRUCK BACK WITH THREE GOALS TO LIFT THE TROPHY. INCLUDED IN THE DARTFORD LINE-UP THAT DAY WAS TED CROKER, LATER TO BECOME THE SECRETARY OF THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION. SOON AFTER THIS WIN DARTFORD TRANSFERRED RILEY CULLUM AND FRED ALEXANDER TO CHARLTON ATHLETIC FOR £6,000, WHICH WIPED OUT THE CLUB'S DEBTS ENTIRELY.

DARTFORD'S FIRST POST-WAR MANAGER WAS WARNEY CRESWELL (EX-EVERTON AND ENGLAND) BUT POOR RESULTS LED TO HIM BEING RAPIDLY REPLACED BY BILL MOSS WHO GRADUALLY PUT SOME STABILITY INTO THE CLUB'S PLAYING PERFORMANCES. IN THE LATE 1950S, THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE WAS TOTALLY REORGANISED AND DARTFORD SPENT MOST OF THE ENSUING TWENTY SEASONS IN THE PREMIER DIVISION. THE KEY MANAGERS OF THE ERA WERE GEORGE GREEN, ALF ACKERMAN AND ERNIE MORGAN, EACH OF WHOM BROUGHT EXTENSIVE FOOTBALL LEAGUE EXPERIENCE TO THE CLUB RESULTING IN A REASONABLE LEVEL OF RESPECTABILITY TO THE PLAYING SIDE AFFAIRS.

IN THE EARLY 1970S, DARTFORD APPEARED IN FOUR SUCCESSIVE KENT SENIOR CUP FINALS, WINNING THE FIRST AND THE LAST. AROUND THIS TIME, THE CLUB ACQUIRED THE SERVICES OF EX-BOLTON AND ENGLAND WINGER DOUG HOLDEN AS MANAGER. DOUG LAID DOWN THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE TEAM, WHICH WON THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP IN 1973-74. HOLDEN LEFT BEFORE THE START OF THAT SEASON AND WAS REPLACED BY ERNIE MORGAN WHO GRAFTED THREE OR FOUR QUALITY PLAYERS ON TO HOLDEN'S SQUAD AND STEERED THE DARTS TO THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE TITLE AND A PLACE IN THE FA TROPHY FINAL AT WEMBLEY (LOSING 2-1 TO MORECAMBE). FOR THE NEXT FEW SEASONS, DARTFORD DRIFTED ALONG AND JUST FAILED TO CLINCH A SPOT IN THE NEWLY FORMED ALLIANCE PREMIER LEAGUE (NOT THE FOOTBALL CONFERENCE). EVEN THOUGH THE PERIOD WAS BARREN BY DARTFORD'S STANDARDS, THE CLUB DID WIN THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE CUP FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1976-77.

VISITING PARK DRIVE DARTFORD HISTORY



THE 80S: A ROLLERCOASTER RIDE TO SWEET SUCCESS

THEN CAME THE 1980S, A PERIOD DOMINATED BY TWO MANAGERS WITH CONTRASTING STYLES: JOHN STILL AND PETER TAYLOR. BY WINNING THE SOUTHERN DIVISION OF THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE IN 1980-81, DARTFORD HAD GAINED A SHORT-LIVED PLACE IN THE ALLIANCE PREMIER LEAGUE. RELEGATED AFTER JUST ONE SEASON, BUT HAVING TASTED LIFE AT THE TOP OF THE SEMI-PROFESSIONAL GAME, DARTFORD WANTED MORE. JOHN STILL, WHO HAD LED LEYTONSTONE/ILFORD TO A CLEAN SWEEP OF TROPHIES, WAS THE MAN FOR THE JOB. IN 1983-84, HE STEERED DARTFORD TO A FOURTH SOUTHERN LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP AND A RETURN TO THE ALLIANCE PREMIER LEAGUE (BY NOW KNOWN AS THE GOLA LEAGUE). THIS TIME DARTS STAYED TWO SEASONS, FINISHING THIRD IN 1984-85. ANOTHER PERIODIC CRISIS WAS LOOMING, AND WITH STILL DEPARTING IN FEBRUARY 1986, DARTFORD WERE RELEGATED ONCE AGAIN.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1986, FORMER TOTTENHAM AND ENGLAND WINGER PETER TAYLOR TOOK CHARGE OF THE CLUB. IN THE FOUR SEASONS OF HIS REIGN, DARTFORD WERE NEVER OUT OF THE TOP FOUR IN THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION, WON THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE CUP TWICE (AND WERE DENIED A UNIQUE HAT-TRICK BY VS RUGBY IN THE 1989-90 FINAL), THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY TWICE, THE KENT SENIOR CUP TWICE AND REACHED THE FA TROPHY SEMI-FINALS, TWICE.

IN EACH OF HIS FOUR SEASONS AT DARTFORD THE TEAM SCORED OVER ONE HUNDRED GOALS — A FEAT UNMATCHED UNTIL TONY BURMAN'S SIDE IN 2007/08. IN ADDITION, TAYLOR SAW AVERAGE ATTENDANCES RISE FROM AROUND 450 TO ALMOST 1,000.

SUPPORTERS' ASSOCIATION SAVE THE CLUB

IN THE WAKE OF THE BRADFORD FIRE AND THE HILLSBOROUGH DISASTER DARTFORD, LIKE SO MANY CLUBS, NEEDED TO EITHER RE-LOCATE OR UPGRADE THEIR FACILITIES WITH THE BOARD GOING FOR THE LATTER OPTION. LARGE SUMS OF MONEY WERE SPENT ON PLANNING AND DESIGN FEES, WHICH BURDENED A MANAGEABLE FINANCIAL DEFICIT WITH CRIPPLING INTEREST CHARGES.

AT THE SAME TIME MAIDSTONE UNITED, WHO HAD SOLD THEIR OWN GROUND, NEEDED A SUITABLE HOME TO LAUNCH THEIR ILL-FATED FORAY INTO THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE AND THE DARTFORD BOARD AGREED TO LET MAIDSTONE GROUND-SHARE AT WATLING STREET, THE RENT INCOME PROVIDING A WELCOME BOOST FOR FINANCES.

WITHIN A FEW YEARS, MAIDSTONE HAD GONE INTO LIQUIDATION, MOST OF THEIR CASH BEING TAKEN UP TO GAIN THE EAGERLY-FOUGHT FOOTBALL LEAGUE PLACE. GROUND IMPROVEMENTS, WHICH MAIDSTONE UNITED HAD PAID FOR, WERE SOLD TO DARTFORD AT A COST (AROUND £500,000), WHICH PUSHED DARTS' DEBTS BEYOND MANAGEABLE PROPORTIONS. WATLING STREET WAS SOLD TO PAY OFF CREDITORS AND DARTFORD WITHDREW FROM THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE FOUR GAMES INTO THE 1992-93 SEASON.

VISITING PARK DRIVE DARTFORD HISTORY



THE CLUB'S SUPPORTERS' ASSOCIATION, AROUND 400 STRONG, CAME TO THE RESCUE, WITH A PRIVATE LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY INCORPORATED IN NOVEMBER 1992 TO MANAGE AFFAIRS. THIS MEANT, PRIMARILY, KEEPING THE YOUTH TEAM OPERATING, AN ACTION WHICH WAS REWARDED WHEN THE YOUTH TEAM BEAT MAIDSTONE INVICTA (THE CLUB RISING OUT OF THE ASHES OF THE OLD UNITED CLUB) IN THE FINAL OF THE JOHN ULLMAN CUP BY 2-0 AT GRAVESEND & NORTHFLEET BEFORE A GATE OF 562. THE CONTINUING EXISTENCE OF THE YOUTH TEAM ENABLED DARTFORD TO MAINTAIN BOTH ITS SENIOR STATUS AND FULL MEMBERSHIP OF THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION.

IN FEBRUARY 1993, FORMER PLAYER TONY BURMAN WAS APPOINTED MANAGER AND WITH THE CLUB BEING OFFERED A GROUND-SHARE ARRANGEMENT BY CRAY WANDERERS, DARTFORD WERE ABLE TO MAKE A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE KENT LEAGUE. SPURRED ON BY AN AVERAGE ATTENDANCE OF WELL OVER 300, DARTFORD FINISHED THAT FIRST SEASON IN SIXTH POSITION.

WITH A VIEW TO THE FUTURE DARTFORD NEGOTIATED A GROUND-SHARE WITH ERITH & BELVEDERE IN TIME FOR THE 1994-95 SEASON AND A SECOND KENT LEAGUE CAMPAIGN STARTED WITH GATES AT A SHADE OVER 400. EARLY PROMISE FADED SOMEWHAT AND THE CLUB FINISHED IN MID-TABLE, BUT THEY DID REACH THE FINAL OF THE KENT LEAGUE CUP.

THE FOLLOWING SEASON SAW DARTFORD INVOLVED IN A SEASON-LONG BATTLE WITH FURNESS FOR THE DIVISION ONE TITLE, WITH THE DESTINATION OF THE CHAMPIONSHIP DECIDED IN THE GLOOM AT FURNESS IN THE LAST FIXTURE OF THE SEASON, THE HOME SIDE CLINGING ON FOR A 1-1 DRAW TO DENY DARTFORD ON GOAL DIFFERENCE. THE SEASON WAS REMARKABLE IN THAT DARTS LOST ONLY ONE LEAGUE GAME ALL SEASON. THE ONE DEFEAT IN ALL COMPETITIONS CAME AT CONFERENCE CLUB FARNBOROUGH TOWN IN THE FA CUP, THE ONLY GOAL COMING FROM THE PENALTY SPOT.

THERE WERE TRIUMPHS, THOUGH, AS DARTFORD SWEEPED TO A 3-0 KENT SENIOR TROPHY VICTORY OVER CHATHAM TOWN AT WELLING UNITED FC, WHILST THE NEWLY FORMED RESERVES, UNDER ANOTHER FORMER DART – GARY JULIANS – CARRIED OFF A SOUTH LONDON FEDERATION LEAGUE AND CUP 'DOUBLE' AND THE YOUTH TEAM FINISHED IN THIRD POSITION IN THE KENT YOUTH LEAGUE.

IN MAY 1996 CAME THE WELCOME NEWS THAT DARTFORD HAD GAINED PROMOTION TO THE DR MARTENS SPONSORED SOUTHERN LEAGUE, EXACTLY ONE HUNDRED YEARS AFTER THE CLUB FIRST ENTERED THAT COMPETITION. UNFORTUNATELY, TONY BURMAN WAS FORCED TO RESIGN AS MANAGER IN THE DECEMBER DUE TO BUSINESS COMMITMENTS BUT THE CLUB QUICKLY PROMOTED RESERVE TEAM MANAGER GARY JULIANS TO FIRST TEAM MANAGER.

AFTER AN INITIAL BRIGHT START TO THE SEASON, WHICH SAW DARTFORD REACH THIRD PLACE, THE SEASON SETTLED DOWN AND THE DARTS FINISHED FOURTEENTH. THE RESERVES HAD ANOTHER EXCELLENT SEASON AND FINISHED SECOND TO TONBRIDGE RESERVES IN THE KENT LEAGUE DIVISION TWO.

IN SEPTEMBER 1997, A DISASTROUS FIRE AT ERITH & BELVEDERE PUT THE CLUB'S FUTURE AND STANDING WITH THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE INTO SERIOUS DOUBT AND WITH THIS IN MIND A NEW GROUND SHARING ARRANGEMENT WAS MADE WITH PURFLEET IN TIME FOR THE 1998-99 SEASON.

VISITING PARK DRIVE DARTFORD HISTORY



A HIGHLIGHT OF THAT SEASON WERE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE YOUTH TEAM UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF GRANT SPELLING AND SIMON HALSEY. THE TEAM WON THE NORTHERN SECTION TITLE AFTER A PENALTY SHOOTOUT IN A PLAY-OFF WITH WELLING UNITED, AND ALSO REACHED THE FINAL OF THE KENT YOUTH LEAGUE CUP AND THE KENT COUNTY CUP.

THE 1999-2000 SEASON SAW THE DARTS REACH THE SEMI-FINAL OF THE KENT SENIOR CUP AND THE RESERVES REACH THE SAME STAGE OF THE KENT INTERMEDIATE CUP.

THE FOLLOWING THREE SEASONS SAW THE TEAM CONSOLIDATE IN THE DR MARTENS LEAGUE, FINISHING MID-TABLE ON EACH OCCASION WITH THE EXCEPTION OF 1999-2000, WHEN THE DARTS FINISHED IN EIGHTH POSITION.

A NEW GROUND SHARING AGREEMENT WAS ARRANGED WITH GRAVESEND & NORTHFLEET IN TIME FOR THE 2001-02 SEASON. IN NOVEMBER 2001 THE CLUB PARTED COMPANY WITH BOTH MANAGER GARY JULIANS AND COACH MICKY CROWER. FORMER MANAGER AND PLAYER TONY BURMAN RETURNED TO THE CLUB AS CARETAKER MANAGER TO BE ASSISTED BY FORMER CAPTAIN AND PLAYER PAUL SAWYER.

DARTFORD WERE BY NOW LANGUISHING IN A RELEGATION POSITION AND DECEMBER 2001 SAW THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT TOMMY SAMPSON, WHO HAD PLAYED OVER 200 GAMES FOR DARTFORD DURING THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD 1975-80, HAD BEEN APPOINTED THE NEW MANAGER. HE WAS ASSISTED BY MARTIN FARNIE AND PAUL SAWYER AND IN EARLY 2002 LONG TIME DARTFORD FAVOURITE STEVE ROBINSON RETURNED TO THE CLUB AS RESERVE TEAM PLAYER-MANAGER.

MANY CHANGES WERE TO FOLLOW ON THE PLAYING FRONT AND BY THE END OF THE SEASON DARTFORD HAD FINISHED IN A VERY CREDIBLE EIGHTH POSITION AND IN DOING SO WERE THE HIGHEST PLACED KENT CLUB IN THE DR MARTENS EASTERN DIVISION. THE RESERVES TOO, HAD A VERY GOOD SEASON, WINNING THE NORTHERN SECTION OF KENT LEAGUE DIVISION ONE.

IN A PLAY-OFF FOR THE OVERALL WINNERS OF DIVISION ONE, THE DARTS MISSED THE TITLE IN AN EXTRA-TIME LOSS TO DOVER ATHLETIC RESERVES. THE GROUND SHARING AGREEMENT AT GRAVESEND & NORTHFLEET, COUPLED WITH AN UPTURN IN PERFORMANCES ON THE FIELD, SAW A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN ATTENDANCES TO HELP THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE CLUB.

SEASON 2002-03 SAW A FURTHER EXPANSION OF THE PLAYING SIDE, WITH THE ADDITION OF AN UNDER 16S SIDE IN THE KENT YOUTH LEAGUE, THUS MAKING THE PROGRESSION OF PLAYERS FROM UNDER 16S LEVEL TO THE SENIOR SQUAD POSSIBLE. THE DECISION PAID OFF AS THE TEAM ACHIEVED A LEAGUE AND CUP DOUBLE. THE UNDER 18S TEAM ALSO ACHIEVED RUNNERS-UP POSITION IN THE CENTRAL DIVISION.

SEASON 2003-04 SAW THE FIRST TEAM FINISH IN 16TH POSITION IN THE DR MARTENS EASTERN DIVISION, BUT THE NEWS THAT EVERYBODY HAD BEEN WAITING FOR CAME ON THE 10TH APRIL 2004 WITH DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNOUNCING THAT IT WOULD PROVIDE FUNDING AND A SITE FOR THE BUILDING OF A STADIUM IN DARTFORD IN TIME FOR THE 2006-07 SEASON.

VISITING PARK DRIVE DARTFORD HISTORY



THE 2004/5 SEASON SAW THE RESTRUCTURING OF NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL. DARTFORD REMAINED IN THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE IN A DIVISION MADE UP OF LARGELY TEAMS FROM THE RYMAN LEAGUE. THE SEASON AS A WHOLE WAS DISAPPOINTING WITH THE DARTS ON THE EDGE OF THE RELEGATION ZONE FOR MUCH OF THE SEASON. MANAGER TOMMY SAMPSON LEFT THE CLUB TOWARDS THE END OF JANUARY AND DIRECTOR AND FORMER PLAYER AND MANAGER TONY BURMAN, TOOK OVER ON A CARETAKER BASIS.

AN EARLY UPSURGE IN RESULTS PULLED THE DARTS AWAY FROM THE RELEGATION ZONE TO RETAIN THEIR SOUTHERN LEAGUE STATUS. MEANWHILE, THE RESERVES UNDER THE MANAGERSHIP OF BOB PITTAWAY, IMPROVED ON THE PREVIOUS SEASON'S POOR PERFORMANCES. AN INFLUX OF PLAYERS PREVIOUSLY UNDER BOB'S GUIDANCE AT TONBRIDGE AND SEVERAL YOUTH TEAM PLAYERS FROM THE PREVIOUS SEASONS UNDER 18S, HELPED THE TEAM ACHIEVE A CREDITABLE MID-TABLE POSITION.

THE BRIGHT SIDE OF THE SEASON FOR THE CLUB WAS THE PERFORMANCE OF THE CLUB'S TWO YOUTH TEAMS. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEASON, DENNIS REID WAS APPOINTED MANAGER FOLLOWING A PREVIOUSLY SUCCESSFUL TIME AT YOUTH TEAM LEVEL AT GRAVESEND & NORTHFLEET.

JOINING HIM WAS CENGIZ IBRAHIM AS COACH. SEVERAL EX-GRAVESEND & NORTHFLEET PLAYERS FOLLOWED THEM AND ACHIEVED THE BEST SEASON AT UNDER 18S LEVEL FOR MANY SEASONS. THE SEASON CULMINATED WITH THEM WINNING THE KENT YOUTH LEAGUE UNDER 18 CENTRAL DIVISION TITLE AND ALSO ACHIEVING THE DOUBLE BY WINNING THE PLAAYA SPONSORED KENT YOUTH UNDER 18 CUP.

THE UNDER 13S TEAM UNDER MANAGER MICK KNIGHT AND COACH GARY WHITEHEAD TOOK A WHILE TO SETTLE DOWN BUT WENT ON TO END THE SEASON IN MID-TABLE AND ALSO TO WIN THE UNDER 13S CHALLENGE CUP. A GAME THAT WAS A CREDIT TO YOUTH FOOTBALL. THE TEAM ALSO ACHIEVED JOINT WINNERS WITH FIVE OTHER CLUBS IN THE SPORTSMANSHIP AWARDS AT THE LEAGUE'S AGM BY NOT HAVING ANY PLAYERS CAUTIONED DURING THE SEASON.

SEASON 2005/6 PROVED TO BE AN EXCITING PERIOD FOR THE CLUB BOTH ON AND OFF THE FIELD. THE YOUTH SIDE OF THE CLUB EXPANDED TO HAVE TEAMS COMPETING AT UNDER 18, 16, 14 AND 13 LEVEL. DARTFORD VIKINGS WHO WERE PREVIOUSLY AFFILIATED TO THE CLUB JOINED FORCES WITH THE DARTS, BRINGING WITH THEM A FURTHER 12 TEAMS FROM UNDER 17S DOWN TO UNDER 7S.

NEW GROUND NEWS REJUVENATES THE CLUB

OFF THE FIELD, THE DECISION EVERY DARTS FAN HAD BEEN WAITING FOR CAME ON WEDNESDAY 13 JULY 2005 WHEN DARTFORD COUNCIL PASSED THE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE NEW GROUND SUBJECT TO NO OBJECTIONS BEING RAISED BY THE HIGHWAY AGENCY OR THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

DURING THE SUMMER OF 2005, TONY BURMAN DECIDED THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE AS MANAGER FOR THE FORTHCOMING SEASON TO BE ASSISTED BY PAUL SAWYER AND STEVE ROBINSON. EXPECTATIONS WERE HIGH WITHIN THE CLUB WITH THE ANTICIPATED START OF THE BUILDING OF THE NEW STADIUM AND THESE EXPECTATIONS WERE FULFILLED WHEN IN NOVEMBER 2005 CONTRACTORS MOVED ONTO THE NEW SITE AND BUILDING COMMENCED.

VISITING PARK DRIVE DARTFORD HISTORY



ON THE FIELD, THE DARTS STARTED BRIGHTLY AND EARLY FORM SAW THEM IN THE TOP HALF OF THE TABLE AND A POSITION THAT THEY WOULD MAINTAIN FOR THE WHOLE SEASON. AN EARLY EXIT IN THE FA CUP SAW DARTS DISMAL RUN IN THIS COMPETITION CONTINUE. HOWEVER, THE CLUB HAD ITS BEST RUN IN THE FA TROPHY FOR SEVERAL SEASONS. WINS OVER DOVER ATHLETIC AND MARGATE BROUGHT THE DRAW EVERYBODY WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO, AT HOME TO AFC WIMBLEDON.

THE GAME AT STONEBRIDGE ROAD, SAW AN END-TO-END ENCOUNTER, BUT AT THE END OF NINETY MINUTES THE SCORE WAS GOALLESS AND A REPLAY AT WIMBLEDON SCHEDULED THE FOLLOWING TUESDAY. ANOTHER PULSATING GAME AND JUST WHEN EXTRA TIME LOOMED, WIMBLEDON BROKE THE DEADLOCK TO SCORE TWO GOALS IN THE LAST FIVE MINUTES.

A DISASTROUS SPELL JUST AFTER CHRISTMAS SAW THE DARTS GO ON A LOSING TRAIL, ALTHOUGH THE LEADING CLUBS REMAINED WITHIN TOUCHING DISTANCE. JAMES CARTER'S ABSENCE FROM THE SQUAD FROM JANUARY WAS A MAJOR SETBACK, BUT THE DARTS RECRUITED BRENDON CASS FROM CHATHAM TOWN TO BOLSTER THE FORWARD LINE. THE FINAL POSITIONS IN THE LEAGUE WERE NOT TO BE DECIDED UNTIL THE LAST DAY OF THE SEASON AND DEPENDED ON DARTFORD'S AND WIVENHOE TOWN'S RESULTS ON THE DAY. WHILST DARTS DID THE BUSINESS BY WINNING AT BARTON ROVERS, WIVENHOE SECURED THE POINT THEY NEEDED TO BOOK A PLAY-OFF POSITION.

THE RESERVES UNDER BOB PITTAWAY STARTED WITH A MIXTURE OF NEW PLAYERS AND THOSE THAT HAD PROGRESSED THROUGH FROM THE UNDER 18S CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM OF THE SEASON BEFORE. WITHOUT A SETTLED TEAM DUE TO INJURIES AND CALL UPS TO THE FIRST TEAM, THE TEAM STRUGGLED AND DECEMBER SAW THE DEPARTURE OF RESERVE TEAM MANAGER BOB PITTAWAY AND HIS ASSISTANTS TO SEVENDOKS TOWN. AS A TEMPORARY MEASURE GRANT SPELLING AGREED TO RETURN TO THE CLUB TO HELP OUT UNTIL A PERMANENT APPOINTMENT COULD BE FOUND.

THIS TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENT TURNED PERMANENT WHEN GRANT CONTINUED IN THAT POSITION UNTIL THE END OF THE SEASON. DURING THAT TIME THE RESERVES HAD A MUCH MORE SETTLED TEAM AND IMPROVED PERFORMANCES SAW THEM FINISH IN A TOP HALF POSITION IN THE LEAGUE WHEN EARLY INDICATIONS WERE THAT THEY WERE RELEGATION CANDIDATES — AND SAW THEM REACH THE FINAL OF THE DIVISION ONE/TWO CUP.

THE FINAL PLAYED AT FOLKESTONE INVICTA'S GROUND, SAW A THOROUGHLY ENTERTAINING GAME OF FOOTBALL WHICH WAS A CREDIT TO BOTH TEAMS BUT WHICH SAW THE DARTS WINNERS AT THE END OF NINETY MINUTES BY THREE GOALS TO ONE.

THERE WERE MIXED FORTUNES FOR THE CLUB'S YOUTH TEAMS. THE UNDER 18S HAD A NEW BLEND OF PLAYERS FROM THOSE LEFT FROM THE PREVIOUS SEASON, PLUS NEWCOMERS TO THE CLUB BUT WERE UNABLE TO REPEAT THE FEATS OF THE PREVIOUS SEASON AND FINISHED MID-TABLE AND WITHOUT ANY GREAT CUP SUCCESS.

THE UNDER 16S HOWEVER WON THEIR LEAGUE AND ALSO FINISHED RUNNERS UP IN THE LEAGUE SHIELD, WHILST THE UNDER 14S CONSOLIDATED ON THEIR PREVIOUS SEASON BY FINISHING MID-TABLE. THERE WAS SUCCESS FOR THE UNDER 13S, WINNING THE LEAGUE TITLE BUT MISSING OUT ON A LEAGUE AND CUP DOUBLE BY LOSING ON PENALTIES TO A STRONG BROMLEY SIDE.

VISITING PARK DRIVE DARTFORD HISTORY



BY THE END OF THE SEASON, THE FA'S RESTRUCTURING PLAN WAS BEING IMPLEMENTED WHICH SAW THE DARTS MOVED FROM THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE TO THE RYMAN LEAGUE WHERE THEY WOULD COMPETE IN THE RYMAN DIVISION ONE SOUTH. MANAGER TONY BURMAN KEPT FAITH WITH THE MAJORITY OF THE PREVIOUS SEASON'S TEAM, BUT REINFORCED THE SQUAD WITH THE ADDITION OF EXPERIENCED DEFENDERS JOHN FARLEY, LEW WATTS, AND FORWARD JAY MAY.

OFF THE FIELD, PRINCES PARK WAS TAKING SHAPE AND AN OPENING DATE OF 23 SEPTEMBER WAS ANNOUNCED FOR THE FIRST GAME. TOWARDS THE END OF APRIL, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THIS DATE WOULD NOT BE MET AND ON MONDAY 21 AUGUST 2006 IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE OPENING DATE WOULD BE SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2006 WHEN THE DARTS ENTERTAINED HORSHAM YMCA IN THE RYMAN LEAGUE.

NEW HORIZONS WITH PRINCES PARK OPENING

THE DAY DULY ARRIVED AND IN FRONT OF A CAPACITY CROWD OF 4,100 (ALL TICKETS SOLD IN 3 WEEKS) THE TEAM WON 4-2 WITH BRENDON CASS HAVING THE HONOUR OF SCORING THE FIRST GOAL AFTER 10 MINUTES.

DARTFORD WERE MOVED ACROSS TO THE RYMAN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE NORTH FOR THE 2007/2008 SEASON. AFTER A LONG BATTLE WITH AFC SUDBURY AT THE TOP (INCLUDING A LONG UNBEATEN RUN FOR THE DARTS MID-SEASON), DARTFORD WERE CROWNED CHAMPIONS DESPITE A 2-1 DEFEAT AWAY AT EDGWARE TOWN. PRINCES PARK CELEBRATED THE VICTORY WITH A VICTORY OVER WINGATE AND FINCHLEY IN THE FINAL MATCH OF 2007/2008, WHERE CLUB CAPTAIN ALEX O'BRIEN LIFTED THE LEAGUE TITLE.

DARTFORD FINISHED A CREDIBLE 8TH IN THE RYMAN PREMIER LEAGUE IN THEIR FIRST SEASON BACK, WHILST SELLING STRIKER CODY McDONALD TO NORWICH CITY IN THE JANUARY 2009 TRANSFER WINDOW.

THE DARTS CONTINUED THEIR PROGRESS THROUGH THE FOOTBALL PYRAMID SINCE RETURNING TO THE BOROUGH THROUGHOUT THE 2009/10 SEASON, ALTHOUGH CUP FOOTBALL WAS NOT THE BIGGEST OF SUCCESSES. AN FA CUP RUN ENDED AT THE HANDS OF CHELMSFORD CITY IN OCTOBER, AND WAS FOLLOWED UP BY DEFEATS BY DOVER ATHLETIC (FA TROPHY), AVELEY (ISTHMIAN LEAGUE CUP) AND WELLING UNITED (KENT SENIOR CUP). HOWEVER, LEAGUE COMPETITION WAS SEEN AS PARAMOUNT AND THIS SHOWED. DARTFORD SEALED THE LEAGUE TITLE ONLY A FORTNIGHT BEFORE THE END OF THE SEASON WITH A THUMPING 6-2 VICTORY AT KINGSTONIAN, BUT THIS DID NOT SHOW THE FULL STORY AS A BAD WINTER LEFT THE DARTS WITH SEVEN GAMES IN THAT FINAL SPELL. VICTORIES IN ALL BUT ONE OF THESE MATCHES LEFT THE CLUB WINNING THE TITLE BY AN 18-POINT MARGIN EVENTUALLY.

IN 2010/11, THE CLUB MADE THEIR DEBUT IN THE CONFERENCE SOUTH, FINISHING A CREDITABLE TENTH. IN CONTRAST TO THE PREVIOUS SEASON, CUP RUNS WERE ON THE AGENDA, WITH AN EXTENDED FA CUP RUN THE HIGHLIGHT. DARTFORD EVENTUALLY SUCCEMBED TO PORT VALE IN A REPLAY, WITH VALE'S LATE EQUALISER AT PRINCES PARK FEELING PARTICULARLY HARSH GIVEN THE CONTEXT OF THE MATCH. THERE WAS ALSO A GOOD FA TROPHY RUN WHICH ENDED IN A LAST SIXTEEN MATCH AT CONFERENCE NATIONAL CLUB GATESHEAD, WHO RAN OUT WINNERS. THERE WAS SUCCESS IN THE KENT SENIOR CUP WHEN THE CLUB LIFTED THE TROPHY FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE LATE 1980S WITH A 4-1 VICTORY OVER BROMLEY AT PRINCES PARK IN THE FINAL.

VISITING PARK DRIVE DARTFORD HISTORY



TOP TIER AGAIN AT LAST

IN 2011/12, IT WAS ANOTHER SEASON OF TWISTS AND TURNS, AS THE DARTS CRASHED OUT OF THE FA CUP EARLY WITH A DEFEAT AT BROMLEY, AND FELL IN THE 3RD ROUND OF THE FA TROPHY TO WEALDSTONE AFTER A REPLAY. THE KENT SENIOR CUP DEFENCE ENDED AT THE FINAL HURDLE, LOSING OUT TO HYTHE TOWN IN THE FINAL, BUT THE LEAGUE FORM WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE SEASON. CHASING DOWN WOKING THROUGHOUT THE SEASON, THE DARTS EVENTUALLY LOST OUT BY FOUR POINTS AND SEALED THE SECOND-PLACE POSITION, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY HOME ADVANTAGE IN THE PLAY-OFFS. BEATING BASINGSTOKE TOWN OVER THE TWO-LEGGED AFFAIR MEANT A HOME MATCH AGAINST WELLING UNITED IN THE FINAL. THE SELL-OUT CROWD SAW LEE NOBLE'S EARLY STRIKE SEAL THE DARTS PLACE AS PROMOTION FINAL WINNERS AND EARNING A SLOT IN THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE 1980S.

THE CLUB'S RETURN TO THE TOP FLIGHT OF NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL IN 2012/13 WILL ALSO BE LONG REMEMBERED FOR BEING ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL SEASONS IN ITS HISTORY. DESPITE A CONTROVERSIAL EXPULSION FROM THE KENT SENIOR CUP, AND THE UNFORTUNATE DRAWING OF A FELLOW CONFERENCE NATIONAL SIDE IN THE CLUB'S FIRST FA CUP MATCH (FOREST GREEN ROVERS), THE CLUB MANAGED TO REACH THE FA TROPHY SEMI FINALS. DEFEATS OF KINGSTONIAN, TONBRIDGE ANGELS, BROMLEY AND HALIFAX TOWN TOOK THE DARTS TO A TWO-LEGGED TIE AGAINST FELLOW CONFERENCE SIDE GRIMSBY TOWN. A 3-0 DEFEAT AT BLUNDELL PARK POSSIBLY FLATTERED THE HOME SIDE, BUT IT LEFT THE DARTS WITH A MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB BACK AT PRINCES PARK, WHERE THEY COULD ONLY MANAGE A 0-0 DRAW TO GET SO NEAR, YET SO FAR FROM A TRIP TO WEMBLEY. HOWEVER, DESPITE THE CUP RUN, THE DARTS' LEAGUE FORM MANAGED TO STAND UP, AGAINST ALL ODDS. AN EIGHTH-PLACE FINISH WAS THE CULMINATION OF SOME EXCELLENT VICTORIES, DEFEATING HEREFORD UNITED, WREXHAM, LUTON TOWN, CAMBRIDGE UNITED AND GRIMSBY TOWN AS WELL AS A TELEVISED HOME WIN OVER THE EVENTUAL CHAMPIONS MANSFIELD TOWN. FINISHING THE HIGHEST PART-TIME SIDE IN THE COUNTRY WAS TOPPED OFF BY PRINCES PARK HOSTING ITS FIRST INTERNATIONAL MATCH AS ENGLAND C HOSTED TURKEY C.

THE FOLLOWING TWO SEASONS WERE HARD WORK FOR THE CLUB. IN 2013/14, DARTFORD LOST THEIR DEFENSIVE SPINE OF CHAMPION, BONNER AND ARBER. DESPITE AWAY WINS AT KIDDERMINSTER AND WREXHAM, RELEGATION WAS CONFIRMED. HOWEVER, DUE TO FINANCIAL MISMANAGEMENT BY OTHER CLUBS IN THE LEAGUE, TWO RELEGATION SPACES WERE REMOVED. DARTFORD WERE IN THOSE TWO SPACES, AND IN THE MIDDLE OF JUNE, IT WAS CONFIRMED THAT THE DARTS HAD BEEN HANDED A REPRIEVE. THE LATE NOTICE OF THIS HOWEVER WORKED AGAINST THE DARTS AS PLANS HAD BEEN PUT IN PLACE TO SIGN PLAYERS WHO COULD NOT COMMIT TO CONFERENCE NATIONAL FOOTBALL. IT WAS NO SURPRISE TO SEE THE CLUB STRUGGLE. AWAY WINS AGAINST WREXHAM AND CHESTER PAPERED OVER A POOR RECORD AWAY FROM HOME, AND A TELEVISED HOME DEFEAT AGAINST BARNET ON EASTER MONDAY CONDEMNED THE DARTS TO RELEGATION, WITH NO REPRIEVE THIS TIME. CUP FOOTBALL IN THESE TWO SEASONS HAD A MIXED SUCCESS. IN 2014/15, THE DARTS MADE IT THROUGH TO THE SECOND ROUND OF THE FA CUP WHEN THEY WERE BEATEN 4-1 BY BRADFORD CITY AT VALLEY PARADE.

FOLLOWING THE CLUB'S RELEGATION FROM THE NATIONAL LEAGUE (FORMERLY THE CONFERENCE), THERE WAS A RETURN TO NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH FOOTBALL. AN EARLY EXIT IN THE FA CUP AT HOME TO LOWER LEAGUE UXBRIDGE WAS A BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT, AS WAS THE EARLY DEFEAT IN THE FA TROPHY AT HOME TO WHITEHAWK. THE LEAGUE CAMPAIGN ENDED WITH THE DARTS JUST OUTSIDE OF THE PLAY-OFFS, WITH A SLENDER BUT IMPROBABLE CHANCE GOING INTO THE FINAL MATCH OF THE SEASON. IT WAS, HOWEVER, NOT TO BE. THERE WAS CUP SUCCESS THOUGH, AS THE DARTS LIFTED THE KENT SENIOR CUP WITH A FINAL AT PRINCES PARK AGAINST CHARLTON ATHLETIC WHO THEY DEFEATED 3-1.

VISITING PARK DRIVE DARTFORD HISTORY



THE FOLLOWING SEASON, VICTORIES AGAINST CHELMSFORD CITY, SLOUGH TOWN AND TONBRIDGE ANGELS IN THE FA CUP TOOK THE DARTS INTO THE FIRST ROUND WITH A TIE AGAINST NATIONAL LEAGUE SIDE SUTTON UNITED AT PRINCES PARK. THE DARTS, HOWEVER, CAME OUT ON THE WRONG SIDE OF A 6-3 DEFEAT IN AN ENTHRALLING MATCH IN WHICH THE HOME SIDE CAME FROM BEHIND THREE TIMES. SUTTON UNITED WOULD GO ON TO BE KNOCKED OUT BY ARSENAL IN THE COMPETITION. IN THE FA TROPHY, CHELMSFORD CITY GAINED REVENGE FOR THE FA CUP DEFEAT BY BEATING THE DARTS 1-0.

THE LEAGUE SEASON WAS ONE OF NEARLY BUT NOT QUITE, HOWEVER. TWO LATE GOALS AGAINST POOLE TOWN SEALED THIRD PLACE IN THE LEAGUE, AND CONFIRMED A TWO-LEGGED TIE AGAINST CHELMSFORD CITY (MAKING A TOTAL OF SIX MATCHES AGAINST THEM IN THE SEASON). THE DARTS MANAGED TO HOLD THEM 0-0 IN THE AWAY LEG, BUT A 2-1 DEFEAT WAS ENOUGH TO KNOCK THE DARTS OUT IN THE SECOND LEG.

FOLLOWING THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF MISSING OUT ON THE PLAY-OFFS, 2017/18 STARTED OFF WITH THE DARTS CONCEDED ONLY THREE GOALS IN THE FIRST SIX MATCHES. VICTORIES IN THE FA CUP AGAINST BARKING, NEEDHAM MARKET & BURGESS HILL TOWN SAW THE DARTS REACH THE FIRST ROUND OF THE COMPETITION FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW. A HOME TIE AGAINST SWINDON TOWN WAS THE REWARD, BUT THE LEAGUE OPPOSITION CAME OUT VICTORS IN A 5-1 WIN.

AN EARLY EXIT FROM THE KENT SENIOR CUP AND SUBSEQUENT DEFEAT ON PENALTIES AGAINST BOREHAM WOOD IN THE FA TROPHY MEANT THAT THE DECK WAS CLEARED FOR A FULL-THROATED ASSAULT ON THE LEAGUE TITLE. THE DARTS WENT UNDEFEATED FROM JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS TO EARLY FEBRUARY. HOWEVER, CONSECUTIVE DEFEATS PROVED TO BE A SETBACK. HAVANT & WATERLOOVILLE WERE THE CLUB'S MAIN RIVALS FOR THE NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH, AND THE TITLE RACE WOULD RUN DOWN TO THE FINAL MATCH. THE DARTS LOST ONLY ONCE FROM THE 10TH FEBRUARY UNTIL THE 28TH APRIL, WINNING NINE CONSECUTIVE MATCHES AT THE TAIL END OF THAT RUN. HAVANT & WATERLOOVILLE WENT INTO THE FINAL MATCH OF THE SEASON AHEAD ON GOAL DIFFERENCE, WITH THE DARTS' NEEDING TO SCORE GOALS AND MATCH THE RESULT OF THE HAWKS.

WITH TONY BURMAN'S MEN WINNING AT BOGNOR REGIS, HAVANT & WATERLOOVILLE WERE LEVEL WITH CONCORD RANGERS WHICH MEANT THAT THE DARTS WERE IN POLE POSITION TO WIN THE LEAGUE UNTIL THE 87TH MINUTE. FORMER DART JASON PRIOR SCORED A LATE WINNER WHICH CONDEMNED DFC TO MISSING OUT ON GOAL DIFFERENCE, AND HAVING TO TAKE THEIR CHANCE IN THE PLAY-OFFS. TAKING ON BRAINTREE TOWN, WHO FINISHED 17 POINTS BEHIND DFC, THE TEAM WERE DEFEATED 1-0, AND IN THE DAYS FOLLOWING THE MATCH, TONY BURMAN RESIGNED HIS POSITION AS FIRST TEAM MANAGER, WITH HIS MANAGEMENT TEAM FOLLOWING HIM.

THE SUMMER OF 2018 SAW UPHEAVAL AT THE CLUB FOLLOWING THE RESIGNATIONS, BUT DFC APPOINTED THEIR FIRST JOINT-MANAGERS IN ITS HISTORY IN LATE MAY, WITH FORMER PLAYERS JAMIE COYLE AND ADAM FLANAGAN TAKING THE HELM. A MIXED START TO THE SEASON FOLLOWED A DISRUPTED PRE-SEASON, WHERE THE CLUB LOST ANDY PUGH TO A HORRIFIC DOUBLE LEG BREAK, AND THE LACK OF GOALS SHOWED, SCORING THREE GOALS IN THE FIRST SIX MATCHES. THIS WAS COMPOUNDED BY ONLY ONE VICTORY IN THE FA CUP, A LABOURED 3-1 WIN AT AFC UCKFIELD TOWN, BEFORE BEING KNOCKED OUT BY OXFORD CITY IN THE THIRD QUALIFYING ROUND.

VISITING PARK DRIVE DARTFORD HISTORY



HOWEVER, FIVE WINS IN SIX MATCHES BRIGHTENED SPIRITS BEFORE AN EARLY EXIT FROM THE FA TROPHY AT THE HANDS OF EASTBOURNE BOROUGH, FOLLOWING A REPLAY. THROUGHOUT THE WINTER THOUGH, INCONSISTENCY PLAGUED THE CLUB UNTIL FEBRUARY, WHEN THE DARTS LOWERED THE COLOURS, TWICE, OF THE SOON TO BE CHAMPIONS WOKING AS WELL AS BATH CITY. WITH THE PLAY-OFFS LOOKING A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY, THE INCONSISTENCY CREPT BACK IN AND UNFORTUNATELY, ONLY ONE WIN IN THE FINAL EIGHT MATCHES OF THE SEASON MEANT THAT THE CLUB MISSED OUT ON THE FINAL PLAY-OFF PLACE.

COVID STRIKES, BUT CLUB BATTLES ON

THE 19-20 SEASON STARTED POORLY AND AFTER A SEPTEMBER LOSS TO TONBRIDGE ANGELS THE MANAGEMENT TEAM OF COYLE AND FLANAGAN, RESIGNED. STEVE KING WAS APPOINTED IN OCTOBER, WITH HIS FIRST MATCH — AN FA CUP GAME — ENDING IN DEFEAT. HOWEVER, THE TEAM FARED BETTER IN THE LEAGUE, WITH KING'S MEN FINISHING IN SIXTH — UP FROM 16TH WHEN HE BEGAN HIS ROLE.

WITH COVID NOW IMPACTING LIFE AND FOOTBALL ACROSS THE WORLD, THE PLAY-OFF SEMI-FINAL AGAINST CHELMSFORD TOOK PLACE BEHIND CLOSED DOORS. A WIN TOOK THE DARTS TO THE FINAL WHICH THEY LOST 3-0 TO WEYMOUTH.

GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL AUTHORITY GRANTS, AS WELL AS FURLOUGH MONEY, HELPED DARTFORD PULL THROUGH THIS TRICKY PERIOD WITH THE 20-21 SEASON NOT BEGINNING UNTIL OCTOBER. RESTRICTIONS WERE LIFTED TO ALLOW CLUB OFFICIALS AND DIRECTORS INTO THE GROUND, BUT WITH A SECOND WAVE ROCKING THE COUNTRY, THE SEASON WAS CURTAILED IN FEB 21, WITH DARTFORD TOP OR SECOND FOR MOST OF THE SEASON.

FOR 21-22, CROWDS WERE BACK AND THE DARTS WERE CHALLENGING FROM THE START. THE KENT SENIOR CUP FINAL TOOK PLACE FROM THE SEASON BEFORE WITH A THRILLING 6-1 WIN AGAINST WHITSTABLE TOWN.

AN FA TROPHY RUN SAW THE TEAM LOSE TO NEEDHAM MARKET IN THE FIFTH ROUND, WITH A FOURTH-PLACE FINISH IN THE LEAGUE. SADLY, THE TEAM LOST ITS SEMI-FINAL PLAY-OFF TO CHIPPENHAM ON PENALTIES. IT DID, HOWEVER, WIN THE KENT SENIOR CUP AGAINST FOLKESTONE 6-2.

STEVE KING WAS LET GO, WITH ALAN DOWSON APPOINTED FOR THE START OF THE 22-23 SEASON. THE 22-23 STARTED WELL, WITH THE TEAM REACHING THE TOP SPOT IN NOVEMBER AFTER BEATING WELLING 5-1. THE TEAM REMAINED IN SECOND OR THIRD SPOT ALL SEASON WITH WINS OF 4-1 AWAY AND 4-0 AT HOME AGAINST EBBSFLEET AMONG THE HIGHLIGHTS. EBBSFLEET WENT ON TO WIN THE LEAGUE TITLE BY 20 POINTS, WITH DARTS FINISHING IN SECOND AND LOSING THE PLAY-OFF SEMI-FINAL TO ST ALBANS CITY ON PENALTIES.

PENNOCK TAKES CHARGE AND RINGS IN THE CHANGES

THE 23-24 SAW THE TEAM STRUGGLE, WITH ALAN DOWSON LET GO IN JANUARY. TONY BURNHAM TOOK CHARGE, BUT RESULTS DID NOT IMPROVE AND ADY PENNOCK — A FORMER GILLINGHAM FC PLAYER AND MANAGER — TOOK CHARGE FOR THE FINAL 10 GAMES.

VISITING PARK DRIVE DARTFORD HISTORY



HIS APPOINTMENT WOULD PROVE TO BE TOO LATE, WITH THE TEAM ENDING THE SEASON RELEGATED TO THE ISTHMIAN PREMIER LEAGUE.

FOR 24-25, PENNOCK SWEEPED IN THE CHANGES, EFFECTIVELY BRINGING IN A WHOLE NEW TEAM FOR THE BEGINNING OF THE SEASON AND PUTTING HIS TRUST IN THE SUCCESSFUL ACADEMY, WITH EIGHT PLAYERS MAKING THE STEP UP TO FIRST TEAM FOOTBALL.

THE SIDE FINISHED THIRD IN THE LEAGUE AFTER A BRILLIANT LATE RUN, BEFORE LOSING TO DOVER IN THE PLAY-OFF FINAL AT PRINCES PARK. FOR 25/26, ADY BROUGHT IN A NUMBER OF NEW FACES AND HOPED TO GO ONE BETTER.

A SLOW START SAW THE TEAM PLAYING CATCH UP, WITH A LATER RUN NOT ENOUGH FOR A PLAY-OFF PLACE.

PENNOCK MADE THE DECISION TO LEAVE BEFORE THE FINAL MATCH OF THE SEASON, ALTHOUGH MANAGED THE LAST GAME AT PRINCES PARK.

BEN GREENHALGH — THE ACADEMY MANAGER FOR EIGHT SEASONS AND MARGATE BOSS FOR TWO, WAS BROUGHT IN DURING MAY 26, READY FOR THE 26/27 SEASON.





PARTNERS WITH
ISTHMIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE



PARTNERS WITH
ISTHMIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE



MALDON & TIPTREE

MANAGER: MARK HAWKES
ASS MANAGER: UGO UDOJI
TACTICAL ANALYST: JASON MAHUR
PHYSIO: HARRISON GOODCHILD

SQUAD

- ELLIOT JUSTHAM [C]
- TOMMY DIXON-HODGE
- TQ ADDY
- SAMUEL ADEYEYE
- IBBY AKANBI
- IFEANYI ALLEN
- MO AMIR
- JERMAINE ANDERSON
- EYITUOYO AKINBULUMO
- ROWAN DORLING
- TOM EASTMAN
- EZE EBUZOEME II
- RHAMAR GARRETT-DOUGLAS
- T'AIZO MARCEL-DILAVER
- KENNEDY MUPOMBA
- LENNY O'SULLIVAN
- HEDLEY OGBEBOR
- KAI REDGRAVE
- ELLIOTT SARTORIUS
- SCOTT SIMMONS
- JADEN THOMPSON-BRISSETT
- AARON WILLIAMS-BUSHELL
- DOMINIC LOCKE



DARTFORD FC

MANAGER: BEN GREENHALGH
ASS MANAGER: ADAM FLANAGAN
COACHES: ELLIOT LEVESON PAUL SAWYER
PHYSIO: DAVID PHILLIPS RHIANNON GREEN

SQUAD

- RYAN SANDFORD
- CARTER SULLIVAN
- LUKE EXAL
- EMMANUEL OKE
- SAM ODAUDU
- BEN SWIFT
- JOE TENNENT
- GEORGE WHITEFIELD
- ADRIAN GYAMERA
- KAI JEFFERY
- SCOTT WAGSTAFF
- BEN GREENHALGH
- BRANDON DAVEY
- RICHIE ATKINS
- JORDAN HIGGS
- LORENZO DUNCAN
- TYLER IBE
- JEREMIAH PINDER
- GIANLUCA BOTTI
- DAN SMITH
- MAX FIDDES
- LOUIE ATKINS

MATCH OFFICIALS

REFEREE: DEMETRI ANASTASIOU
ASSISTANTS: LEWIS MOORE JOHN MAGILL

NEXT HERE

CRAY WANDERERS
SATURDAY 29TH AUGUST KO 3:00PM