SEASIDERS

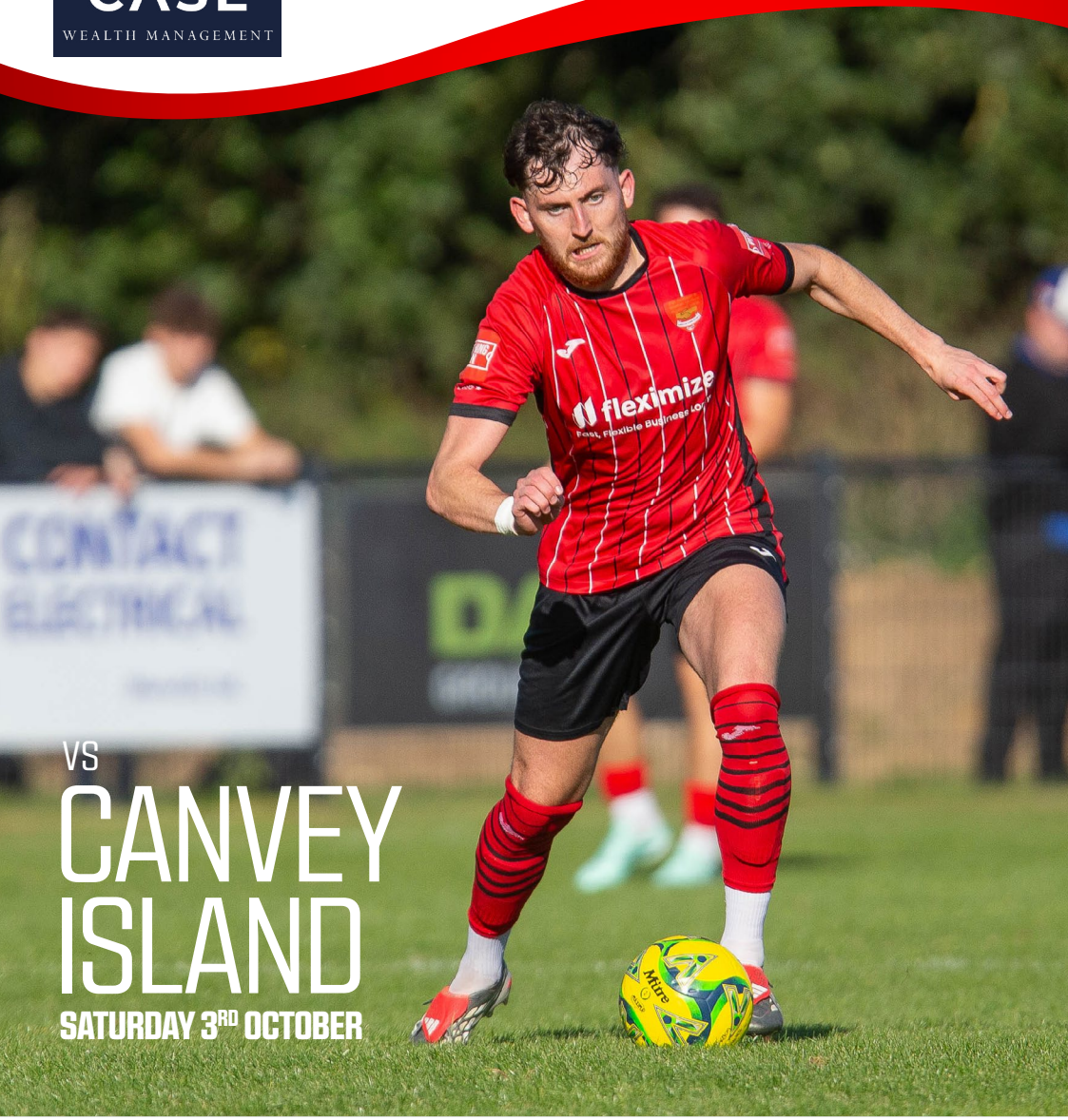
Felixstowe & Walton United Football Club

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THE OFFICIAL 2026/27 MATCHDAY PROGRAMME SPONSORED BY:

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VICE CHAIRMAN: ANDY CLARKE



Good afternoon everyone, and a very warm welcome to the Martello Ground for today's Isthmian League fixture against Canvey Island.

These are my first programme notes of the season and, as I sat down to write them, I found myself wondering where to start. The football? The club? The season so far? Or perhaps even the ongoing debate about whether Manchester City really can explain away 115 charges! But enough of that; let's focus on matters closer to home.

Let's start on a positive note with our recent 0-0 draw against Hashtag United. For me, it was probably the most entertaining game we've seen at the Martello this season. Both sides played some excellent football, and both goalkeepers were outstanding. Either could easily have walked away with the Man of the Match award, although Harry ultimately got the nod. If you were looking to show someone what non-league football is all about, that match would have been a perfect example. No goals, but a fantastic advert for football at this level.

Three days later, we were back in action as Sudbury Town visited the Martello. Despite their recent struggles, they arrived in good spirits following an impressive victory over Walthamstow. We picked up where we had left off against Hashtag and produced an excellent first-half display. The football was quick, precise and enjoyable to watch, and two goals from Tom gave us a deserved 2-0 lead at the break.

Unfortunately, football matches are rarely won after 45 minutes. While credit must go to Sudbury for sticking at it, our second-half performance lacked the same quality and composure. Poor decision-making and sloppy passing invited pressure, and as the game wore on, we began to look vulnerable. Two late penalties eventually cost us what had looked like a comfortable three points. It was frustrating, particularly given how dominant we had been, but in football every point counts, and we moved on.

Saturday then brought our first-ever visit to Mulbarton Wanderers following their earlier FA Trophy victory at the Martello, a result we were keen to put right.

From the moment we arrived, we received a warm welcome from everyone at the club. It was clear to see why people speak so highly of the place. Friendly supporters, good-natured banter around the ground, excellent burgers at a very reasonable £5 according to Steve Isaac, reasonably priced beer according to the travelling contingent, and a very generous half-time spread. The only thing that seemed to be missing was our football, although thankfully we didn't have long to wait.

"Hits" gave us the perfect start with a goal inside two minutes, before Joe converted from the spot to make it two inside the opening ten minutes. Unlike the Sudbury game, our game management in the second half was excellent. Ethan then produced the standout moment of

the afternoon with a superb strike that effectively ended the contest. From that point on, Harry had very little to do, and we saw the game out comfortably. All in all, it was a thoroughly enjoyable day out and three well-earned points.

Tuesday evening took us to Fakenham Town, who were sitting at the foot of the table. On paper, it looked like a good opportunity to build momentum. However, as we've all seen this season, football isn't played on paper, and we've too often flattered to deceive. Unfortunately, work commitments meant I couldn't make the trip, but having listened to Stu's post-match interview, it sounds as though it was a frustrating evening. An away point is never a bad result, but if our ambition is to be challenging for the title, these are the games where we need to find a way to take all three points.

That said, I remain optimistic. I've seen enough this season to know we have the quality within the squad to be genuine contenders once again. The biggest challenge is finding consistency. If we can do that, there is no reason why we cannot be right in the mix come the business end of the season.

Hopefully, that starts today against a side currently sitting just above the bottom three. After today's game, we face one of our biggest tests so far when we travel to current league leaders and surprise package of the season, Gorleston. Which Felixstowe & Walton United side will turn up? Your guess is probably as good as mine, but let's hope it's the one we've seen when we're at our best.

Before I finish, a quick reminder that our new hospitality suite is now officially open. The facility is available for supporters, sponsors and community groups alike. If you'd like more information, please take a look at the club website or our social media channels.

Thank you for your continued support, and enjoy the game.

Regards,
AC

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SA
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AINSLEY



Good afternoon and welcome to the Martello Ground for today's league clash against Canvey Island.

I'd like to welcome the players, management and supporters of my former club, Canvey. It's a club I've got huge respect for and where I really enjoyed my time, although it was a fair few years ago now!

Since my last set of notes a couple of weeks ago, we've won one and drawn three, so we're unbeaten in four. However, we're slightly disappointed as a couple of those draws should have been wins, which would have made our recent form look a lot better.

That said, we'll take a lot of positives from those results and, in particular, our performances. We look a lot harder to beat recently, which has been really pleasing to see after our difficult start to the season. Full credit to the players for standing up and digging deep when times are tough, which certainly isn't easy when expectations are so high.

We're currently deep into a run of two-game weeks, where the travel and game time certainly haven't been easy for us. We've already been to Wroxham and Fakenham in midweek, with Gorleston to come next week. The players and supporters who've followed us throughout deserve a lot of credit, and we thank them hugely for their continued support. At least it's not winter yet…

Finally, I'd like to thank the departing Hugh Cullum for his service to this club. He's a really great local lad who has contributed massively to the club over the last few years, and we wish him all the very best for the future.

Enjoy the game.
Stu





SEASIDER: PHIL GRIFFITHS

What are the chances?

Two players playing for the same non-league club, both having a brother playing in the English Football League for the same club.

Zak Brown and Tom Warren are regular starters here at the Martello Ground, and all being well will be in today's starting line-up against Canvey Island, while 265 miles North West of the Martello Ground, Charlie Brown and Charlie Warren will hopefully be lining up for Accrington Stanley against Cheltenham FC in the EFL.

While the two Seasiders are regular starters for us, the two Charlie's are not quite so regular, usually starting games on the bench.

Both have taken very different routes to get to Accrington although both started in the youth set up at Portman Road, Charlie Brown got there via Chelsea, MK Dons, Cheltenham & Morecombe while Charlie Warren was spotted playing for us by a Bolton Wanderers scout and duly signed for them, he spent last season on loan at National League Aldershot and is currently on loan at Accrington Stanley.



What are the chances of all four scoring a goal this afternoon, now that would be something worth writing about!!





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SJP Approved 28/01/2026

SJP14332a_DS B3 (08/24)

FELIXSTOWE & WALTON UNITED	**0**
HASHTAG UNITED	**0**

Saturday 19th September
Isthmian League North
Photos: Stefan Peck

LINE UP: Wright, Brown, Stevenson Holland (C), Whight, Ainsley, Garcia Hitter, Santa De La Paz, Harrison, Warren

SUBS: Smith, Jones, Mayhew, Cullum, Ward




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OUR SQUAD

Introducing the Felixstowe & Walton United FC playing squad and management team of 2026/2027



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PLAYER/MANAGER
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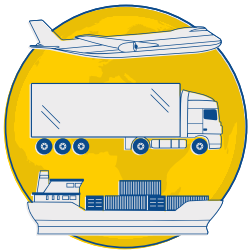
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SEASIDERS PEN PICS

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.



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 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 Seasiders.



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 Seasiders 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.

Thomas Warren
Tom signed for the club in the summer of 2024 from Hadleigh United and played his first season for the Seasiders 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.

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 seasiders in early 2025.

Maxwell Statham
Maxwell joined the Seasiders this summer with a wealth of experience at National League South level. The 24-year-old right-sided defender came through the academies at Tottenham Hotspur and Watford before making his mark in senior football. After impressing during a standout spell at Welling United, Maxwell became a regular at Dartford

for two seasons before further spells with Hemel Hempstead Town and Chatham Town, and most recently, back at Welling United.

Brad Smith
Brad joined the club in summer 2026 after spending most of his youth career at Needham Market, progressing through the youth teams and their academy. Has joined the Seasiders with good pedigree, a versatile defender or midfielder.

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.

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.

Lester Ward
A versatile full-back/winger, Lester joins the Seasiders from Chelmsford City and boasts an impressive footballing pedigree, having progressed through the academies of Colchester United, West Ham United and Arsenal.

Callum Harrison
A fan favourite and naturally gifted No.10, Callum made 109 appearances and scored 35goals during his previous spell with the Seasiders before departing last summer. Previous clubs include Needham Market, Coggeshall, Chelmsford City and AFC Sudbury. Callum returned to the Seasiders this summer after a season at Brightlingsea Regent.













Luke Allen
Luke joined the Seasider this summer, bringing significant experience and quality in the middle of the park. Luke started out at Tottenham Hotspur and Cambridge United and has enjoyed spells with Welling United, Braintree Town, Folkestone Invicta and Aveley, as well as five successful seasons at Dartford, where he established himself as one of the division's most consistent midfielders.

FORWARDS

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.

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.



TERRACE TALK

BY NEIL EDWARDS



September has been a very busy month for the 1st team, with 8 games played, and October is no different.

Two vastly contrasting draws were played out at The Martello Ground. A very spirited 0-0 draw with Hashtag United, who strolled into town boasting a 100% league record thus far, was followed up with a 2-2 draw with struggling AFC Sudbury 3 days later. Alas the scoreline does not tell the full story, as we led 2-0 on 84 minutes prior to our visitors being awarded two late penalties. The second of these was highly contentious, with Joe Whight laying on the floor when the ball hit his arm. We hear all too often these days of "arms in a natural position" but I really don't know where the referee thinks Joe's arms should have been in this instance.

For the Sudbury fixture I took advantage of the new Corner Flag Suite and enjoyed some great company, buckets of cold beers and a delicious hot pie at Half Time. The covered viewing area contrasted with my usual position behind the goal at the Delwood end but it certainly made a great vantage point with all 4 goals on the night down that end.

If you have a special occasion during the season, such as a birthday, anniversary or friends/family joining you from afar for a fixture, I would highly recommend the additional outlay for the afternoon or evening. Thanks again to Jess for being a great host.

Onto our travels, and 2 games in Norfolk in the space of 4 days returned us 4 crucial league points. Last Saturday we made use of the supporters' minibus to Mulbarton Wanderers, and on Tuesday I took the car up to Fakenham.







Mulbarton's Adobe Arena is a smart ground, although the clubhouse and toilets are in a separate building outside of the actual playing area, so we were all attacked on our way in by a man with a rubber stamp, and he wasn't afraid to use it. Clipboard Cheryl and hubby Dan enjoyed some lunch on the old green double decker bus that has been turned into a centrepiece of the club, whilst the rest of us headed to the bar to refresh after the journey. The clubhouse was probably 80% Felixstowe & Walton fans, and a good selection of beers was available, plenty of ales too which is always a nice sight.

Regular supporters will remember Mulbarton knocking us out of The FA Trophy in mid-August.

Well thankfully we turned the tables and won convincingly 0-3. Josh Hitter opened the scoring after 2 minutes and only a linesman's flag kept it that way when Jose Santa De La Paz had the ball in the net 3 minutes later. It was 0-2 soon afterwards though, with Joe Whight, our latest penalty taker, converting from the spot. Ethan Garcia made the points safe after the break and









so it was a buzzing minibus making it's way back home with all 3 points safely in the bag.

Tuesday's game at Fakenham was originally scheduled for the first Saturday in September but was re-arranged due to our FA Cup tie at Wingate & Finchley. Norwich train station is some 25 miles from Fakenham, so it was always going to be a car day for this fixture. We arrived shortly after 6.30pm and made our way to the clubhouse which, for fear of repeating myself, was mainly occupied by F&W supporters. Carl paid for me to get in, Clipboard treated me to an alcohol-free Kopparberg and Mistley John sorted me out with some grub, a most delicious cheeseburger (with onions…) cooked outside on the BBQ.



The trip was well worthwhile, as we were treated to a 6-goal thriller that had the pendulum swinging back and forth. 3-3 was perhaps a fair result, if one discounts the 2 penalties that maybe would have been awarded on another day. Near identical goals from Billy Holland and Tom Warren, both from superb Toby corners, and a third from Ethan Garcia, looked to have won it for us, but alas The Ghosts managed to level the game, and had the lion's share of the chances in stoppage time.

After a difficult start to the campaign, we have climbed the table and are in a far healthier position now going into another busy month, which includes another Norfolk midweek road trip to meet current league leaders Gorleston in Great Yarmouth and Saturday train days out at Witham and Buckhurst Hill to look forward to.

A quick mention for Hugh Cullum who you will have seen on our social media channels this week has departed the club. Hugh always gave 100% and we wish him well.

Finally, a reminder that tickets are currently on sale to all club members for the annual Fireworks display on Sunday 1st November, and the New Years Eve party with Bearfoot Souls Home Ground Hullabaloo. Grab yours whilst you can from the clubhouse on matchdays, from Sweets Reunited in town, or online.

Enjoy the game, and thanks for reading.
Up the Seasiders.



TODAY'S MASCOTS

Today we are delighted to welcome the **Felixstowe & Walton United Under-12 Girls** as the Seasiders' match mascots.

The girls will get the chance to enjoy the full matchday experience, joining the players in the build-up to the game before cheering on the Seasiders as they take on Canvey Island.

The Under-12 Girls are proudly sponsored by **1 to 1 Transport**, whose valued support helps the team continue to enjoy their football and represent Felixstowe & Walton United.

A huge thank you goes to 1 to 1 Transport for their fantastic support of the team and youth football at the club.

We hope all of our Under-12 Girls, along with their coaches and families, have a fantastic day at the match and enjoy the experience of representing the Seasiders as today's mascots.

Enjoy your day, girls – and come on you Seasiders!

1 t. 1
TRANSPORT



ISTHMIAN NORTH
DIVISION TABLE 2026/27

POS		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Gorleston	8	6	1	1	14	5	+9	19
2	Hashtag United	8	5	2	1	21	5	+16	17
3	Wroxham	9	5	1	3	19	10	+9	16
4	Redbridge	7	5	0	2	18	13	+5	15
5	Bowers & Pitsea	8	4	2	2	13	12	+1	14
6	Concord Rangers	6	4	1	1	15	9	+6	13
7	Newmarket Town	7	4	1	2	8	9	-1	13
8	Takeley	8	4	1	3	13	15	-2	13
9	Cambridge City	6	4	0	2	19	7	+12	12
10	**Felixstowe & Walton United**	**9**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**17**	**18**	**-1**	**12**
11	AFC Sudbury	9	3	2	4	15	13	+2	11
12	Little Oakley	6	3	1	2	12	10	+2	10
13	Walthamstow	9	3	1	5	16	15	+1	10
14	Buckhurst Hill	6	3	0	3	12	9	+3	9
15	Mulbarton Wanderers	6	3	0	3	9	7	+2	9
16	Witham Town	6	3	0	3	10	15	-5	9
17	Tilbury	8	2	3	3	8	14	-6	9
18	Grays Athletic	8	2	1	5	8	14	-6	7
19	Lowestoft Town	9	2	1	6	9	29	-20	7
20	**Canvey Island**	**7**	**1**	**2**	**4**	**8**	**11**	**-3**	**5**
21	Brightlingsea Regent	9	0	3	6	7	18	-11	3
22	Fakenham Town	7	0	2	5	6	19	-13	2

Last updated: Wednesday 30th September 2026 at 21:35:36

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Warren (2)

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Tuesday 22nd September
Isthmian League North
Photos: Stefan Peck

LINE UP: Wright, Brown, Stevenson Holland (C), Whight, Ainsley, Garcia Jones, Santa De La Paz, Hitter, Warren

SUBS: Smith, Harrison, Mayhew Cullum, Warren




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5


9


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THE OTHER SIDE
CANVEY ISLAND FC

CLUB HISTORY

The Club was founded in 1926, but unfortunately, most of its early records were lost in the devastating East Coast floods of 1953. The Club was very successful during its days in the local leagues, winning many cups and league championships in the process. During these years, the Club appointed Denis Neville as manager, his first job after leaving his position as manager of the Dutch National Team.

However, the Club had drifted away towards the end of the 1980s, and the very existence of Canvey Island FC was in serious doubt. When it looked as though the end was near, local businessman and former Canvey player Jeff King took over as manager, as well as helping to generate funds to take the Club forward.

Canvey then enjoyed a meteoric rise up the football pyramid, with the success beginning in 1993 when the Gulls won the Essex Senior League and reached the semi-final of the FA Vase.

The Club then gained promotion to the Isthmian League in 1994 and won promotion from Division Three and Division Two in successive seasons. In 1995/96, after beating Conference team Hednesford Town in the FA Cup, they reached the First Round Proper and drew 2-2 with Football League side Brighton & Hove Albion at Park Lane in front of a then ground-record crowd of 3,400. The replay was lost at Brighton in front of a crowd of over 7,000. As well as winning Division Two, the team were also winners of the Carlton Trophy and Thames-side Trophy.

The 1998/99 season was yet another exciting one for supporters, as the Club won the Division One championship and the Essex Senior Cup, beating Leyton Orient in the final. The 1999/2000 season was the Club's first in the Premier Division of the Ryman League, and they finished a very creditable fifth in the league and retained the Essex Senior Cup, defeating Purfleet in the final.

The following season saw the team win the FA Trophy by beating Forest Green Rovers 1-0 in the final in front of over 10,000 people at Villa Park, with thousands more watching live on television. To win the FA Trophy, they had to beat four Conference League teams in succession: Stevenage Borough, Telford United, Chester City (over two legs) and Forest Green.



Earlier in the season, the Club had another great FA Cup run. After beating Braintree Town, King's Lynn and Cambridge City, they were drawn against Port Vale from the Second Division of the Football League. In an exciting match at Park Lane, they drew 4-4 after being 4-2 down with only two minutes left to play. However, even better was to follow as they went to Port Vale and beat them 2-1 after extra time.

They were then drawn at home to Football League neighbours Southend United. To accommodate the number of people wishing to see the game, Canvey agreed to transfer the match to Southend's Roots Hall ground. A capacity crowd of 11,400 saw the game, with record gate receipts for a match at Southend, and Canvey were narrowly beaten.

These tremendous cup runs took their toll in the league. With a large number of matches being postponed at opponents' grounds because of waterlogged pitches, Canvey had to complete the season with ten league games in fifteen days. Consequently, they dropped points that may have taken them to the league title and a place in the Conference League. However, it was still a fine performance to finish runners-up in only their second season in the Premier Division.

The Club enjoyed a then record-breaking season the following year when they reached the Third Round Proper of the FA Cup for the first time. On the way, they beat five teams, including two from the Second Division of the Football League: Wigan Athletic at the JJB Stadium and Northampton Town in front of a full house at Park Lane and five million television viewers on 'Match of the Day Live'. Burnley finally knocked them out in a memorable game at Turf Moor.

They finished runners-up in the Ryman Premier League despite winning thirty games and scoring 108 goals. In defending the FA Trophy, the team had a fine run before narrowly losing away to eventual winners Yeovil Town. The team did, however, end the season with silverware by winning the Essex Senior Cup, beating Dagenham & Redbridge in the final.

Canvey had another fine league season the following year, finishing runners-up in the Ryman Premier League. Although this was another superb performance, finishing thirteen points clear of the third-placed club, it was tinged with disappointment as it was the third season running that the Club had finished runners-up in their quest to reach the Conference League. Towards the end of the season, the Club recorded a ground-record attendance of 3,553 when playing eventual champions Aldershot Town in a midweek league game. However, the disappointment was a measure of how far the Club had progressed over the previous decade since winning the Essex Senior League.

The next season saw Canvey reach the goal they had been working towards for the previous four years, as they won the Ryman Premier League by a margin of nineteen points. Canvey also reached the FA Trophy

PHOTOS TAKEN FROM CANVEY ISLAND WEBSITE WITH PERMISSION. COURTESY OF EMMIE GRACE AND CRAIG BRETT



final and the First Round of the FA Cup. The league was clinched at Easter with seven games still to play, and the team finally finished with a total of 104 points. The FA Trophy run included wins over Conference teams Farnborough Town and Telford United, the latter in a two-legged semi-final, before losing 3-2 in an exciting final at Villa Park against Hednesford United. After a fine run in the FA Cup, the team were narrowly beaten 3-2 at home by Third Division neighbours Southend United following a 1-1 draw at Roots Hall.

In Canvey's first season in the Conference, they finished in 18th position in the league table, achieving their initial aim of consolidation. The season started well with a draw at Carlisle United in front of a 7,000-strong crowd on the opening day and just one defeat in the first seven games, against eventual champions Barnet. After this, the Club lost some key players through injury for several months and struggled during the middle part of the season, but came back strongly at the end to secure their status for a second season.

The following season saw the Club achieve its highest-ever league position, earning a respectable 14th place. However, the lack of success compared with previous seasons had taken its toll on attendances, so much so that Jeff King made the decision to withdraw his financial and footballing interests from the Club. However, the Club's supporters rallied together, allowing the team to continue playing the following year in Ryman League Division One North.

John Batch took over as manager for the 2006/07 campaign, with his reserve side from the previous season making up the bulk of the squad. A learning curve for all concerned very nearly ended in promotion, though the Gulls narrowly missed out on a play-off place, finishing sixth on the final day of the season.

Canvey went one better the following season, gaining promotion to the Ryman Premier League through the play-offs. A run of five wins from their final six games earned them a place in the play-offs, and after beating AFC Sudbury 3-2 away after extra time, the Gulls travelled to Redbridge for the final. After the match finished 1-1 following extra time, Canvey won a nail-biting penalty shootout 5-4 to earn promotion. During this season, Canvey also knocked Ryman Premier League side Maidstone United out of the FA Trophy and reached the final of the Essex Thameside Trophy.

Manager John Batch stood down in January 2012, with the Club lying in 10th place in the Ryman Premier League. First-team coach Glen Alzapiedi stepped up to take over as manager. He guided the Club to the Essex Senior Cup for the first time in a decade with a 1-0 victory against League One side Colchester United at Thurrock FC's Ship Lane. Having defeated another Football League side, Dagenham & Redbridge, on penalties in the semi-finals, a headed goal from Rob King with seven minutes to play won Canvey the cup without the team having conceded a goal throughout the competition.



Alzapiedi left the Club in July 2012 and was replaced by former Canvey captain Steve Tilson, who five years previously had been managing Southend United in the Championship. Tilson's reign lasted only one season before he was replaced by another former Canvey player, Danny Heale.

After staying up on the final day of the 2014/15 season, Canvey were relegated on the final day of the following campaign, their first relegation due to league position in 19 years. The Club's first season in the Bostik North nearly ended in an immediate return, as they reached the play-off final but lost 3-1 away to Haringey Borough.

The Gulls picked up their first piece of silverware in six years ahead of the 2018/19 season, beating reigning Bostik North champions AFC Hornchurch 2-1 to win the Isthmian Charity Shield.

Former Southend United and Gillingham player Mark Bentley took over as manager in October 2018. After finishing ninth in the Isthmian Division One North in his first season, his next two campaigns were cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the 2020/21 season did turn out to be a memorable one, with Bentley leading the Gulls into the Second Round Proper of the FA Cup. Wins against Ware, Dereham Town, Biggleswade, Bedfont Sports and Cray Wanderers earned Canvey an away tie against higher-division Banbury United in the First Round. Live on BBC television, goals from Conor Hubble and Elliott Ronto saw Canvey progress with a 2-1 victory and earn a home tie against National League outfit Boreham Wood.

With a home match against Millwall awaiting the winners, Canvey were beaten 3-0 at Park Lane. However, the match brought in much-needed television revenue after being shown live on BT Sport.

Manager Mark Bentley stepped down from his role in October 2021 with the Club top of the Isthmian League North, leaving to join the new first-team coaching setup at Southend United. Assistant manager Brad Wellmen stepped up into the role, assisted by coach Sammy Knott.

Wellmen and Knott achieved a second-place finish, earning qualification for the play-offs. A 3-1 home win against Felixstowe & Walton United in the semi-final set up a final at Park Lane against Brentwood Town. In front of a crowd of 2,532, Canvey fell behind early but levelled before the break through Matthew Price. The two sides could not be separated after 120 minutes, meaning promotion would be decided on penalties. Brentwood failed to convert two of their spot kicks, while Canvey scored all four of theirs to spark wild celebrations.

The following season, back in the Isthmian Premier, saw Canvey involved in a late title challenge before eventually having to settle for third place. In the play-offs, they were narrowly defeated by eventual winners Aveley.

The 2023/24 season saw the Club finish 14th after a campaign plagued by injuries within the squad, although they managed a derby 'double double' over local rivals Concord Rangers and Billericay Town for the first time in over a decade.

The 2024/25 season was a poor one in the league, with Canvey managing to avoid relegation. However, they took some consolation from winning the BBC Essex Senior Cup, beating Hornchurch in the final after a penalty shootout. At the end of the season, the Club parted company with the management team of Brad Wellman and Sammy Knott, replacing them for the coming campaign with former England player and manager Peter Taylor and his assistant, Ryan Handley.

After a poor start to the season, Peter Taylor and Ryan Handley were replaced by Garry Kimble and his assistant, James Arundell, who took charge of their first game at the beginning of November 2025. Following their appointment, results began to improve and Canvey eventually climbed off the bottom of the table. However, performances subsequently declined, with Garry Kimble's side falling to the foot of the table once again, where they remained until the end of the season. Before the season finale, the Gulls were mathematically relegated back to the Isthmian North Division.

PEN PICS 2026-27

GOALKEEPERS

David Hughes
Summer signing, David spent the 2025/26 season with Walthamstow picking up the Mitre Golden Glove award in December. He made 44 appearances for the Stow.

Kasey Clark
Summer Signing, Kasey joins the Gulls after a successful trial period during pre-season.

DEFENDERS

Louie Arrowsmith
Summer Signing, Louie was previously with the Gulls where he played 38 times during the 23/24 season, before a move to Maldon & Tiptree. He made a total of 72 appearances for the Jammers and last year winning the Isthmian North Division.

Jack Cawley
Summer Signing, Jack spent last season with Maldon & Tiptree, playing 42 times and captained the side to winning the title.

Michael Finneran
Michael Finneran spent last season with the Gulls after re-signing last summer, the defender originally joined Canvey in 2019 and quickly became a fan-favourite, before leaving after captaining the side to promotion back in the 2021/22 season, he brings a wealth of experience to the back-line and scored 2 goals last season.

Ali Njie
Summer Signing, Ali spent last season with Cambridge City, playing 39 times, and scoring twice.

George Scales
Summer Signing, George joins the Gulls from Bowers & Pitsea, and made 37 appearances last season.

MIDFIELDERS

Rowan Balestreri
Summer Signing, Rowan joins the Gulls after a successful trial period during pre-season.

Dominykas Brobrovskij
Young midfielder, Dominykas made the step up to the first-team last season, and made a handful of appearances towards the end of the 2025/26 season.

Conor Hubble
Conor Hubble re-joined the Gulls last season after departing in June 2025 to link up with Stanway Rovers, at the time, in the Isthmian North Division. Conor had previously made 200 appearances before his departure and was a part of the 2021/22 promotion winning side and the 2024/25 BBC Essex Senior Cup winning side . The Midfielder began his career at QPR, before moving to Colchester United, where he made his professional and Football League debut in 2013.

Ernest Okoh
Another returning face, summer signing Ernest previously played for the Gulls before leaving and joining a range of non-league sides, most notably Witham Town where last season he played 38 times and scored 8 goals.

Charlie Panton
Summer signing, Charlie joins Canvey on a dual-registration deal from Billericay Town.

Freddie Price
Attacking midfielder Freddie joined the Gulls last season and scored once.

Elliott Ronto
Midfielder, Elliott joined Canvey in the summer of 2021 and was a part of the promotion winning side, he went on to win Manager's Player of the Season in 23/24 and was also in the side that won the BBC Essex Senior Cup in 2024/25, the Australian captained the side last season.

Omar Rowe
Summer Signing, Omar joined the Gulls following a successful trial period.

Rasheed Salau
Summer Signing, Rasheed played 41 times for Walthamstow last season scoring 6 goals.

Archie McFadden
Summer Signing, Archie previously played under Garry Kimble at Witham Town, playing 30 times last season scoring three times, before a move to Hullbridge Sports.

FORWARDS

Mitchell May
Summer Signing Mitchell, ended last season with Sittingbourne with 11 appearances and 4 goals. Before that, the striker played in the Isthmian Premier Division for Ramsgate, where he scored 12 goals in 33 appearances.

Ross Wall
Summer Signing Ross, previously made appearances for Maldon & Tiptree last season and was a part of the side that won the division, playing 10 times and scoring 3, after joining from Bowers & Pitsea where he started last season, there he made 23 appearances and scored 11 goals.

Evans Kouassi
The talented forward needs no introduction at Park Lane as the Ivorian netted 31 goals in forty seven appearances during the 2021/22 to help the Gulls secure promotion to the Isthmian Premier Division via the play-offs. The following season Evans scored another 24 from forty-seven games to help secure the Gulls a spot in the Isthmian Premier Division play-offs. During his four year spell at the club Evans secured top-goal scorer twice and was also voted Supporter's Player of the Season twice. Evans most previously was making appearances for Dartford where he came off the bench on five occasions and made one start.



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FIXTURES 2026/27

AUGUST

SAT 8	REDBRIDGE Warren	A	3PM	LEAGUE	L 4-1	ATT 80
SAT 15	**MULBARTON WANDERERS**	**H**	**3PM**	**FA TROPHY PRELIMINARY RND**	**L 2-0**	**ATT 300**
TUE 18	WROXHAM	A	7.45PM	LEAGUE	L 4-0	ATT 265
FRI 21	WOODBRIDGE TOWN Santa De La Paz	A	7.45PM	EMIRATES FA CUP	W 1-0	ATT 371
MON 31	**BRIGHTLINGSEA REGENT** Mayhew, Jones, Statham, Hitter, Warren	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**	**W 5-1**	**ATT 462**

SEPTEMBER

SAT 5	WINGATE & FINCHLEY	A	3PM	FA CUP	D 0-0	ATT 207
TUE 15	**WINGATE & FINCHLEY**	**H**	**7.45PM**	**FA CUP REPLAY**	**L 2-0**	**ATT 243**
FRI 11	LOWESTOFT TOWN	A	7.45PM	LEAGUE	L 2-0	ATT 368
TUE 15	**BUCKHURST HILL** Harrison, Warren, Mayhew	**H**	**7.45PM**	**LEAGUE**	**W 3-2**	**ATT 193**
SAT 19	**HASHTAG UNITED**	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**	**D 0-0**	**ATT 435**
TUE 22	**AFC SUDBURY** Warren (2)	**H**	**7.45PM**	**LEAGUE**	**D 2-2**	**ATT 356**
SAT 26	MULBARTON WANDERERS Hitter, Whight, Garcia	A	3PM	LEAGUE	W 3-0	ATT 280
TUE 29	FAKENHAM TOWN Holland, Warren, Garcia	A	7.45PM	LEAGUE	D 3-3	ATT 122

OCTOBER

SAT 3	**CANVEY ISLAND**	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**
WED 7	GORLESTON	A	7.45	LEAGUE
SAT 10	WITHAM TOWN	A	3PM	LEAGUE
TUE 13	**IPSWICH WANDERERS**	**H**	**7.45PM**	**LEAGUE**
SAT 17	**WALTHAMSTOW**	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**
TUE 20	**WROXHAM**	**H**	**7.45PM**	**LEAGUE**
SAT 24	BUCKHURST HILL	A	3PM	LEAGUE
SAT 31	**CAMBRIDGE CITY**	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**

NOVEMBER

SAT 3	**CANVEY ISLAND**	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**
SAT 14	**TILBURY**	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**
SAT 21	BOWERS & PITSEA	A	3PM	LEAGUE
SAT 28	CONCORD RANGERS	A	3PM	LEAGUE

DECEMBER

SAT 5	**NEWMARKET TOWN**	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**
FRI 11	**LOWESTOFT TOWN**	**H**	**7.45PM**	**LEAGUE**
SAT 19	GRAYS ATHLETIC	A	3PM	LEAGUE
MON 28	**LITTLE OAKLEY**	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**

JANUARY

SAT 2	BRIGHTLINGSEA REGENT	A	3PM	LEAGUE
SAT 9	CAMBRIDGE CITY	A	3PM	LEAGUE
SAT 16	**TAKELEY**	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**
SAT 23	TILBURY	A	3PM	LEAGUE
SAT 30	**BOWERS & PITSEA**	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**

FEBRUARY

SAT 6	AFC SUDBURY	A	3PM	LEAGUE
TUE 9	**GORLESTON**	**H**	**7.45PM**	**LEAGUE**
SAT 13	**MULBARTON WANDERERS**	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**
SAT 20	CANVEY ISLAND	A	3PM	LEAGUE
SAT 27	**CONCORD RANGERS**	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**

MARCH

SAT 6	NEWMARKET TOWN	A	3PM	LEAGUE
SAT 13	**FAKENHAM TOWN**	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**
SAT 20	HASHTAG UNITED	A	3PM	LEAGUE
SAT 27	**GRAYS ATHLETIC**	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**
MON 29	LITTLE OAKLEY	A	3PM	LEAGUE

APRIL

SAT 3	**REDBRIDGE**	**H**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**
SAT 10	WALTHAMSTOW	A	3PM	LEAGUE
SAT 17	**WITHAM TOWN**	**A**	**3PM**	**LEAGUE**



MULBARTON WANDERERS	**0**	
FELIXSTOWE & WALTON UNITED	**3**	Hitter, Whight (Pen), Garcia

Saturday 26th September
Isthmian League North
Photos: Stefan Peck

LINE UP: Wright, Brown, Stevenson Holland (C), Whight, Ainsley, Garcia, Jones Santa De La PazHitter, Warren

SUBS: Smith, Harrison, Mayhew Allen, Ward




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THE YEAR THAT ALMOST WASN'T



BY MARTYN GREEN, THE UNTOLD GAME
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Imagine going seven years without a regular football season. Most of us would be desperate to get back in the stands, support our teams, and just generally get back to what are our normal lives. This is exactly what people faced at the conclusion of the Second World War. After the trauma, the anxiety and the national horror of a second global conflict, still deep in mourning for those lost and in celebration for what was saved, people flocked back to football grounds up and down the country when the first new season kicked off in 1946. And it lived up to expectations, even as it nearly came to an early halt.

On 31st August 1946, 88 Football League clubs kicked off the first postwar football season. It had been a long time coming, and the crowds desperate to get back to football were enormous. Chelsea alone reported over 60,000 people turning up to Stamford Bridge to watch them beat Bolton. It was a pattern repeated all over the country. In the austerity stricken environment of a rebuilding nation, football provided a distraction from the toil, and the working classes in particular lapped it up in droves.

The problems with mass football returning were obvious to the government from the start. There was a huge fuel shortage following the war, which made the idea of some of it being used to transport football teams - and their fans - over long distances a little tricky to sell. There were also large coal shortages, so the trains were equally problematic and limited. Regional football during the war consumed far fewer resources than national football demanded.

To make matters worse, those responsible for producing the coal that powered so much of Britain's postwar recovery were exactly the people who were desperate to get back in the stands. People were less willing to work on Saturdays, and help with the national shortage, when their local team was playing, and under the postwar consensus those who had sacrificed so much to defeat Nazism were rewarded with more freedoms and workplace protections. It was more difficult to force people into a mine than it would have been in 1936.

These problems were exacerbated as the nights grew darker. The winter of that season was exceptionally severe, very cold with deep snowfall. At one point, the mercury hit -21°C and, as might be expected, travel was catastrophically disrupted. This deepened the fuel crisis as coal and oil became more difficult to transport, but also forced the postponement of a large number of matches. By March, seven consecutive weeks of football had been disrupted, an unintended mid-season break. The Football League was beginning to feel the heat, while praying the country soon would.

The disparity between clubs was also enormous. Blackpool, for example, had played 34 of their 44 matches for the season. Sheffield United had only managed 26. The league season wasn't even supposed to go beyond the spring,

so it wouldn't interfere with the cricket season, but that looked increasingly like a pipe dream. The Football League decided it would have to increase the frequency of matches for some clubs, and hope to avoid extending the season into the summer.

This, however, drew a response from the government. In the era before floodlights, rearranging games to midweek meant even more absences from vital industries to watch football. On 12th March they summoned the heads of spectator sports to Downing Street to discuss the problem. Except a 'discussion' is a strong word, the government simply laid down the law, providing sports with a voluntary, but not really voluntary, demand. Rugby, horse racing, greyhound racing, speedway, and football, would drastically limit their midweek events. This denied the Football League a chance to catch up the schedule, and there was a very real discussion about abandoning the season altogether. But the title race - helped by the weather - was extremely exciting. At length they decided to, unevenly, extend the season deep into the summer.

For most of the season, Wolves sat at the top of the table. Liverpool and Stoke City led the chasing pack, along with a strong Manchester United under new manager Matt Busby. But the league in April didn't tell the whole story. Wolves' lead was being exaggerated by their greater number of games, and their challengers kept winning. Man Utd eventually fell away, but going into the last weekend of May it was extraordinarily tight. Liverpool travelled to Molineux, knowing that a win would put them top of the table. They did what was required, and won 2-1. They finished their season, top of the league.

But for Stoke, the postponements meant their season continued. They won that weekend to keep pace, and then again the following weekend to close the gap. Their final game was at Sheffield United, two weeks after Liverpool had finished their season. Stoke knew that a win would hand them the title, anything else and it would go to Merseyside. And despite their best efforts, they lost 2-1, handing Liverpool their fifth league title.

The result confirmed the end of one of the most extraordinary seasons in English football. But there wasn't much time to celebrate. Football is cyclical, and disappointment in April (or May, or June, depending on the weather) can be rectified in August. The close season was very short, given the length of the season, and almost as soon as they had finished everyone had to get started again.

Fortunately, the following season was much more conventional.

Enjoy the game.

Martyn Green
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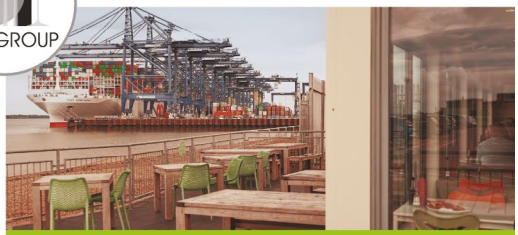
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PITCHING IN

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

PITCHING IN

TRIDENT LEAGUES VOLUNTEER HUB
POWERED BY ENTAIN

ISTHMIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

PITCHING IN

PARTNERS WITH
ISTHMIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

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PITCHING IN

PARTNERS WITH
ISTHMIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

MATCHDAY SQUADS

Isthmian League North
Saturday 3rd October 2026
Kick-off 7.45pm

Felixstowe & Walton Utd FC

Managers: Jack Ainsley and Stuart Ainsley

Jack **Ainsley**
Luke **Allen**
Zak **Brown**
Ethan **Garcia**
Callum **Harrison**
Josh **Hitter**
Billy **Holland (C)**
Will **Jones**
Josh **Mayhew**
Jose **Santa De La Paz**
Brad **Smith**
Maxwell **Statham**
Toby **Stevenson**
Lester **Ward**
Thomas **Warren**
Joe **Whight**
Harry **Wright (GK)**

Canvey Island FC

Manager: Garry Kimble
Assistant Manager: James Arundell

Louie **Arrowsmith**
Rowan **Balestreri**
Dominykas **Brobrovskij**
Jack **Cawley**
Kasey **Clark (GK)**
Michael **Finneran**
Conor **Hubble**
David **Hughes (GK)**
Evans **Kouassi**
Mitchell **May**
Archie **McFadden**
Ali **Njie**
Ernest **Okoh**
Charlie **Panton**
Freddie **Price**
Elliott **Ronto**
Omar **Rowe**
Rasheed **Salau**
George **Scales**
Ross **Wall**

MATCH SPONSOR:
Schallenberg

MATCH OFFICIALS:

Referee: Mr Samuel Gasson-Cox **Assistant Referees:** Ms Aaron Mills and Mr Matthew Hills