

SEASIDERS



THE OFFICIAL 2025/26 MATCHDAY PROGRAMME SPONSORED BY:

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WEALTH MANAGEMENT



VS
REDBRIDGE

TUESDAY 28TH APRIL, 7.45PM



CHAIRMAN: **TONY BARNES**



A very good evening to one and all, and welcome to The Martello Ground as The Seasiders welcome Redbridge for a promotion play-off semi-final.

A warm welcome to all the players, supporters, and officials of Redbridge, and indeed to tonight's match officials. I hope you all enjoy our hospitality, the game itself, and have a safe and pleasant journey home later tonight.

Our visitors will be on a massive high, as they only secured their play-off place in the 95th minute of Saturday's league game at home to Concord, having come from 3-2 behind to win 4-3. The Seasiders, on the other hand, secured their play-off place many weeks ago and, as it turned out, only missed out on the league title by goal difference to Maldon & Tiptree. Many congratulations to Maldon & Tiptree, and we wish them every success as they move into Step 3 football next year.

I personally think what we have achieved here, totalling 97 points in the regular season on a comparatively shoestring budget compared to that of Maldon & Tiptree, is a greater achievement and a massive credit to the coaching staff led by Stuart and Jack, and to all the players.

With the runners-up position already secured

and no realistic chance of overhauling Maldon, the gaffers rested a few players on Saturday and gave others every opportunity to shake off niggling injuries. Not that it was really noticeable, as the lads put in a very professional performance and dominated Mildenhall Town from start to finish, unfortunately subjecting our Suffolk neighbours to relegation back down to Thurlow Nunn League football next year with a 3-0 scoreline, courtesy of goals from Sam, Jacob, and Tom.

The second semi-final also takes place tonight, so the winners will know who they are facing on Saturday at, or shortly after, the final whistle. In the event that the scores are level at full time, we'll be going straight to penalties, as extra time is only permitted in the final on Saturday.

I don't often say this, but I really hope I have another set of notes to prepare later this week, and that we can end the season on a real high by lifting the play-off trophy. Football can sometimes be very cruel, and what a shame it would be to leave here tonight thinking the season is now over, that's it, see you at the end-of-season bash...

I'm going for an Ipswich & Felixstowe promotion double on Saturday. That's what I would call a great end to the season for local football!

Before I go, may I also congratulate our neighbours, Kirton Athletic, who secured promotion on Saturday and will be playing senior football next season for the very first time.

Anyone reading this before leaving for the game, I suggest you leave in plenty of time and allow for queues, as we are expecting a very large crowd. Bring your voices, wear your colours (no drums please!), and get behind your team.

If, in the event this is our last game, can I just thank you all so much for your fantastic support throughout the season. Hopefully this is premature, and I'll see you all back here on Saturday. COYS!!



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JACK
AINSLEY



Good evening and welcome to the Martello Ground for the Isthmian North play-off semi-final against Redbridge. I would like to welcome Redbridge to Felixstowe.

So here we are again, a play-off semi-final against a very good Redbridge side who have shown in their recent results that tonight's game is going to be a very difficult one, and one we will not be taking lightly. Play-off games are always tough, and this is certainly no different.

Having looked back over the season, to finish on 97 points and lose the league title on goal difference is disappointing. However, as a management team we could not be more proud of the players. They have been fantastic since Stu and I took over, and we still have a chance to do what we set out to do at the start of the season.

After last week's disappointing result in the Suffolk Premier Cup, it was pleasing that we got back to winning ways on Saturday with a dominant 3-0 win against Mildenhall. The young lads who came in did not put a foot wrong and can be very pleased with how they performed.

As always, your support has been brilliant all season. To the youngsters behind the goal on Saturday, same again tonight, be loud.

Up the Seaside
Jack





SEASIDER: **PHIL GRIFFITHS**



Not many people know this...

On Saturday for the Mildenhall programme I began ***"Here we are again, our 8th final day of an Isthmian League season"***

This evening we are on our 4th extension to our Isthmian League journey as we host Redbridge FC in the semi-final of the play off's after finishing with an identical playing record as Maldon & Tiptree who were declared champions based on their goal difference of plus 64 against our own GD of plus 53.

It's congratulations to the Jammers who take the automatic promotion spot, they don't make the rules so there is no animosity with them, they did what they had to do and gained the promotion and we wish them every success in the forthcoming seasons at Premier Division level and maybe, hopefully, beyond!

Congratulations also to tonight's visitors who

took 5th place and the final play-off spot with a 95th minute winner in a 7 goal thriller at home to Concord Rangers to leap over Gorleston who were cruising home with a 3-1 win over Grays and sitting in the last play-off spot until Darren Esuka produced that winner at the Techsoc.com Stadium.

There are no favourites to go through tonight, it's who can produce that sparkle and find the winning combination. League positions no longer count, hopefully we can, but I know that our management won't be underestimating our visitors, let's get behind the lads and cheer them on to a place in Saturday's final, which, should we be successful will be played here at the Martello Ground 3pm.

Seasider.



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BILLY HOLLAND



Ahead of Tuesday evening's play-off semi-final against Redbridge, we spoke to Felixstowe & Walton captain Billy Holland about the season so far and the challenge that lies ahead.

Billy, how do you reflect on the season as a whole for yourself and the team?

Well... at the time of writing this we sit second in the league on 94 points with one more game to play and are Suffolk Premier Cup finalists so I'd say we've done pretty well! You never know quite how it's going to go when there is a change in management but I think the new management team have done a brilliant job and it's been another really enjoyable season.

Having finished so close to Maldon & Tiptree at the top, how frustrating is it to have just missed out on automatic promotion?

We are of course disappointed that we couldn't catch Maldon but given the investment over there I think we can be proud of how close we did get to them in the end. It's hard not to look back at games here and there where maybe we could have gained an extra point or two, but Maldon I'm sure have just as many of those examples so there's no point dwelling on it. I'm a firm believer that by the end of a 42 game season the team that finish top deserve to be there so congratulations to them. We can't feel sorry for ourselves, it's now time to turn our full attention and focus to the play-offs and give everything we can to secure promotion via that route instead.

Looking back at the cup final defeat to higher-level opposition Needham Market, what are your thoughts on that result and performance?

Gutted! It just wasn't our night sadly. The lads were all desperate to keep our hands on the trophy but sometimes you have to accept that you've been beaten by the better team on the night. In terms of the performance, I thought we started both halves quite well to be honest without really threatening their goal, but for the large majority of the game we couldn't get to grips with their shape and movement and they thoroughly deserved the win.

Do you feel that defeat will have any impact on the squad heading into the final stages of the season?

Not at all. It's not a nice feeling of course but losing that one game doesn't define our season. We have been excellent and it's now about taking the momentum that we have from the league into the play-offs.

***"THE CLUB DESERVE
STEP 3 FOOTBALL AND
IT'S OUR JOB TO DELIVER
THAT NOW."***

As club captain, what does it mean to you to be leading the team into such a big game like the play-off semi-final against Redbridge?

It means a lot! These are the games you wanted to be involved in and we are really excited for it. We've worked really hard to make it to this point so we'll give everything we have to deliver a performance that leads to a positive result.

How important do you think the Martello Ground and a big home crowd can be in giving the team an advantage on the night?

Oh it's massive! I genuinely can't thank our fans enough for the support they've shown us this season. They've followed us home and away and we hope we have returned the favour with



our performances on the pitch. I know they will bring the noise on Tuesday night and just know we hear it and appreciate it!

Finally, what would it mean to you and the club to achieve promotion to Step 3 football next season?

It's been a long time coming and certainly feels overdue so we'd love to do it this season. It would be a shame to finish so far ahead of the other teams in the play-off places and not be the team go on to win it, but nothing will be given to us so we'll need to go out and earn it across those two games. The club deserve step 3 football and it's our job to deliver that now.

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FELIXSTOWE & WALTON UNITED

Ford, Lay, Warren

MILDENHALL TOWN

3

0

Saturday 25th April
Isthmian League North
Photos: Stefan Peck

LINE UP: Tuvey, Akhuseyin, Warren
Holland (C), Stevenson, Ainsley
Lay, Jones, Ford, Brown, Garcia

SUBS: Whight, Hitter, Santa De La Paz
Mayhew, Barrow











Seasiders supporter **Gary Hills** shares his thoughts ahead of tonight's play-off semi-final. A long-time follower of non-league football, Gary reflects on a remarkable season, the key moments along the way, and the fine margins that have brought us to this point.

Well that's another season closing in around us. Once again the Seasiders' has secured a home semi final play off match having pushed our rivals at Maldon & Tiptree all the way to the last day of the regular season. We have been imperious on the road as our away form was by far the best in the league and delivered an amazing haul of 50 points from a possible 63. One match in particular summing up that incredible team spirit. Anyone who was fortunate to be at Brightlingsea in January will recall how we looked down and out at 1-3 after 81 mins but somehow found the willpower to score thrice more and win a remarkable match 4-3 with Toby Stevenson's 92nd minute winner direct from a corner. The travelling support erupted in unison with the players as everyone went berserk.



In 50 years of watching Dartford and now Felixstowe I've only seen my team garner more points from away fixtures in one previous season, when Dartford's all conquering team won the 2012 Isthmian Premier. But this team is different. Dartford won that league with 6 games to go, the Seasiders have had to maintain a level of performance to match the eventual champions, Maldon, and in the process accrue 97 points, missing out on the title on goal difference. But for a small dip in home form during March when a defeat and a couple of draws undoubtedly proved the difference between runners up and the title. The added time winner v Downham that was mysteriously chalked off by the referee was probably the one that sticks out for me. At no stage has Maldon been able to rest on their laurels. There was certainly an expectation around the league that they would steamroller all and sundry and claim the championship by March when their new owners took over 15 months ago.



Our new management team of brothers Stu and Jack assisted by Leon and of course John and Stuart has maintained the high playing standards that were established by Boards and Crumpy. The team's consistency enabled the management to accrue 4 or was it 5 manager of the month awards? I can't remember now. Is that due to advancing years or the fact the season has come and gone in a flash? In the majority of seasons 97 points would comfortably be a title winning total and allow an additional stress free week to plan for the next season's campaign. Some people say that winning promotion via the play off system is

better than winning the league. What a load of boloney! If I wanted to be dragged through the wringer, had my nerves shredded and be mentally beaten up I'd be Keir Starmer's personality coach... (other politicians are available).

It has been particularly pleasing to see so many of our stalwart players continue to deliver top notch performances including Joe Whight's long awaited comeback. Plus some impressive additions to the squad with Ethan, Dan, Jacob, Will and Jose adding goals and quality which helped to cover some of the magic denied us by the close season departure of Charlie Warren to Bolton Wanderers.

So it came down to the final day league fixtures. The league title was in effect Maldon's as the goal difference swing required by the Seasiders was 16. Little chance of a South American style refereeing scandal, unfortunately. So we settled down to live updates on football webpages and witnessed an ever changing team occupying the 5th and final play off position and our play off opponents. Bowers, Redbridge, Gorleston, Redbridge, Gorleston and when we thought all was done, up popped notification of a 96th minute winner and finally it was Redbridge that secured 5th place.

And here we are tonight in another semi final play off. The 3rd in a row at the Martello for me and Mrs H since moving to Felixstowe. Whereas the previous two the Seasiders points tally was similar to those other teams in playoff positions, this season we are a full 26 points clear of 5th spot. We know the boys have done everything to gain automatic promotion but two more top performances are required to do it via the circumvented route. We're more than capable.

As for the travelling support which has utilised the Greater Anglia chuffer service and the odd bus replacement thrown in. The club minibuses and occasional coach and the many car drivers, this has been one hell of a season to follow the Red army around the east of the country. The general consensus is that it would make a nice change visiting pastures new.

Weekend in Worcester anyone?

A full-page photograph of Sam Ford, a footballer, wearing a red kit with white vertical stripes. He is making a 'V' hand gesture with his right hand. The kit features a Joma logo, a club crest, and a 'fleximize' sponsor logo with the tagline 'Fast, Flexible Business Loans'.

SAM FORD

Ahead of Tuesday's play-off semi-final, we caught up with Seasiders **forward** Sam Ford to reflect on his season, his goals on and off the pitch, and his thoughts going into a crucial night at The Martello Ground.

Sam, how do you reflect on your season overall at Felixstowe & Walton?

A real bit part season, started really well playing and scoring then sporadic injuries here and there, then it has been frustrating not being as involved for the latter part.

You've scored 20 goals in 41 appearances this campaign – does that meet the expectations you set yourself at the start of the season?

"Do the math on that, it's one goal a game pretty much." But in all seriousness at the start of the season, yes.



What have been your personal highlights from the season?

If I had to whittle it down... my hat trick away at Hertford, Whighty getting sent to the gym at Concord away, Zak's yellow at Mildenhall away, Hugh cutting his lip open but limping off, OCB's own goal, Skip on Christmas night out and Tom Warren winning 50k on a scratch card.

The team has spent the majority of the season in the top two and finished well clear of third place – what are your thoughts on having to go through the play-offs?

That the league is pants for sending one team up automatically when 4 get relegated!

Looking back at Tuesday evening's Premier Cup Final defeat to Needham Market, what was it like playing against a side from a higher level, and why do you think we couldn't raise our game for the occasion?

Beat them last season and 3-0 in pre season so

the whole 'higher level' thing is irrelevant. Maybe too much respect, played into their hands trying to match them. I think and they were just better on the night.

Do you feel Felixstowe & Walton can compete against teams like that if promotion is achieved next season?

Of course, if we keep the core of our team.

Away from the pitch, your coaching academy has grown in popularity, particularly with young players – how has that been going?

It's been incredible... my main focus, currently in a transition period and for the first time can really feel the effect it's having now on the community which is a real auspicious feeling.

What does it mean to you to have that connection with the local youth through your coaching?

Kind of become mandatory now, feel useless if kids aren't coming to me for advice or help, so it means everything.

Looking ahead to the play-off semi-final against Redbridge, how do you think the game will unfold?

I have no idea, play offs are a lottery. Just hope we win!

How important will the home crowd be on Tuesday evening?

Pivotal, the supporters always are but we owe it to them to do the business on the pitch this time round.



ISTHMIAN NORTH

DIVISION TABLE 2025/26

POS		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
C	Maldon & Tiptree	42	30	7	5	97	33	+64	97
2	Felixstowe & Walton United	42	30	7	5	90	37	+53	97
3	Waltham Abbey	42	24	8	10	88	50	+38	80
4	Stanway Rovers	42	22	11	9	70	44	+26	77
5	Redbridge	42	21	8	13	83	65	+18	71
6	Gorleston	42	22	5	15	70	67	+3	71
7	Bowers & Pitsea	42	19	11	12	85	53	+32	68
8	Wroxham	42	19	10	13	54	47	+7	67
9	Witham Town	42	17	11	14	68	59	+9	62
10	Walthamstow	42	16	10	16	68	62	+6	58
11	Tilbury	42	15	13	14	57	54	+3	58
12	Cambridge City	42	14	14	14	58	49	+9	56
13	Concord Rangers	42	16	8	18	62	64	-2	56
14	Brightlingsea Regent	42	16	8	18	61	63	-2	56
15	Newmarket Town	42	15	9	18	69	69	0	54
16	Lowestoft Town	42	14	7	21	62	84	-22	49
17	Takeley	42	13	8	21	43	72	-29	47
18	Grays Athletic	42	12	8	22	44	60	-16	44
R	Mildenhall Town	42	12	5	25	53	81	-28	41
R	Downham Town	42	8	13	21	43	72	-29	37
R	Heybridge Swifts	42	7	7	28	29	85	-56	28
R	Brantham Athletic	42	4	4	34	27	111	-84	16

LAST UPDATED: SATURDAY 25TH APRIL 2026 AT 17:47:28

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and management team of
2025/2026



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PLAYER/MANAGER
Travis Perkins



STUART AINSLEY
MANAGER
Pat Haseman, Chris & Jayne Ryan



LEON OTTLEY-GOOCH
COACH
Meat Pies, Sausage Rolls



STUART STEVENSON
FITNESS COACH
Shirley Ainsley



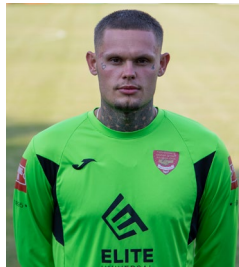
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SEASIDERS PEN PICS

MANAGEMENT

Jack Ainsley – Manager

Rejoined for a second spell at the club from Stowmarket in 2023. Jack played professionally for ITFC after coming through their academy and went on to make four appearances playing under Roy Keane. Jack went on to have spells at Step 2 with Lowestoft and Step 3 with Leiston but is back at the Seaside as player/joint manager with brother Stuart.

Stuart Ainsley – Manager

Stuart joined the club for his second spell in 2014 from Lowestoft Town. Previous clubs include Chelmsford City, Canvey Island and AFC Sudbury. Stuart spent ten years at Ipswich Town, winning the FA Youth Cup in 2005. Having spent the last 11 years playing for Felixstowe, began his management career alongside brother Jack in May 2025.

Stuart Stevensen – Fitness Coach

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



Leon Ottley-Gooch – First Team Coach

Leon signed for the club in 2020 and is another vastly experienced player at step 3 and 4 level. Previous clubs include Leiston, Bury Town, Hadleigh Utd and Stowmarket Town. Leon is very versatile but is predominantly a dynamic midfielder player. Was appointed first team coach in May 2025.

John Abbott – Physio

John is a vastly experienced physio, qualifying in 1992 and dedicating 37 years to the NHS. Previous football clubs include Enfield Town, Tottenham and Stevenage before taking early retirement to move to Felixstowe, where he joined the seasiders in October 2024.

Alex Egelton – Goalkeeper Coach/Coach

Alex returned to Felixstowe last season having spent many years coaching within the youth and reserve setups at the club. Alex heads up the Goalkeeping section of the club and works with





the Youth section right through to the Seniors and is an important member of the First Team Management structure.

Doug French - Kit Man

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

GOALKEEPER

Harry Wright

Harry started his career as a professional at Ipswich Town and left there in 2021 where he then went on to play for Fleetwood Town and Bury before

joining the Seaside in the summer of 2024. He has quickly become a firm fans favourite and works within the clubs Academy system.

DEFENDERS

Joe Whight

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

Ollie Caley-Brown

Ollie was signed in the summer of 2024 from neighbours AFC Sudbury and has played in recent years for Stowmarket and Leiston. An energetic and attacking full back who loves to get forward and create chances and with a wealth of higher level experience to boot.

Hugh Cullum

Hugh is a local lad who left Felixstowe's youth system and progressed through the Needham Market Academy. Hugh signed back with his local club in the summer of 2024 and has immediately impressed with his consistent and confident defending.

Hugo Akhuseyin

Hugo is an academy graduate that is now starting to flourish with his progression into the first team squad. A tough tackling and tenacious defender who likes to get forward.



Toby Stevenson

Ex-professional Toby scored a hat-trick on his debut for Charlton Athletic at 18 years old, the strong centre back or left back's previous clubs include Leyton Orient, Watford, Billericay and Braintree. An excellent defender at this level after joining the seashiders in early 2025.

Jack Wilkinson

Jack joined the Seashiders in October after having had a break from the game. He offers huge experience and versatility as a defender or midfielder which is a great asset to have in the squad, previous clubs include Stowmarket, AFC Sudbury and Needham Market.

Thomas Warren

Tom signed for the club in the summer of 2024 from Hadleigh United and played his first season for the Seashiders alongside his brother Charlie. Tom is an Athletic, strong and pacy full back or winger with a fantastic left foot and keen eye for a goal, scoring an impressive 17 goals in his debut season.

Callum Bennett

Callum returned to the club in 2025 after a brief spell away. Grew up at Ipswich Town Academy before spending a year at Notts County, returning back to local football with Bury Town in 2013, before signing for Felixstowe in 2014. Callum is in the top five for appearances made in the club's history.





MIDFIELDERS

Billy Holland

Billy started life at Ipswich Wanderers and has had spells at Needham, Leiston and AFC Sudbury. He's established himself as a mainstay in the centre of midfield. Players player and Supporters player of the year for the 22/23 season led to him being appointed captain the following year.

Josh Hitter

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

Noel Aitkens

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

Ethan Garcia

Ethan signed for Felixstowe in the summer of 2025 after a two year spell with Walsham Le Willows where he impressed many at step 5. Only playing football for four years, a tricky winger with an eye for goal.

Will Jones

Midfielder Will joined the club from Brantham Athletic in November 2025 and is a product of the AFC Sudbury Academy.

FORWARDS

Sam Ford

Having spent a successful period with Arbroath that saw them just miss out on promotion to the Scottish Premiership, Sam spent the Summer with Hume City FC in Australia before returning to Felixstowe in 2022. Coming through ITFC and later West Ham's academy, Sam is a local talent who will provide real firepower in front of goal.

Josh Mayhew

Josh joined us from promotion winners AFC Sudbury. An experienced front man who has been prolific at Step 4 and 5 with an impressive

spell at Stowmarket yielding 136 goals in 173 games. Josh's physical presence brings a focal point to our attack as well as a being natural finisher who is a proven goalscorer at this level.

Zak Brown

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



Dan Gilchrist

Dan's non league career started at Canvey Island before relocating to Suffolk where he went onto play for AFC Sudbury in the FA Cup First Round, before moving onto Bury Town and Thetford where he had two impressive goalscoring seasons. A hard working attacking player with an eye for goal.

Jacob Lay

Jacob rejoins the club for his second spell, after leaving in 2020, Jacob has gained promotion from step 3 and played at step 2 last season for Needham Market. A tricky winger who has huge energy and workrate.

Jose Santa De La Paz

Signed for the club in October 2025. Jose is a quick and powerful winger or striker with an eye for goal and assists, with previous clubs including Newmarket Market, Bury Town, Needham Market and Ipswich Wanderers.





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THE OTHER SIDE: REDBRIDGE FC



A Brief History 1934 – 2025

FORMATION, MERGERS AND NAMES

The Club's roots lie in the car industry which has long been a staple of the economy in this corner of East London and Essex, and give us several 'sister' clubs both locally and nationally. Previously known as Ford United F.C. which dated from a 1958 or '59 merger between two older clubs, Ford Sports F.C. (Dagenham) and Briggs Sports F.C., both of which were founded in 1934. Up until WW2, the latter actually began life as Briggs Motor Bodies F.C. and entered a team in the London League under that name between 1935 and '51. The Ford United Club was in serious problems at the start of 1995/6 season, however, as sponsorship was lost and disbanding seemed a real danger, until Vice-Chairman George Adams enlisted Sky Sports as sponsors, rescuing the Club. Nicknamed 'The Motormen', they play in Blue Shirts and White Shorts. The name of Ford United was to end forever when the club was changed at the start of the 2004/05 season to Redbridge Football Club in a bid to gain more local support and become firmly established as the highest placed football club in the London Borough of Redbridge.

GROUNDS

Briggs Sports played at the Victoria Road ground, now famous as home of Dagenham & Redbridge. Ford United's old ground was the Ford Sports & Social Club in Rush Green. Romford F.C. shared the ground in 1995/6, providing valuable funds at a difficult time. Sadly, this pleasant ground was ruled unacceptable to the Isthmian League in summer of 2000 since its owners, Ford Motor Company, would grant only a yearly lease, so some 40 years of history there came to an end. A new home was leased at Oakside Stadium the home of Barkingside F.C. who became tenants at the ground until they moved out at the end of the 2013/14 season.

LEAGUES

Briggs Motor Bodies won the London League in 1937 & '39, actually pipping Ford Sports to the title in '37 - the first of two successive runners-up spots. The London League Park Royal Cup (for lower division clubs) was won by Briggs Sports in '37 and



their reserves in '50. Ford Sports' membership of this league ran from 1935 to '53, winning Div 2 East in 1939. Briggs played in the Spartan League from 1945, winning East Div 1 in 1947, and the League Cup in '57, '58, and '59. They enjoyed unparalleled success in the Premier Division, as their positions from '49/'50 to 58/'59 read; 1st, 2nd, 1st, 2nd, 2nd, 2nd, 1st, 1st, 1st, 1st: following the merger on the back of 4 titles, the next Spartan winners were Staines Town. Ford Sports also played in the Spartan League during 1938, 1945 and 1952-58.

The newly merged club joined the new Aetolian League in 1959/'60, and became the first Champions, a feat they repeated in 1962: in between, they were runners-up in '61 when they also won the League Cup. Fortunes of both the club and the League began to wane in the 60's, whereupon we switched to the Greater London League in 1964. This was won in 1971, a year after being runners-up and capturing the League Cup then between 71-'74 we played in the Metropolitan London League.

In 1974 we moved to the Essex Senior League, and here we were champions in 1992, runners-up in '94, and remained until earning promotion to the Isthmian (Ryman) League in 1997, on the back of another Essex Senior League title (and League Cup final appearance) and a much improved ground. We finished in 5th spot in our first season, and with Jeff Wood contributing a league's best 35 goals, Ford United won Division 3 in

1999, scoring 110 goals in 38 games in the process - also the best in the League. We continued our rapid rise in 2000, when we romped to promotion. Wood bagging a remarkable 42 goals as we finished 3rd in Division 2.

We continued our rapid rise in 2000, when we romped to promotion. Wood bagging a remarkable 42 goals as we finished 3rd in Division 2. Another two successive promotions followed firstly with a 3rd place finish in season 2000/'01 and then by becoming champions of the Ryman Division 1 in 2001/'02. This coincided with a change of ground to the Oakside Stadium in Barkingside which was quickly updated to an A-grading so being able to host Ryman League football. Ryman Premier football was finally achieved but started with the departure of manager Denis Elliott and in came Craig Edwards whose first season in charge saw a 15th place finish as well as London Senior Cup runners up. The following season saw the club finish in 13th position which meant that we would qualify to enter the Nationwide Conference South in season 2004-'05.

Ford United started season 2004-'05 in the newly formed Nationwide Conference South under the

new name of Redbridge FC in an attempt to gain more support and become recognised as the highest placed football side in the London Borough of Redbridge. Unfortunately this proved to be a bridge too far for the club both on and off the pitch and we suffered relegation and a bottom place finish whilst also losing manager Craig Edwards halfway through the season as he was to be replaced with Ex Ford United and Fulham goalkeeper Jim Stannard. One success to come out of this season was the excellent Redbridge FC Under 18's side who as well as winning the Eastern Junior Alliance League and Cup also captured the Essex Pelly Cup and made it through to the 3rd round of the FA Youth Cup only to be beaten by previous winners Middlesbrough. The following season saw the club back in the Ryman Premier League but a second successive relegation was soon to follow which saw the club playing in the newly formed Ryman Division One North.

A change in management halfway through the season saw Ilford manager and ex Ford United player Allan Fenn join the club but was unable to stop the side from a bottom place finish. The following season was disappointing with a 16th place finish and resulted in Fenn being replaced in the summer break by ex Wimbledon and Bolton striker Dean Holdsworth. Dean led us to a 3rd place finish and a play off final only to see us lose out in a dramatic penalty shoot-out against Canvey Island.

Unfortunately, after only one season Dean moved on to become the new manager of Conference South side Newport County and this resulted in most of the squad breaking up. Ex Ford United player Jay Devereux took over and his first task was to rebuild the squad from scratch after most of the team moved on during the summer break. His first season finished with a respectable 9th place finish after a season which was hampered with floodlight problems at the Oakside and after the side got off to a slow start the next campaign and without a financial budget, he decided it best to leave the club.

First team coach Dave Ross took over as manager for the remainder of the season. Poor winter weather affected the side at the start of 2010 and the team initially struggled with a fixture pile up, but Ross managed to keep the side in the league avoiding relegation.

The following season Kris Taylor joined up with Ross to form a dual management team however after a bad start to the season which saw the club sitting bottom of the league Ross was asked to step down. Kris Taylor was confirmed as first team manager after talks broke down with Kevin Durrant who looked all set to join the club. Taylor's tenure ended in Dec



2010 when his work commitments affected the amount of time demanded to run a club of this stature meant he was unable to give 100% to the management of the team. First team coach Jody Brown was appointed manager on a short-term basis just before Christmas 2010 and he was able to bring some stability and stave of relegation with three games of the season remaining.

Chairman Dan Holloway moved quickly at the end of the season to make the changes that will bring the structure and stability needed at a football club at this level. Terry Spillane was appointed first team manager after a highly successful spell with Stansted with Jody Brown reverting to a coaching role.

The team ended the season well finishing 6th place just 4 points off the play off positions. However, soon after the season finished, Chairman Dan Holloway resigned from the club due to personal reasons and, with the playing budget due to be cut, manager Terry Spillane felt it was not possible to take the team any further and he and his footballing staff left to join fellow Ryman One North side Maldon & Tiptree.

A new joint management team made up of Del Robinson and ex Gravesend and Northfleet legend Steve Portway took charge for the 2012/13 season. After a poor start to the season, the team improved in the second half of the season and fought off

survival on the last day to finish 20th and secure another season at Ryman Level. During preseason Jim Chapman stepped down as chairman stepping aside for Imran Merchant who joined from London Bari. He brought in Ricky Eaton who joint up with the returning Dave Ross to form a dual management team.

After just one season Imran stepped down as Chairman due to personal reasons and ex Chairman Jim Chapman took control in the boardroom once again. The management team of Ricky and Dave stayed on becoming directors of the club and started to make improvements around the ground.

On the pitch however with no playing budget the team found the going tough and ended the season in 23rd place but were able to escape relegation when handed a reprieve due to Southern League side Clevedon Town being demoted over a ground grading rule.

The 2015/16 season was one of disappointment as the club struggled on the pitch winning just 8 league matches all season seeing them finish in bottom position suffering relegation back to the Essex Senior League for the first time in 19 years. Jimmy Chapman stepped down as Chairman handing over to Ricky Eaton who combined his role alongside being joint 1st team manager with newly appointed Joey May and wasted no time in making

much needed improvements around the ground such as changing rooms/refreshment bar and the club house.

In Jan 2019 Ricky Eaton stepped down from his role as manager to solely concentrate on his chairman duties and wasted no time in bringing across May & Baker manager Micky Wetherall well known to the football club and bringing in an entirely new side, he managed to lead the team to a 12th place finish.

The following season Redbridge was sitting in 8th position when the season was declared null and void due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The 2020/21 season eventually started in September however Micky decided to step down due to personal reasons and was soon replaced by ex Aveley Reserves manager George Christou however his first season was also cut short as the season was curtailed early due to the ongoing pandemic.

After two seasons of disruption due to the pandemic the 2021/22 was fully completed and George led his side to a 3rd place finish however went one better the following season finishing runners up resulting in an Inter League Play Off Final against Step Four Side Haywards Heath Town. A 3-2 victory secured promotion back to the Isthmian North Division after 7 years away in what was an unforgettable season setting new club records along the way with 10 consecutive wins and 12 consecutive clean sheets. A first season back at Step Four saw a mid-table finish however the superb Essex Senior Cup victory along with a strong run in the FA Trophy saw us crowned Isthmian North team of the season 2023/24.

George stepped down in Oct 24 and was eventually replaced by Basildon United manager



Chris Taylor who had a superb start winning his first four games before leading us to a 12th place finish.

NOTABLE PEOPLE:

Probably the most successful ex Ford United player was Peter Brabrook; an outside right who joined Chelsea in 1954 and went on to appear 488 times in the League with The Blues, West Ham and Orient. He also played 3 times for England (including a World Cup-tie v USSR), represented England U23, Youth, and the League, and won the FA Cup and Cup Winners Cup with West Ham. Playing in the 1954 Amateur Cup Semi was Les Allen, then 16, who went on to score 112 goals in 291 League games for Chelsea, Spurs and QPR, as well as representing England U23 and the Football League XI. Mick Flannagan went on to play for QPR, Charlton, Crystal Palace and Spurs; and others who progressed to the pro' ranks included Jimmy Stannard (Fulham, Southend, Millwall, Gillingham goalkeeper), Nicky Hammond (Arsenal, Swindon), Laurie Abrahams (Charlton), Doug Barton (Reading, Newport), John Dunn (goalkeeper at Chelsea, Torquay, Aston Villa and Charlton) and more recently Glenn Poole who recently played at Brentford. The England Amateur and Great Britain Olympic sides of the '50s and '60s contained Derek Shewring, Ernie Childs, George Bunce, and Alf Noble (later at Colchester). Numerous players have gained Essex representative caps/badges: Seniors: Ernie Childs, JL Morgan, HW Jarvis, AGH Smith, RL Bumpstead, R Hammond, HW Green, C Guiver (all Briggs Sports), D Harris (Ford United) Juniors: SE Clark (Ford Sports), E Smith (Briggs Sports). Roger Bond holds the appearance record. Jimmy Chapman although now retired from the game managed to combine his role of goalkeeper and Chairman for many seasons.



FIXTURES 2025/26

AUGUST

SAT 9	WALTHAM ABBEY	A	3PM	LEAGUE	L 1-0	ATT 302
TUE 12	WITHAM TOWN Garcia, Mayhew	H	7.45PM	LEAGUE	W 2-0	ATT 388
SAT 16	NEWMARKET Garcia	A	3PM	EMIRATES FA CUP PR	D 1-1	
TUE 19	NEWMARKET	H	7.45PM	EMIRATES FA CUP RR REPLAY	L 2-0	ATT 384
SAT 23	BOWERS & PITSEA	H	3PM	LEAGUE	D 0-0	ATT 340
MON 25	GORLESTON Holland, Hitter, Gilchrist	A	1PM	LEAGUE	W 3-1	ATT 121
SAT 30	GRAYS ATHLETIC Mayhew, Hitter, Gilchrist	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 3-0	ATT 189

SEPTEMBER

SAT 6	HERTFORD TOWN Ford (3)	A	3PM	ISUZU FA TROPHY 1QR	W 3-1	ATT 377
SAT 13	NEWMARKET TOWN Ford, Garcia	H	3PM	LEAGUE	W 2-0	ATT 502
TUE 16	BRANTHAM ATHLETIC Hitter, Brown, Holland, Gilchrist	A	7.45PM	LEAGUE	W 4-0	ATT 185
SAT 20	GRAYS ATHLETIC	A	3PM	ISUZU FA TROPHY 2QR	L 2-0	ATT 194
SAT 27	TILBURY Mayhew (P)	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 1-0	ATT 295

OCTOBER

SAT 4	HEYBRIDGE SWIFTS	H	3PM	LEAGUE	D 0-0	ATT 420
TUE 7	AFC SUDBURY Lay, Warren, Gilchrist	A	7.45PM	SUFFOLK PREMIER CUP	W 3-2	ATT 114
SAT 11	CAMBRIDGE CITY Warren, Stevenson	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 2-0	ATT 563
SAT 18	MALDON & TIPTREE Mayhew, Brown	H	3PM	LEAGUE	W 2-1	ATT 1017
WED 22	BRANTHAM ATHLETIC Ford	H	7.45PM	LEAGUE	W 1-0	ATT 401

NOVEMBER

SAT 1	TAKELEY Ford (2), Hitter, Lay	H	3PM	LEAGUE	W 4-0	ATT 390
TUE 4	BRIGHTLINGSEA REGENT Ford (2), Brown	H	7.45PM	LEAGUE	W 3-0	ATT 251
SAT 8	WALTHAMSTOW Warren, Ford	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 2-1	ATT 323
TUE 11	CORNARD UNITED Santa De La Paz, Lay, Holland	A	7.45PM	SUFFOLK PREMIER CUP QF	W 3-1	
SAT 15	CONCORD RANGERS Garcia, Warren, Santa De La Paz	H	3.03PM	LEAGUE	W 3-1	ATT 541
TUE 24	STANWAY ROVERS Ford (2)	A	7.45PM	LEAGUE	D 2-2	ATT 181
SAT 29	WALTHAM ABBEY Ford, Santa De La Paz	H	3PM	LEAGUE	L 7-2	ATT 397

DECEMBER

SAT 6	REDBRIDGE Hitter, Santa De La Paz	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 2-1	ATT 96
TUE 9	WITHAM TOWN Santa De La Paz	A	7.45PM	LEAGUE	L 2-1	ATT 191
SAT 13	WROXHAM Ford, Garcia	H	3PM	LEAGUE	W 2-0	ATT 403
SAT 20	GRAYS ATHLETIC Mayhew, Garcia, Santa De La Paz (2), Aitkens	H	3PM	LEAGUE	W 5-1	ATT 342
SAT 27	LOWESTOFT TOWN Stevenson, Santa De La Paz (2), Hitter	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 4-1	ATT 600

JANUARY

SAT 10	DOWNHAM TOWN Santa De La Paz (2)	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 2-0	ATT 132
TUE 13	MILDENHALL TOWN Hitter, Holland	A	7.45PM	LEAGUE	W 2-1	ATT 174
SAT 17	BRIGHTLINGSEA REGENT Ford (2), Santa De La Paz, Stevenson	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 4-3	ATT 311
TUE 20	GORLESTON Santa De La Paz, Ford, Hitter, Holland	H	7.45PM	LEAGUE	W 4-0	ATT 254
SAT 24	CAMBRIDGE CITY Ford, Garcia	H	3PM	LEAGUE	D 2-2	ATT 521
SAT 31	HEYBRIDGE SWIFTS Garcia, Gilchrist	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 2-1	ATT 244

FEBRUARY

SAT 14	MALDON & TIPTREE	A	3PM	LEAGUE	L 4-0	ATT 1394
FRI 20	STANWAY ROVERS Stevenson, Mayhew, Jones	H	7.45PM	LEAGUE	W 3-0	ATT 501

MARCH

TUE 3	TILBURY	H	7.45PM	LEAGUE	L 2-0	ATT 260
SAT 7	WALTHAMSTOW Holland	H	3PM	LEAGUE	D 1-1	ATT 344
TUE 10	TAKELEY Mayhew (3)	A	7.45PM	LEAGUE	W 3-2	ATT 91
SAT 14	WROXHAM Mayhew, Brown	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 2-0	ATT 210
TUE 17	HAVERHILL Mayhew, Holland FELIXSTOWE WIN 5-4 ON PENS (Ainsley, Whight, Mayhew, Stevenson and Ford)	A	7.45PM	SUFFOLK FA PREMIER CUP SF	D 2-2	
SAT 21	REDBRIDGE Stevenson, Warren	H	3PM	LEAGUE	W 2-0	ATT 407
SAT 28	DOWNHAM TOWN	H	3PM	LEAGUE	D 0-0	ATT 617

APRIL

SAT 4	BOWERS & PITSEA Garcia, Mayhew	A	3PM	LEAGUE	D 2-2	ATT 218
MON 6	LOWESTOFT TOWN Gilchrist, Mayhew	H	3PM	LEAGUE	W 2-0	ATT 391
SAT 11	NEWMARKET TOWN Warren, Brown	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 2-0	ATT 215
SAT 18	CONCORD RANGERS Santa De La Paz (2), Ford, Lay	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 4-0	ATT 267
TUE 21	NEEDHAM MARKET	A	7.45PM	SUFFOLK PREMIER CUP FINAL L	L 3-0	ATT
SAT 25	MILDENHALL TOWN Ford, Lay, Warren	H	3PM	LEAGUE	W 3-0	ATT 547

MY BALL

BY MARTYN GREEN, THE UNTOLD GAME

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When we think of football, we focus on players, tactics, coaches, managers. Sometimes we look at the governing bodies and their questionable and controversial actions 'in the service of the game'. Or the referees, and how they were clearly against my team that day. Often we'll even look at the pitches we play on; pristine green carpets or boggy mud bowls. Anything and everything can be discussed in the pub afterward, or form the basis of analysis on Match of the Day. But rarely, in any context, do we take a look at the thing that actually gets moved up and down the playing field. The ball itself is taken for granted, but it has got quite the history of it's own.

Football can trace its roots back further than the codification of the game we now know, with games involving the kicking of balls being found in the medieval period. Having all grown being told not to play with our food, it's somewhat ironic that all those centuries ago, that's exactly what they did; reports of kicking a hog's head at each other are found in a number of sources. In circumstances slightly more recognisable to modern fans, others also used to get hold of a pig or a sheep's bladder, blow it up, and tie a knot in the end. They would then put it in a leather casing to protect it, and then play whatever ancestor version of football they had. This was the method of making footballs that lasted all the way up until the 19th century.

In 1838, the chemist and engineer Charles Goodyear invented the process for vulcanising

rubber. He patented the process in 1844, and started his company that became most famous for manufacturing tyres. More importantly than the silly business of bikes and cars, though, was football. Alongside tyres, vulcanising rubber allowed for the manufacture of stronger, bouncier, more elastic bladders to form the basis of a football. Suddenly, the ball moved in a much more forgiving way.

The Football Association was formed in 1863, and one of their first tasks was to codify the regulations around footballs, so that clubs across the country could play with the same equipment. Goodyear's vulcanised bladders were made standard, as was the leather coating. Eighteen tanned leather sections would be fitted to the bladder in six panels of three strips each. Everything was sewn together with laces, which are visible on some early footballs. This was the first recognisable and ubiquitous football; the brown leather ball that started the growth of the game into the behemoth it has become.

The laces were removed in 1931 by Argentinian engineers, and adopted by the Argentinian FA in 1932 and by the rest of the world soon after. It removed the hardest part of the ball, and allowed it to fly and bounce in a more predictable way. But a problem remained, and became a major issue much later. The ball was heavy, and when the leather got wet it soaked up water and got much heavier. In places where it rained a lot - like the UK, for

example - it meant the ball was often such a weight that it could cause injury. Decades later, the weight of the ball would be linked to dementia in post-war players, caused by the repetitive heading of such a sodden weight.

FIFA initially started trialling plastics in the 1950s to reduce the weight, but preferred leather so, in the 1960s, they started to insist that a waterproof coating was added. But another football innovation at this time was driven by a more recognisable FIFA motive; tv ratings.

In the 1950s and 1960s, football started to be televised for the first time. In black and white, the brown leather ball was harder to track, so FIFA decided that it needed to change. At first, the change was simple; brown leather became white leather, and suddenly the ball was bright and obvious on the screen.

But almost immediately, tv networks started innovating with colour. By 1970 it was obvious that this shift would be unstoppable, and FIFA

acted again, working with Adidas to produce possibly the most famous football ever produced, the Telstar ball, for the 1970 World Cup in Mexico. Black and white panels, and named after the Telstar satellite, it was supposed to be the football for the future. Unfortunately, even with waterproofing, rain could seep between the panels and increase the weight.

In 1986, FIFA finally relented and allowed synthetic materials to be used in the production of footballs. The Adidas Azteca was the first of its kind, and formed the basis of the footballs we see today. It took over a century, but finally the football had completed its journey. Iconic balls have come and gone since; some (like the 2010 Jabulani) tried to improve the ball once again, but were quickly rejected.

And so the simple round thing that gets booted from one end to the other isn't such a simple round thing at all.

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"The Isthmian Football League strongly supports the Football Association's statement that there should be a zero-tolerance approach against all forms of discrimination. Any inappropriate conduct toward others, including but not limited to that based on an individual's sex, race, colour, weight, size, religion and belief, national origin, age, marital or domestic-partnership status, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, will not be tolerated and will be reported to the relevant authorities. The Isthmian League and our Member Clubs are committed to promoting equity and equality by treating all people fairly and with respect, by recognising that inequalities may exist, by taking steps to address them and providing access and opportunities for all members of our communities."



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We are proud to be a club partner and team sponsor of Felixstowe and Walton United FC

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Ever thought of volunteering to help your local football club?

There are many different volunteer roles in non-league football and Isthmian League football clubs need your help with them.

The Trident Leagues and Pitching In's online Volunteer Hub is the place where you can find opportunities and contact your local football club.

Please visit
Pitchinginvolunteers.co.uk
to find out more



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**ISTHMIAN
FOOTBALL
LEAGUE**



PARTNERS WITH
ISTHMIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE



PARTNERS WITH
ISTHMIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE



MATCHDAY SQUADS

Isthmian League North
Tuesday 28th April 2026
Kick-off 7.45pm



Felixstowe & Walton Utd FC

Managers: Jack Ainsley and
Stuart Ainsley

Jack **Ainsley**
Stuart **Ainsley**
Hugo **Akhuseyin**
Noel **Aitkens**
Callum **Bennett**
Zak **Brown**
Ollie **Caley-Brown**
Hugh **Cullum**
Sam **Ford**
Ethan **Garcia**
Dan **Gilchrist**
Josh **Hitter**
Billy **Holland (C)**
Will **Jones**
Jacob **Lay**
Olly **Martin**
Josh **Mayhew**
Jose **Santa De La Paz**
Toby **Stevenson**
Thomas **Warren**
Joe **Whight**
Jack **Wilkinson**
Harry **Wright (GK)**

Redbridge FC

Manager: Chris Taylor

Michael **Agboola**
Charles **Brown-Bampoe**
Pedro **Carvalho**
Sam **Carter**
Jack **Chawner (C)**
Henry **Day**
Darren **Esuka**
Kaya **Hansson-Ramis-Hayrettin**
Jimi **Feeley**
Joseph **Johnson**
Karl **Kayembe**
Emmanuel **Kwatchey**
Adriano **Morrison**
Samuel **Nwabuko (GK)**
Ayodeji **Olukoga**
Louie **Remi**
Elliott **Sartorius**
Prince **Sikiru**
Kyle **Thomas-Fraser**
Mekael **Williams**

MATCH SPONSOR:
MARTELLO TRANSPORT

MATCH OFFICIALS:

Referee: Mr Matthew Friend **Assistant Referees:** Mr George Lowe and Mr Andrew Denikiewicz