

The Official Matchday Programme of **Sevenoaks Town**

Vs Lancing

Season 2021/2022
Issue 15 – £2

Pitching In
Isthmian
South East
Division



Respect



Saturday
February 5th,
2022, kick-off
3pm



MANAK
SOLICITORS



Sevenoaks Town Info

Chairman and Director: Paul Lansdale
Secretary and Director: Sam Lansdale
Directors: Kevin Marsh, Ray Miles, Frank Le Sibirel
Committee Members: Dan Thomas, Michael Tapp
Match Secretary: As chairman
First Team Manager: Micky Collins

Coaches:

Julian Leigh
 Jason Bourne
 Terry Groom

Physio: Jade Shaw

Safety Officer: Ray Miles

Club Welfare Officer: As chairman

Covid-19 Officer: As chairman

Equality and Diversity Officer: Michael Tapp

Press Officer/ PA announcer: Andrew Gidley

Club Photographer, App and Social Media: Adam Beaumont

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From the Chairman



Hello everybody and welcome to the Bourne Stadium for today's Pitching In isthmian League South East fixture against Lancing. We extend the same to their officials, players and supporters, who have made the trip to be here today, and our three match officials. A glance at the league table emphasises how important today's game is to both teams. Since winning 2-0 against Phoenix Sports here last month we have lost our last three matches. Five of our Under-18s featured in the squad at Herne Bay in the Kent Senior Cup, which saw us draw 1-1 after 90 minutes - losing 4-2 on penalties. It was great to see Teddy Chandler make his senior debut, pulling off one fine save in the first half, and while he may have been disappoint-

ed in the manner of Bay's second half equaliser, the experience of the whole night will certainly help him - including being the butt of some banter from the Bay supporters behind his goal. Michael Peate and Harvey Welford both got second half opportunities off the bench, with William Mullen and Stan Kenny completing the number. Defeats at East Grinstead and Cray Valley were disappointing results, but we go again today as we move into the final three months of the season, which looks set to be completed on the pitch - a far more satisfactory conclusion than two Covid truncated campaigns. Thank you for your support today. Enjoy the game.
Paul Lansdale



A photograph of three men in blue tracksuits, likely football staff, looking towards the left. The man in the foreground has a grey beard and is wearing a blue jacket with a white Nike logo. The man behind him is wearing a blue tracksuit with a yellow crest. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Micky's Message

Good afternoon everyone and welcome to The Bourne Stadium for this Isthmian league fixture. I would like to extend this welcome to everyone connected to our visitors today, Lancing FC.

We've been away from home since we beat Phoenix Sports here a couple of Saturdays ago, which was a very good performance and a solid 2-0 win.

We then travelled to Herne Bay on the Tuesday in the Kent Senior Cup. We rested the starting 11 from the Saturday, but the boys put in an excellent performance with five under 18s involved as we held a very strong Bay side 1-1, only to lose the tie on penalties. Since then we played East Grinstead away last Saturday and our performance certainly didn't reflect the scoreline, but on Tuesday we faced Cray Valley away and individual errors cost us against a quality side on the night. There have been some new signings in the past couple of weeks. Jordan Johnson is a very gifted midfielder and was formerly of Hornchurch and Leatherhead, and we've also signed Devontae Roberts, a good centre half whose been plying his trade in Italy. Danny Divine has left the club to seek more first team football. We wish him every success and thank him for all his efforts.

On the injury front Dean Gunner and Joe Docherty are still sidelined but Fjord Rogers is back in training.

I hope you all enjoy today's game and wish you all a safe journey home.

MC

Bumper crowds flock to grounds as race heats up

By Ian Townsend

Honours went to **Hastings United** in the South East Division's Match of the Day at **Ashford United** in front of more than 1100 spectators.

The visitors took the lead on twelve minutes, through Tom Chalmers and although Luke Burdon equalised for the hosts on the stroke of half time Ryan Worrall hit the winner ten minutes after the break.

Ramsgate replaced the Nuts and Bolts in second courtesy of a hard-fought derby win over **Herne Bay**.

Both goals came after the break, Lee Prescott opening the scoring just before the hour before Joshua Ajayi made sure of the points with his 20th goal of the season four minutes from time, in a game that attracted 1600 plus.

Haywards Heath Town, under new management, moved up to fourth with the only goal of the game at **Chichester City**. It came just after half time, and it went to Davigildo Cravid, a fourth of the campaign for the Heath number eleven.

A second goalless draw in two matches saw **Cray Valley PM** slip to fifth after a 0-0 at bottom club **Phoenix Sports**.

Burgess Hill beat **Whitehawk** 1-0 - Martin Box netting the decider for the third successive game. **Sittingbourne** won 2-0 at **Whitstable Town**. Kane Rowland gave the Brickies the lead just after the hour, and thirteen minutes later Toby Bancroft added the second.

Corinthian beat **VCD** 3-0 - Jamie Miller, Frankie Morgan and Ryan Sawyer with the goals.

Hythe Town beat **Faversham Town** 2-1, Riley Alford getting both, before new signing and ex-Oaks striker, Marcus Elliott scored Faversham's

late reply.

Today's visitors **Lancing** won a seven-goal thriller against **Three Bridges**.

They were two up, 3-2 down before completing a come-back win, despite ending the game with ten men.

Matt Daniel and James Rhodes gave them a two-nil lead, before Ryan Brackpool halved things seven minutes before the break.

Brannon O'Neill drew Bridges level midway through the second half, and then Brackpool completed the turnaround soon afterwards - but that sparked the hosts into life once more. Daniel's second of the game thirteen minutes from time drew them level, and then Lorenzo Lewis grabbed a winner for the hosts two minutes from time - but still had time to get himself sent off.

Cray Valley moved joint second following the 3-0 win over **Sevenoaks Town** on Tuesday night, while **Chichester City** dented Sussex rivals **Burgess Hill's** recent good run winning 2-1.

Welcome to our two recent signings Ryan Palmer and Joe Bingham.

Both are back for a second spell at the club.

Ryan was with us 10 seasons ago making his debut in a 2-0 FA Vase defeat at Three Bridges in September 2011.

Joe made 38 appearances between 2016/18 scoring eight goals.

Meanwhile Ollie Palmer made headlines last month when National League Wrexham paid AFC Wimbledon £300,000 for the 30-year old striker.

Back in 2010 he was part of the Woking Academy joining us in September on-loan, and scoring twice on debut in 2-0 Kent League win over Holmesdale.



Hastings United	25	17	2	6	54	27	+27	53
Ramsgate	24	14	5	5	54	31	+23	47
Cray Valley PM	25	13	8	4	50	28	+22	47
Ashford United	24	14	4	6	48	26	+22	46
Haywards Heath Town	24	13	7	4	39	21	+18	46
Herne Bay	23	12	5	6	38	25	+13	41
Burgess Hill Town	25	12	5	8	37	33	+4	41
Sittingbourne	25	12	4	9	37	32	+5	40
VCD Athletic	25	11	5	9	49	34	+15	38
Chichester City	24	10	7	7	36	24	+12	37
Corinthian	25	9	7	9	29	29	0	34
East Grinstead Town	24	7	7	10	25	37	-12	28
Three Bridges	25	6	9	10	35	49	-14	27
Faversham Town	24	7	4	13	28	43	-15	25
Hythe Town	24	7	4	13	26	52	-26	25
Whitehawk	24	6	6	12	24	34	-10	24
Sevenoaks Town	25	7	2	16	29	50	-21	23
Whitstable Town	25	6	4	15	30	50	-20	22
Lancing	25	5	7	13	22	43	-21	22
Phoenix Sports	25	4	4	17	24	46	-22	16

Table includes Tuesday night's results

Saturday January 29th

Ashford United	1	2	Hastings United	1,134
Burdon 45			Chalmers 12, Worrall 55	
Burgess Hill Town	1	0	Whitehawk	744
Box 45				
Chichester City	0	1	Haywards Heath Town	287
Cravid 49				
Corinthian	3	0	VCD Athletic	69
Miller 5, Morgan 45, Sawyer 90				
East Grinstead Town	2	1	Sevenoaks Town	366
Cornwell 18, Briggs 68			Collins 59	
Hythe Town	2	1	Faversham Town	270
Alford 52', 58			Elliott 82	
Lancing	4	3	Three Bridges	220
Daniel 6', 77, Rhodes 28, Lewis 88			Brackpool 38', 68, O'Neill 65	
Phoenix Sports	0	0	Cray Valley PM	238
Ramsgate	2	0	Herne Bay	1,625
Prescott 58, Ajayi 86				
Whitstable Town	0	2	Sittingbourne	703
			Rowland 63, Bancroft 76	

Tuesday February 1st

Chichester City	2	1	Burgess Hill Town	210
Overton 12, Rowlatt 34			Harding 78	
Cray Valley PM	3	0	Sevenoaks Town	130
Gayle 12, Adeyemo, Barrington 90				



Lancing FC History

The club is proud of its long-standing history, central to the village of Lancing. The committee, in particular Ron George, are currently in the process of collating much of the older history of the Lancers, founded in **1941**.

The long-term aspiration is to publish a book and/or website about the club and its history, from its foundation, achievements, historic players & talent, the war, and the present day.

Lancing FC was established in 1941, initially as a multi-sport club under the name Lancing Athletic. They joined the Brighton, Hove & District League in **1946** and went on to win the Division One and League Cup double in their first season. The club applied to join the Sussex County League, but were rejected. However, after retaining the Brighton, Hove & District League title in **1947-48**, the club were then admitted to the Sussex County League, at which point they became a separate organisation to the remainder of the sports club. They were Sussex County League runners-up in **1949-50**, only missing out on the title on goal average. When the league gained a second division in **1952** the club became members of Division One, but were relegated to Division Two after finishing bottom of the table in **1956-57**.

In 1957 the club dropped Athletic from their name. They were Division Two champions at the first attempt, earning

promotion back to Division One. The club won the League Cup in **1964-65**, beating Chichester City 2-0 in the final, and went on to win the Sussex RUR Cup the following season with a 3-0 win over Rye United. However, they were relegated again at the end of the **1967-68**. Although the club won the Division Two title in **1969-70** and were promoted back to Division One, two seasons later they were relegated back to Division Two after finishing bottom of Division One. The club won the Division Two Cup in **1981-82**.

Lancing remained in Division Two until a second-place finish in **1982-83** saw them promoted to Division One. They were relegated again at the end of the 1989-90 season and spent the next ten seasons in Division Two, winning the Division Two Cup again in **1992-93**, before earning promotion with a third-place finish in **1999-2000**. However, the club were relegated back to Division Two at the end of the following season. In **2010-11** they were Division Two runners-up, earning promotion to Division One. In **2015** the league was renamed the Southern Combination, with Division One becoming the Premier Division.

In the **2017/18** season, first team manager Jon Sharman, assisted by Nigel Geary & Malcolm Saunders, led the Lancers to 10th place in the Southern Combination Premier League. At the end of the season,

THE LAST TIME WE MET

Saturday October 2 2021:

Lancing 2

Louis 42, Daniel 67

Sevenoaks

Town 1

Bah (60mins)

Sevenoaks Town: Ben Bridle-Card, Danny Divine, Conrad Lee, Ben Davis-son, (Bradley Schafer 84 mins), Freeman Rogers, Dean Gunner, Frankie Sawyer (Hayden Skerry 38 mins), Lamin Bah, Steve Smith, Louis Collins, Stefan Wright (Max Walsh 79 mins)



Pictures from Lancing's website of their classic, old-school main stand

Chairman, Jon Rea, resigned from his role, in addition to Jon Sharman and Nigel Geary.

For the **2018/19** season, Steve Taylor was elected Chairman to replace the departing Jon Rea, and was joined by Daniel Fuller-Smith as Secretary, whilst Barry Sutton was promoted to the role of Vice-Chairman. With 4 new teams – Ladies, two Under-18 squads and a Veterans side – joining the existing First Team and Under-23s, the club gained FA Charter Standard Community status in February 2019.

Unfortunately Ash Bailey was forced to retire from his post as First Team manager in September for family commitments, and was replaced by Mark Pulling who enabled the team to finish 13th in the SCFL Premier Division table.

During the season, the club launched a new mental health initiative, named the 'You're Not In This Alone' campaign, through offering free entry to supporters with mental health issues, raising over £400 for Mind Lancing, supporting the Time to Talk Day in February 2019, and raising over £1,000 for CALM – The Campaign Against Living Miserably. In addition, Lancing supported the Fairtrade Foundation through the purchasing of Fairtrade certified footballs for the new Ladies squad. The club came runners-up in the Active Sussex 'Club of the Year' category in November 2018, where a presentation was held at The Grand Hotel, Brighton.

On 16th February 2019, the club was saddened to hear about the passing of long-serving committee member, Michael Clark, who managed the 100 Club, manned the turnstile and supported the club in the later years of his life.

In the **2019/20** season, the club introduced a new Disability team, and appointed a new First Team management team, consisting of Naim Rouane, David Altendorff and Kane Louis for the season. The first team had an excellent season, the best in the club's history, however the season was brought to a premature end following the COVID-19 outbreak. The Lancers were top of the league looking to be promoted, but with the season voided by the FA, were left to compete in the SCFL for another season.

Ahead of the **2020/21** season, Kane Louis and James Rhodes were appointed Joint Managers of the first team following the departure Rouane's & Altendorff. James and Kane kept the existing backroom staff of Matt Evans, Mark Stuart, Lloyd Osland and Georgina Hill.

Following a second curtailed season due to COVID-19, thanks to FA restructuring, Lancing were promoted to the Pitching In Isthmian League – South East Division, finishing top on PPG in the SCFL Premier Division over the course of two seasons. This movement from Step 5 to Step 4 in the English football pyramid marked a huge achievement for the club, in what was appropriately also their 80th anniversary.



Title chasers too strong

Cray Valley PM 3 Sevenoaks Town 0

By Andrew Gidley

Oaks endured a tough night as they finished second best to promotion contenders Cray Valley in on Tuesday. Micky Collins highlighted errors for all three goals as his side clocked up a half century of goals conceded. Oaks included central defender Devante Roberts, replacing Steve Smith, while another new signing Jordan Johnson was introduced off the bench in the second half. Cray looked a pacy side on a lively pitch, but Denzel Gayle was allowed too much time and space shooting his side in front Cray in after 12 minutes. Recalled Kweku Ansah shot wide midway through the half, before Oaks survived two close calls as

Ade Adeyemo and former Oaks player Rory Hill both narrowly missed out doubling the lead Gayle might have added a second but miscued badly. Cray doubled the lead eight minutes after half time when Daniel Colmer pushed Ade Adeyemo's effort into his own net. Kyle De Silva set up a half chance for Louis Collins who fired wide then substitute Bobby Dunn on for injured De Silva, created another opening, but Jason Fregene's header went past the far post. Colmer kicked away Hill's late effort before another Oaks error gifted home top scorer Marcel Barrington his side's third in stoppage-time - his 15th of the season.
Sevenoaks Town: Daniel Colmer, Jon Pilbeam, Jason Fregene, Joe Bingham, Freeman Rogers, Devante Roberts, Ryan Palmer, Luke Leppard (Jordan Johnson 65 mins), Kyle De Silva (Bobby Dunn 78 mins), Louis Collins, Kweku Ansah

Shoot-out kills cup hopes

Herne Bay 1 Sevenoaks Town 1 (Bay win 4-2 on penalties)

By Andrew Gidley

Oaks bowed out of the Kent Senior Cup on a chilly night at the MBS Stadium. The tie ended 1-1 after 90 minutes before Bay won the shoot-out 4-2, with Ben Davisson and Danny Divine, Oaks' successful pair from the spot. The squad included five members of the club's Under-18s - with goalkeeper Teddy Chandler making his senior debut - and two trialists- Devonate Roberts and Luis Pires Costa.

Bay included ex-Oaks pair, Reion McFarlane and Bradley Schafer. Oaks suffered a blow early on losing Fjord Rogers forced off with a groin problem shortly before half-time- his first game back after a three-match ban. Davisson put Oaks in front with a 25-yard direct free-kick just before the hour, before Keiron Campbell levelled things up 19 minutes from time, shooting under Chandler. It was tough luck on the youngster, having pulled off one fine first save to deny Adam Ramadan.
Sevenoaks Town: Teddy Chandler, Wesley Jno-Baptiste, Conrad Lee, Ben Davisson, Danny Divine, Devonate Roberts, Michael Peate 76 mins), Luis Pires-Costa (Harvey Welford 53 mins), Kweku Ansah, Fjord Rogers, Stephen Ikpeme, Lamin Bah

Leppard is on the spot



Sevenoaks Town 2 Phoenix Sports 0

By Andrew Gidley

Luke Leppard helped Sevenoaks chalk up their first Pitching In Isthmian League South East double of the season against fellow- strugglers Phoenix Sports at Bourne Stadium on Saturday. Leppard, who plundered 15 goals for West Kent Sunday League side Simla in a 45-0 victory the previous weekend, scored both - his first Oaks goals. It ensured back-to-back home wins in 2022, on a day when other results went their way - three bottom five rivals lost, and the other two drew. Oaks midfielder Ryan Palmer made an impressive home debut in his second spell with the club, 10 seasons after his first, together with another returning old boy Joe Bingham. Leppard opened the scoring after 20 minutes with Palmer and Bingham both involved in the build-up. Palmer played a short corner to Bobby Dunn whose long cross found Steve Smith, he beat a defender, before playing in Bingham who set-up unmarked Leppard to fire home off the underside of the bar. Phoenix had a few sighters before and after going behind, Malaki Toussaint, going closest on the half hour, but home keeper Daniel Colmer was rarely tested, earning his first clean-sheet on his fourth appearance. Palmer was involved again in first half stoppage-time, Smith heading his corner against the bar. Leppard added his second eight minutes after the break, timing his jump perfectly at to head in Jon Pilbeam's deep cross from the right, having started the move combining with Palmer from a short throw. Oaks had chances to increase their advantage - Palmer was denied twice by visiting skipper/keeper Steve Phillips who also saved well from Bobby Dunn late on.
Sevenoaks Town: Daniel Colmer, Jon Pilbeam (Kweke Ansah 67 mins), Jason Fregene, Joe Bingham, Freeman Rogers, Steve Smith, Bobby Dunn, Luke Leppard, Kyle De Silva, Louis Collins, Ryan Palmer



Sevenoaks Town FC

21-22 Squad Pictures



History: Sevenoaks Town were originally formed in 1883, one of the founding members of the Kent League. In April the same year, the club played Royal Arsenal, then the only professional club in the South East of England in front of around 1000 spectators at Knole Paddock. They combined with St Johns United in 1951, and joined the Western section of the Kent Amateur League. Division 1 League Cup winners in 1965-66, they were twice winners of the Premier Division in 1968-69 and 1975-76. They won the Kent County League - three times - 1984-85, 1995-96 and 2002-3. The club were Kent Intermediate Challenge Shield and Inter-Regional Challenge Cup winners twice, and lifted the Sevenoaks Charity Cup on 12 occasions.

Recent successes:
Southern Counties East League Cup champions: 2016-17
Southern Counties East League champions: 2017-8
Best FA Cup Performance:
Second Qualifying Round: 2016-17
Best FA Trophy Performance:
First Qualifying Round: 2018-19
Best FA Vase Performance:
Third Round Proper 2017-18.

A new state of the art 3G pitch was installed in June 2017, and plans are in place to construct a brand new stadium in the next two years.



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DRAKES

Grow the Oaks!

Since 1883, Sevenoaks Town FC has provided playing opportunities for footballers of all ages and abilities. As our club seeks to take each step of the Government's Covid 19 roadmap and beyond with care, we are determined to find our feet as quickly as possible, making sure Greatness Park returns to becoming a safe, friendly hub of footballing activity for the local community and our football family.

It is now nearly two years since the global pandemic was declared, it is poignant to reflect on the things we've learned from these, tough, strange and unprecedented times. With our lives changed beyond recognition, we have learnt to appreciate all the things we enjoy – football being one of them. All the people who dedicate hours of time to helping Sevenoaks Town FC run are providing a selfless service we all appreciate goes beyond supplying physical benefits. It's the social elements of being part of a team; the mental health release of being active and empowered; its feeling and being a part of something unique, constructive and valuable.

With lots of people impacted economically, whether that be by being placed on furlough, losing employment or having planned opportunities postponed or cancelled, we are aware there may be individuals and groups out there who want to seize opportunity

once lockdown eases. Opportunity to give back. Opportunity to contribute to their local community. Opportunity to reignite with the game they love and have most probably sorely missed.

We want to #GrowTheOaks with a specific push to recruit volunteers to be a part of our team at Sevenoaks Town FC. However, no specifics are required for you to be a part of it. Whatever your skills, whatever your experience; if you want to get involved, if you'd like to contribute some hours and if you'd like to give up your free time, then you'd be most welcome.

Every volunteer at Sevenoaks Town FC is supported and given guidance around their role and responsibilities. We pride ourselves on looking after our players, coaches, officers and wider community. As a volunteer at our FA Charter Standard Community club, you will be a part of a club that prides itself on meeting and exceeding standards. You'll have opportunity to improve both yourself and the club in turn.

We are looking forward to a continued safe and positive return to football and if you want to be a part of it you can explore volunteering options and be a part of #GrowTheOaks by emailing info@sevenoakstownfc.co.uk

Zero tolerance for racism

"The Isthmian Football League strongly supports the FA statement that there should be a zero-tolerance approach against racism and all forms of discrimination. Accordingly, any form of discriminatory abuse whether it be by reason of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sex and sexual orientation or any other form of abuse will be reported

to The Football Association for action by that Association." (The FA 0800 085 0508 / Kick it Out 020 7253 0162). The Isthmian League and all Member Clubs in the League are committed to promoting equality by treating 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 the community."

Sevenoaks Town Women and Girls' Strategy

Sevenoaks Town FC are currently in the exciting process of putting together three-year plan for the women and girls' section of the club, in which they are aiming to help the team move from tier 7 (b) to tier 4 within the next 3 years. This is an ambitious jump to a high standard of football which STFC are confident they can achieve.

In order to help Sevenoaks Town accomplish this, the club has been working with two consultants who both have a lot of first-hand experience in women's football: Natalie Curtis, a Football Development Officer for Women & Girls Football at the Kent FA who has also played for a pro club and managed and coached at the same level, and Charlotte Richardson, an FA Club Consultant who has been involved in the Women's Sport & Leadership Academy.

Both Natalie and Charlotte have experience of working with clubs and taking their Women's and Girls' teams up a few tiers, which is what Sevenoaks Town aspires to achieve. Natalie and Charlotte have begun to map out this three-year plan to help STFC achieve our goals.

Furthermore, Sevenoaks Town have also appointed Paul McDonagh who will be a great addition to the Women's and Girls section at Sevenoaks Town. Paul is a UEFA A Coach, and has also been Technical Director for Women's and Girls football at Charlton Athletic for two years.

Paul will take on and oversee STFC's Women and Girls' section, and he will also manage the Women's First

Team for the upcoming 21/22 season supported by Maddie Smith and Dan Thomas who bring a wealth of experience and have been instrumental in our progress so far.

We at Sevenoaks Town FC are confident that with the addition of Natalie, Charlotte and Paul to STFC's Women and Girls' section, as well as

the foundation we have built since our first girls' team in 2012, we will be able to really push on and increase the profile and exposure of women's football at the club. The ultimate aim is to have our women's and men's teams run in the same way and be on the same level, and we hope to achieve this starting with the three-year plan which is being put in place.



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Player Profile: Jason Fregene

Age: 27

Born: Leytonstone

Home: Rochester

Occupation: Owns his own cleaning company

Previous Clubs: Whitstable Town, Sittingbourne, Hollands & Blair (plus loan spell earlier this season)

Club Supported: Manchester United

Favourite Player: Thiago Alcantara

Best Mate in Football: Danny Divine

Best Goal Scored: "I was playing as a striker for Hollands & Blair against Sporting Club Thamesmead (November 2018) in a Kent Senior Trophy Second Round tie.

"The ball was pinged over the top, and I just chested it down and scored with a bicycle kick inside the back post - it was a great strike for me and fantastic to score it."

Best Thing About Football: "I have got so much passion and love for the game, it's been part of my life, and given me the opportunity to express myself.

"I put every emotion into it and it's important to me."

Worst Thing About Football: "Losing games - I hate it."

Thoughts on season and joining Sevenoaks: "I suffered an anterior crucial ligament and meniscus tear playing for Sittingbourne in Guernsey in February 2020 which had kept me out for 18 months/two years.

"The flight home was the most terrible bit because I was in absolute agony, I just had to hold the leg the whole way - it was brutal.

"The Sittingbourne fans were great supporting me through my time out - it needed a lot of mental strength - but I kept going - pushing myself - and always knew I would come back stronger.

"I just had to aid it - I came here at the beginning of the season, supported the boys as much as I could, as I say football is a passion of mine, whether you are playing or not, it's got to be in your heart, I took my time, fortunately Micky gave me the opportunity to watch things, and he and the rest of the guys, Bourny, Terry and Jules have all been very supportive.

"We have got a strong squad here, we feel we are on the brink of it, we can all feel it, the dressing room is different, now we are all there for each other - and I do believe we will come good."

Favourite Drink: Ginger Beer

Favourite Food: Chicken Wrap



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Return of the C-Team

By Jon Couch

After much deliberation, doubt and concern, England C is back – and in a whole new guise.

It's been two-and-a-half years since Paul Fairclough led out Non-League's Young Lions with many fearing that crippling FA finances from the pandemic may spell the end of the institution which has had young semi-professionals dreaming of representing their country since 1979.

You needn't go far to realise just what donning those Three Lions means to a Non-League footballer. Players now playing in the top-flight of English pride have done so with immense pride and speak fondly about how the experience helped develop them as a player – and as a man.

"I loved my time with England C, We travelled to countries that we probably never would have visited otherwise and saw some unreal places."

Only a few weeks ago, NLP columnist Tony Incenzo spoke to QPR's former Watford striker Andre Gray about his six England C caps won between 2012 and 2014 while playing for Luton Town.

"I loved my time with England C," he said. "We travelled to countries that

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we probably never would have visited otherwise and saw some unreal places.

"The support from the coaching staff was really hands on and they were very good at the diet and psychology side of things. People might be surprised by how professional the England C set-up is run.

"It was such an honour to be capped at international level as a Non-League player. I found it a great opportunity to test myself against top young footballers from places like Russia and Turkey.

"Most of the players around me in Paul Fairclough's squad moved into the Football League and the Premier League.

I am sure that my England C appearances helped me progress as a footballer. The whole experience prepared me towards playing at a much higher level of club football.

"I would definitely recommend England C to any young Non-League players who are aspiring to move forward in their careers."

Thankfully, calls for a reunification of the England C post-Covid have been heard and last week it was announced that the Three Lions would return to play their first game since June 2019 when they take on Wales C at Caernarfon Town on Wednesday, March 30.

As he has since 2003, Paul Fairclough will once again take the reins – but this time has an altogether different

job on his hands with his squad selections no longer limited to players under the age of 23.

That means, the veteran former Barnet and Stevenage chief literally has the pick of Non-League football to choose a squad from and with the likes of Wrexham, Stockport and Chesterfield all spending big and taking the National League to a whole new level, that's a pretty mouthwatering task.

I mean, can you imagine a strike force, for example, containing the likes of Kabongo Tshimanga and Michael Cheek and boosting with the experience and firepower of an Ollie Palmer, Paddy Madden or Paul Mullin?

Interestingly, this new England C set-up will no longer be funded by the Football Association but instead jointly by the National League and the Trident Leagues at Steps 3 and 4.

The FA have remained pretty tight-lipped on the reason for this but, thinking about it, with the TV connections that the National League have, could it be that the England C team begin to get the exposure that they deserve?

This, in turn, can resurrect careers and propel new ones with players of all levels vying for their chance to go under the spotlight.

At The NLP, we are naturally delighted to see the England C team back in action and can't wait to see how the new venture unfolds.

It may have taken a while but the Three Lions are roaring again.



Today's team sheets

Sevenoaks Town

1: Daniel Colmer

2: Jon Pilbeam

3: Jason Fregene

4: Joe Bingham

5: Freeman Rogers

6: Devontae Roberts

7: Bobby Dunn

8: Luke Leppard

9: Kyle De Silva

10: Louis Collins

11: Fjord Rogers

12: Kweke Ansah

14: Ryan Palmer

15: Ben Davisson

16: Steve Ikpeme

17: Jordan Johnson

Lancing FC

1: Gregor Shaw

2: Darius Goldsmith

3: Harrison Parker

4: Finn Daniels-Yeomans

5: Joe Rye

6: Liam Hendy

7: Modou Jammeh

8: Will Berry

9: Matt Daniel

10: James Rhodes

11: Lorenzo Lewis

12: Anesu Sisimayi

14: Mahamadou Juwara

15: Destiny Ojo

16: Gabe Robinson

17: Mohamed Joumaa-Z



Saturday February 5th 3pm. Pitching In Isthmian South-East Division, Sevenoaks v Lancing

Referee: Chris Williams

Assistant 1: Charlie Roberts

Assistant 2: Michael Iddenden-Smith

Next home match: Saturday February 19th 3pm.
Pitching In Isthmian South-East Division,
Sevenoaks v Burgess Hill

