



# V AFC RUSHDEN & DIAMONDS



Saturday 16th September 2023  
Pitching In Northern Premier League - Midlands

**PITCHING IN** PARTNERS WITH  
 NORTHERN PREMIER LEAGUE

## CLUB HONOURS

### United Counties League Premier Division South

Winners 2023

### Midland Alliance League Cup

Winners 2010

### Midland Combination Premier Division

Champions 2007

Runners-up 1996, 2002, 2005, 2006

### Midland Combination Challenge Cup

Finalists 1999

Winners 2002, 2005

### Coventry Evening Telegraph Cup

Winners 1966, 2005, 2006

### Coventry Charity Cup

Winners 2007

### BCFA Midweek Floodlit Cup

Winners 2007

### Tony Allden Cup

Winners 2007

### FA Vase

Quarter Finalists 2008

## OTHER HONOURS

### United Counties League Programme of the Year

Winners 2023

### Midland Alliance Programme of the Year

Winners 2008

Runners-up 2009

### Midland Combination Programme of the Year

Runners-up 2005

Winners 2006, 2007

### Midland Combination Hospitality Award

Winners 2006 (Division 3)

Winners 2007 (Division 2)



## CLUB OFFICIALS

Chairman: Daniel Cahill

Vice-Chairman: Joseph Fletcher

Finance Officer: Neil Buswell

Club Secretary: Sharon Taylor

Matchday Secretary: Sharon Taylor

Youth Secretary: Sharon Taylor

Pitch Allocator: Dave Bull

Welfare Officer: Joanne Bull

Ticket Manager: Mandy Seddon

Programme Editor: Chris Nee

### FIRST TEAM STAFF

Joint Manager: Shaun Thomas

Joint Manager: John Woodward

First Team Coach: Nigel Starkey

First Team Coach: Dan Gibson

Goalkeeping Coach: Damian Morgan

Goalkeeping Coach: Michael Taylor

First Team Physio: Kirk Holland

Kit Manager: Paul Seddon

Chief Scout: Jim McClean

### GROUNDS TEAM

Paul Wright, Martin Sutton

### MEDIA TEAM

Chris Nee

Liam Cook

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Marcus Robinson

Stuart Guest

### MATCHDAY HOSPITALITY

Leanne Talbot & Donna Crouch

### MATCHDAY VOLUNTEERS

Martin Sutton, Dave Bull, Alan Townsend

### Coventry Sphinx Football Club

Sphinx Industrial Supplies Arena, Sphinx Drive, Coventry, CV3 1WA  
024 7645 1361

Coventry Sphinx Football Club is a non-for-profit organisation



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## Upcoming fixtures

AWAY



### Rugby Town v Coventry Sphinx

Pitching In Northern Premier League - Midlands  
Saturday 30th September 2023 | 3.00pm  
Butlin Road  
Butlin Road, Rugby, CV21 3SD

HOME



### Coventry Sphinx v Corby Town

Pitching In Northern Premier League - Midlands  
Saturday 7th October 2023 | 3.00pm  
Sphinx Industrial Supplies Arena  
Sphinx Drive

AWAY



### Shepshed Dynamo v Coventry Sphinx

Pitching In Northern Premier League - Midlands  
Saturday 14th October 2023 | 3.00pm  
The Dovecote Stadium  
Butthole Lane, Shepshed, LE12 9BN

HOME



### Coventry Sphinx v Coleshill Town

Pitching In Northern Premier League - Midlands  
Saturday 21st October 2023 | 3.00pm  
Sphinx Industrial Supplies Arena  
Sphinx Drive

AWAY



### Harborough Town v Coventry Sphinx

Pitching In Northern Premier League - Midlands  
Saturday 28th October 2023 | 3.00pm  
Harborough Town Community Football Ground  
Northampton Rd, Market Harborough, LE16 9HF

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Last Saturday was the first time in a long time I felt we came up short in a match. There have been tough ones to take in the last few years, not least the recent losses at Spalding United and Sutton Coldfield Town, but in most cases there have been mitigating factors and flashes of encouragement.

But I left Farley Way completely gutted because I know we can do more. I know we didn't show the real Coventry Sphinx in that performance in the FA Trophy. I know Quorn aren't four goals better than we are.

Injuries, the heat and a challenging run of form all played their part but this was a game full of regrets and, I believe, one that isn't representative of this Sphinx team. These players can do so much more.

Since our last home game we've had a difficult spell. Goals have leaked at one end and dried up at the other. Suddenly, we're not going toe to toe with top teams but being rolled over by teams that aren't as good as them.

This is where the positive side of the Trophy defeat comes in. The dust has settled and the knowledge that we're a more capable side than we showed last week is a big reason for confidence not to drop as we move into this second phase of the season.

Every player in our squad has the ability to play at this level. The period of acclimatisation is over and now the time has come to show it. Not as individual players, or as a team, but as a club. We earned the right to be here. Let's prove ourselves again.

Today's opponents have been on quite the journey to this point themselves, of course. Presumably every programme they read this season will remind them where Rushden & Diamonds were twenty years ago. No football supporter should have to

withstand what followed but I'm full of respect and admiration for supporters who keep their club's name alive. AFC Rushden & Diamonds were founded in 2011 and Rushden & Diamonds supporters have a football club. When push comes to shove, that's all that matters.

With that, we welcome those supporters along with the Diamonds players, management and officials for this afternoon's Pitching In Northern Premier League Midlands fixture at the Sphinx Industrial Supplies Arena.

It goes without saying that both of these teams could do with a win and I expect that to be reflected in the intensity of today's game on the pitch. It should be an absolute cracker.

Sphinx's cup exits mean we now (at the time of writing) have two weeks between this match and the next. Last year's visit to Butlin Road was a high point of our title win. Really, it was where it all began. I don't think we're too popular there now.

We go to Rugby Town two weeks from today before four important league fixtures in the month of October. We host Corby Town on Saturday 7th and then three former Step Five league opponents lie in wait.

Coleshill Town's return to Sphinx Drive on Saturday 21st will be sandwiched between trips to the East Midlands. We're away at Shepshed Dynamo on Saturday 14th and the previous United Counties League Premier Division South winners on 28th.

Harborough Town have gone from strength to strength since their promotion. Our game there at the end of October will reveal a lot. Everything I know about Sphinx tells me we'll have moved forward by the time we get there. Up the Sphinx.

Chris Nee  
Programme Editor

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# OUR HISTORY

The history of Coventry Sphinx began in 1946. Armstrong Whitworth Aircraft FC had been highly successful in the city before and during the Second World War and changed their name to Sphinx FC.

AWA's legacy was replicated by the new club. Sphinx won a number of league and cup competitions throughout the 1950s and 1960s before playing a major role in the formation of the Coventry Alliance and continuing to win trophies in the following decades.

Coventry underwent significant socioeconomic change in the 1990s. The recession led to the closure of factories in the city and surrounding areas, which in turn led to the dissolution of many of Coventry's football clubs. Sphinx needed a new challenge and joined the Midland Combination Football League in 1993.

In our first season in the Midland Combination we were promoted from Division 2 and reached the semi-finals of the Birmingham Sunday Vase. A second consecutive promotion followed thanks to a second-placed finish in Division 1 the next season.

With promotion to the top division of the Midland Combination secured it was decided that the club should be linked more closely to our city. We became Coventry Sphinx and the first match under our new name was against a Coventry City XI at our home ground.

Throughout its history, our club has been served by countless loyal and hard-working local people who've contributed enormously to Coventry Sphinx on and off the field. Through their dedication we

have achieved some unbeatable highs. There have also been times of great tragedy.

In November 2001, Sphinx manager Willie Knibbs was killed in a car accident on the way home from a cup match at Meir KA. Willie was a former Sphinx player in his second spell as manager. His death was a terrible loss to our club and to local football in Coventry.

After a painful season, Sphinx went on to win the Midland Combination Challenge Cup and it was renamed the Willie Knibbs Cup as a mark of respect. Our main stand is also named in Willie's honour.

Sphinx became one of the leading teams in the Midland Combination Premier League, finishing as runners-up in our first season and again in both 2005 and 2006. We reached the final of the Endsleigh Challenge Cup on three occasions, losing to Alveston at Villa Park in 1999 but beating Coventry Marconi in 2003 and Feckenham in 2005.

We also won the Coventry Evening Telegraph Cup in successive seasons, making Sphinx the last winners of the competition at Highfield Road and the first at the Ricoh Arena.

Although first team success is a driving force, the heartbeat of our club is the thriving junior section. Formed in 1997, it started with just three teams and has grown ever since. There are now hundreds of players representing Coventry Sphinx and we were the first club in Coventry to achieve the FA Charter.

Our youth team started competing in the Midland Floodlit Youth League in 2003 and one of the

biggest successes to date came in the 2014/15 season, when they won the double after suffering only one league defeat and beating Stourbridge 3-0 in the Birmingham County FA Midweek Floodlit Youth Cup.

Under manager Paul Charnley, Coventry Sphinx's men's first team completed a remarkable treble achievement in May 2007.

In addition to finally becoming champions of the Midland Football Combination – achieving promotion to the Midland Football Alliance in the process – Sphinx won the Coventry Charity Cup and the BCFA Midland Floodlit Cup.

The 2007/08 season saw Sphinx enjoy our best ever run in the FA Vase, reaching the quarter-final for the very first time and losing controversially to Kirkham & Wesham, the eventual Wembley winners, in a replay at Sphinx Drive.

We made a run to the semi-finals of the League Cup in the same season and went on to win the Midland Alliance Polymac League Cup by beating Westfields in the final in 2009/10.

In 2014/15 the club was honoured to become a founder member of the Midland Football League Premier Division. After a top ten finish under Stuart Dutton, Lee Knibbs took over as manager in the autumn of 2017.

Lee is the son of Willie Knibbs and returned to the club after an earlier spell as assistant manager to Danny McSheffrey.

He guided Sphinx to some of our most memorable results of the decade before deciding to step aside in November 2019.

Knibbs was succeeded by his assistants, John Woodward and Shaun Thomas, who became the club's joint managers and ended the truncated 2019/20 season on a long unbeaten run, the foundation of Sphinx's greatest achievement to come.

Sphinx made a sideways move as part of FA restructuring ahead of the 2021/22 season, competing in a newly formed Premier Division South in the United Counties League.

In our first season we finished in fourth place, losing only twice in the second half of the season, and enjoyed a long run in the FA Vase, narrowly missing out on another quarter-final.

The following season saw Sphinx lose on penalties again in the same round of the FA Vase but 2022/23 was the best season in our history.

In the space of one week in April, our club acquired the freehold to the Sphinx Drive ground for the very first time and secured the United Counties League Premier Division South title with a 7-0 win against Eynesbury Rovers.

Sphinx won all of the last eleven league matches to close a big gap at the top and become champions. We scored 106 goals and ended the season three points clear of runners-up Rugby Town to confirm promotion to the Northern Premier League Midlands Division. 2023/24 is our first ever season at Step 4.

Football never stands still. Local football in Coventry has declined over the years, so to be playing at our highest ever level after more than seventy years is an achievement of which the players, officials and supporters of our club can be proud.

The structure in place at senior, youth and junior levels for both men and women promises a bright future for Coventry Sphinx as we work towards the progress Willie Knibbs' memory deserves.



STUART GUEST



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# MARCH OF THE GUESTIES

On Sunday 17th September, our vice-captain Louis Guest and his dad, Stuart, will be walking from Wembley Stadium to Wycombe Wanderers FC in order to raise money for Prostate Cancer UK. They're participating in **Jeff Stelling's Football March 2023**, which aims to raise money to fund better tests and treatments to save and improve the lives of men affected by prostate cancer.

stadium to raise money for a genuinely excellent cause that we can all get behind.

If you are in a position to make a donation, you can do so at [justgiving.com/fundraising/stuart-guest2](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/stuart-guest2)

Prostate cancer has impacted countless lives in non-league football and Prostate Cancer UK is a charity that's close to Stuart's heart. The Guesties have our full support as they walk a marathon from the national



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# MEET THE SQUAD

If you're interested in claiming one of our vacant player or management sponsorships, speak to one of our media team today or contact [neil@coventrysphinx.co.uk](mailto:neil@coventrysphinx.co.uk)

	<b>Harvey Billing</b>	Former Sphinx youth team captain who returned to the club after spells with Stratford Town and Easington Sports.	
	<b>James Bryson</b>	Strong and steady central defender with a knack for a goal. A crucial part of the title-winning Sphinx team in 2022/23.	Sponsored by <b>MANDY SEDDON</b>
	<b>Kyle Carey</b>	Incisive and creative attacker who returned to Sphinx in March 2023 to help secure the league title.	Sponsored by <b>STUART GUEST</b>
	<b>Antonio Cristofaro</b>	Skilful former Walsall youth midfielder with dribbling ability, sharp creative instincts and an eye for goal.	
	<b>Jack Downes</b>	Versatile, battling midfielder with a tremendous engine. Outstanding since returning to Sphinx Drive and a league winner in 2022/23.	
	<b>Luke Downes</b>	Creative midfield player who returned to Sphinx in 2021 after countless impressive performances here as a youngster.	
	<b>Jamie Draper</b>	Defender who emerged from the Sphinx youth team and has become a regular starter in our best ever team.	
	<b>William Edjenguele</b>	Experienced former Coventry City central defender who joined from Bedworth United after spells with Barwell and Nuneaton Borough.	Sponsorship available
	<b>Sam Ellis</b>	Entertaining attacking midfielder who joined Sphinx after spells with Sutton Coldfield Town and Hinckley in 2022/23.	
	<b>Keelan Fallows</b>	Talented goalkeeper who joined from Tamworth at the start of Sphinx's first season in the eighth tier of English football.	
	<b>Louis Guest</b>	A former Sphinx junior and now a leader in our squad, Guesty is a long-serving central defender and the club's vice captain.	
	<b>Jordan Hayward</b>	Former Long Buckby wide player who scored on his debut in August 2022 and went on to win the UCL Premier Division South in his first season.	Sponsored by <b>IAN AND PAULINE MCINTOSH</b>

	<b>Max Johnson</b>	Classy former Bedworth United midfielder who debuted for Sphinx in October 2022 and went on to claim a league winner's medal.	
	<b>Callum Martin</b>	Pacy former Coventry City junior full back who loves a tackle and causes opponents problems in the attacking third.	
	<b>Dylan Parker</b>	Dangerous forward player who signed for Sphinx in November 2022 and has been a consistent scorer ever since.	Sponsored by <b>DANNIE CAHILL</b>
	<b>Dawid Peplinski</b>	Future Pro Academy scholar and former Sphinx youth central defender who joined the first team ranks after playing Step 5 football in 2022/23.	
	<b>Leigh Phillips</b>	Experienced wide player who returned to Sphinx ahead of 2023/24 after a successful career in armed forces football.	
	<b>Joe Pursey</b>	Sturdy defender who came in late in 2022/23 and had an instant impact in Sphinx's title quest.	Sponsored by <b>LENA MELLOR</b>
	<b>Jac Redhead</b>	Creative midfield player with experience at Barwell and Halesowen Town.	Sponsored by <b>JOHN MELLOR</b>
	<b>Kurtis Selley-Haywood</b>	A key member of the coaching set-up at Sphinx and a goalkeeper with an exceptional record when called upon.	Sponsorship available
	<b>Matthew Shipman</b>	Physical and mobile striker who led the line in the UCL Premier Division South title season after signing from Long Buckby in 2021/22.	Sponsored by <b>BF ESSENTIALS 07927 649288</b>
	<b>Callum Whiteside</b>	Versatile defensive player who joined Sphinx at the start of 2022/23 and quickly became a reliable regular for John Woodward and Shaun Thomas.	
	<b>Callum Woodward</b>	Long-serving legendary club captain, a battling mainstay in the Sphinx midfield and a vital source of goals and creativity.	

## FIRST TEAM MANAGEMENT

John Woodward	Joint Manager	Sponsorship available
Shaun Thomas	Joint Manager	Sponsorship available
Nigel Starkey	First Team Coach	Sponsorship available
Dan Gibson	First Team Coach	Sponsorship available
Michael Taylor	Goalkeeping Coach	Sponsorship available
Damian Morgan	Goalkeeping Coach	Sponsorship available
Jim McClean	Chief Scout	Sponsorship available
Kirk Holland	First Team Physio	Sponsorship available
Paul Seddon	Kit Manager	Sponsored by CEFOVID UGANDA
Sharon Taylor	Club Secretary	
Martin Sutton	Matchday Volunteer	CNS SPORT 
Liam Cook	Match Commentator	
Chris Nee	Programme Editor	

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# 2023/24 Player Stats (all competitions)

Player	Apps	Mins	Starts	Full 90	Sub On	Yellows	Second Yellows	Straight Reds	Goals	Assists	Goals Per 90	Assists Per 90	G+A Per 90
Billing, Harvey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Bryson, James	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Carey, Kyle	5	396	4	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Cristofaro, Antonio	4	105	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Cross, Tom	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Downes, Jack	8	716	8	7	0	3	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Downes, Luke	7	403	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Draper, Jamie	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Edjenguele, Will	1	90	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Ellis, Sam	7	192	1	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Fallows, Keelan	5	450	5	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Guest, Louis	8	720	8	8	0	3	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Hayward, Jordan	4	296	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Hedge, Zach	3	270	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Jackson, Sam	1	28	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Johnson, Max	7	427	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Kennedy, Jack	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Martin, Callum	6	427	5	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Parker, Dylan	8	601	7	5	1	2	0	0	0	2	0.000	0.022	0.022
Peplinski, Dawid	4	168	1	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Phillips, Leigh	3	125	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pursey, Joe	7	630	7	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Redhead, Jac	2	170	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Selley-Haywood, Kurtis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Shipman, Matty	6	540	6	6	0	1	0	0	2	0	0.022	0.000	0.022
Whiteside, Callum	8	706	8	7	0	3	0	0	1	0	0.011	0.000	0.011
Woodward, Callum	6	460	6	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0.000	0.011	0.011

# 2023/24 Player Stats (NPL Midlands only)

Player	Apps	Mins	Starts	Full 90	Sub On	Yellows	Second Yellows	Straight Reds	Goals	Assists	Goals Per 90	Assists Per 90	G+A Per 90
Billing, Harvey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Bryson, James	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Carey, Kyle	3	270	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Cristofaro, Antonio	3	91	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Cross, Tom	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Downes, Jack	6	536	6	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Downes, Luke	5	251	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Draper, Jamie	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Edjenguele, Will	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Ellis, Sam	5	136	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Fallows, Keelan	3	270	3	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Guest, Louis	6	540	6	6	0	2	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Hayward, Jordan	3	206	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Hedge, Zach	3	270	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Jackson, Sam	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Johnson, Max	5	337	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Kennedy, Jack	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Martin, Callum	6	427	5	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Parker, Dylan	6	457	5	4	1	1	0	0	0	2	0.000	0.022	0.022
Peplinski, Dawid	4	168	1	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Phillips, Leigh	2	63	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pursey, Joe	6	540	6	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Redhead, Jac	1	80	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Selley-Haywood, Kurtis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Shipman, Matty	4	360	4	4	0	1	0	0	2	0	0.022	0.000	0.022
Whiteside, Callum	6	540	6	6	0	3	0	0	1	0	0.011	0.000	0.011
Woodward, Callum	5	398	5	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0.000	0.011	0.011

## SPALDING UNITED 4 COVENTRY SPHINX 0

**Pitching In NPL**  
**Division One Midlands**  
Saturday 26th August 2023

Coventry Sphinx suffered a comprehensive defeat on a difficult Saturday afternoon against a very strong Spalding United team.

As well as facing the highest quality Pitching In Northern Premier League Midlands opposition to date, Sphinx had to contend with a late arrival, delayed kick-off and the unavailability of two thirds of the usual front three.

With goalkeeper Keelan Fallows also away, Zach Hedge continued to deputise. Louis Guest and Callum Whiteside started at the back with Joe Pursey, with Jordan Hayward and Callum Martin at wing back.

Jack Downes and Max Johnson played in the centre of midfield, while captain Callum Woodward was pushed forward to play off Dylan Parker with both Matty Shipman and Kyle Carey unable to travel. There was also a first start for Sam Ellis in midfield.



Stuart Guest

After more pressure from the home team, Sphinx managed to get on the ball much more in the middle of the first half. Spalding carried the threat, however, and a quiet spell was punctuated by another Hedge save, this time a fine tip over the crossbar to thwart a powerful effort from distance.



Stuart Guest

A couple of half chances later, Spalding doubled their lead. In the 35th minute Lewis Hilliard's corner kick from the Tulips' left curled beyond everyone in the box and found the far corner. It had all the hallmarks of a dangerous delivery but it's not a type of goal managers like to concede. It left Sphinx with it all to do.

Hindered by imperfect preparation, it was obvious from the start that Sphinx would have their work cut out against a team who should expect to be competing at the top end of the Midlands division in 2023/24 just as they did last term.

Spalding were tidy and robust, extremely organised in possession, and quickly took control of a match that would remain in their grasp for the duration. Sphinx were under the cosh early on and a goal for the Tulips in the tenth minute made sure they weren't able to withstand the pressure for long.

James Clifton fired the opening goal in off the crossbar from inside the penalty area after Hedge had initially made a decent save.

Hedge had to save again to keep the deficit at two with six minutes left in the first half, which ended with yellow cards for Woodward and Pursey. Spalding were good value for their 2-0 lead at the break, ahead on merit, but Sphinx had more to give.

Thomas and Woodward's men made a much brighter start to the second half, culminating in a shot from Johnson that was blocked. The visitors had more possession after half time and, as usual, looked much more effective when they had a platform to play a bit.

Even in the good moments, Sphinx found it difficult to make chances at one end and limit them at the other. Hedge parried another driven effort just

before the hour even as Sphinx – while there was always the sense they were being kept at arm's length – continued to move the ball well.

Sphinx's joint managers introduced three of their four substitutes with 25 minutes left on the clock.

Luke Downes replaced Sam Ellis, who played 65 minutes on his first league start for the club. Dawid Peplinski came on for Martin, resulting in a shift from right to left for Hayward, and captain Woodward made way for Antonio Cristofaro.

Two minutes later Spalding made it 3-0 through a substitute of their own. Jordan Graham is a player of some pedigree and his left-footed drive into the top corner of Hedge's net was unstoppable.



Stuart Guest

The second half was better than the first from a Sphinx point of view but Spalding added a fourth goal with five minutes remaining. Clifton, who started the scoring, ended it too.

He pounced on a split-second lapse at the back and produced a neat finish to beat Hedge and roll the ball over the line.

Hayward had to leave the field injured in the final minute and Cristofaro drew a save from Spalding goalkeeper Tony Breen with a 25-yard curling shot in the fifth minute of time added on, but the game was long gone.

It was ultimately a heavy defeat for Sphinx and there's no doubt the home team deserved a comfortable win, but the

fourth goal added a dimension to the scoreline that wasn't quite in keeping with the match.

Sphinx were up against it with key forward players missing and their delayed preparation didn't help.

The truth for promoted teams in any division is that they need to have an almost perfect day to get anything out of the top teams away from home. This day was anything but perfect.

The fourteen players who were on the pitch gave everything, as they are expected to at Coventry Sphinx.

The step up in intensity was more evident than ever and it was a tough challenge that they embraced fully.

In the end, they were handsomely beaten by a quality side. Next up in the NPL Midlands is a home game against neighbours Bedworth United on Bank Holiday Monday.

### TEAMSHEET

- 1 Zach Hedge
- 2 Joe Pursey
- 3 Callum Martin ▼ Peplinski (65)
- 4 Jack Downes
- 5 Louis Guest
- 6 Callum Whiteside
- 7 Jordan Hayward
- 8 Callum Woodward @ ▼ Cristofaro (65)
- 9 Dylan Parker
- 10 Sam Ellis ▼ L. Downes (65)
- 11 Max Johnson
- 12 Luke Downes ▲ Ellis (65)
- 14 Dawid Peplinski ▲ Martin (65)
- 15 Antonio Cristofaro ▲ Woodward (65)
- 16 Jamie Draper

SPHINX MAN OF THE MATCH  
**JACK DOWNES**



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The  
**Daniel Wilkinson**  
Foundation

*Providing Screening and Defibrillators to  
prevent Sudden Cardiac Death in the young*



The Daniel Wilkinson Foundation is a charity set up in memory of Daniel Wilkinson who died in 2016 aged 24, while playing the game he loved, from an underlying heart condition called Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Cardiomyopathy (ARVC).



Dan played football from an early age and joined Hull City AFC when he was 10, earning a professional contract aged 18. Loughborough University followed where he completed a degree in Accounting and Financial Management while playing non-league football. He was an athlete who enjoyed the gym and took his health and nutrition very seriously. He lived life to the full and had so much ahead of him.

Other than feeling light-headed on a few occasions in the month before he died, he had no symptoms!

## SUDDEN CARDIAC DEATH IN THE YOUNG (SCD)

- SCD is the leading cause of death in young athletes during sport and the majority of deaths occur with NO SYMPTOMS or family history.
- ARVC can be found in one in every 1,000 to 5,000 young adults - IF IT IS LOOKED FOR.
- Warning signs may include light-headedness, fainting, palpitations, swollen legs, breathlessness.
- Every week in the UK, 12 apparently fit and healthy young people (aged 35 and under) die from previously undiagnosed heart conditions.
- In Italy, where screening is mandatory for all young people engaged in organised sport, they have reduced the incidence of young sudden cardiac death by 89%.

## OUR MISSION

The Daniel Wilkinson Foundation has been set up to raise awareness of SCD and to provide funding towards heart screening, defibrillators and CPR/defibrillator training primarily for grass-roots sporting teams.

**Tragedies can be prevented through cardiac screening. It is vital that young people are identified and treated.**

## Find out more

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Date	Opponents	Comp	H	A	Res	Starting Eleven											Substitutes ( <i>not used in italics</i> )						
						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	14	15	16	17 / GK	18	19 / GK
5 Aug	Stourport Swifts	FAC EP	A	2-0	L	Fallows	Pursey	Hayward	L. Downes	Guest ©	Whiteside	Parker	J. Downes	Shipman	Carey	Johnson	Ellis	Jackson	<i>Peplinski</i>	<i>Cristofaro</i>	<i>Billing</i>	<i>Martin</i>	<i>Salley-Haywood</i>
12 Aug	Quorn	NPL M	H	1-1	D	Fallows	Pursey	Hayward	J. Downes	Guest	<b>Whiteside 1</b>	Parker	Woodward ©	Shipman	Carey	Johnson	L. Downes	Ellis	<i>Phillips</i>	<i>Cristofaro</i>	<i>Martin</i>		
15 Aug	Gresley Rovers	NPL M	A	1-1	D	Fallows	Pursey	Martin	L. Downes	Guest	Whiteside	Parker	Woodward ©	<b>Shipman 1</b>	Carey	J. Downes	<i>Johnson</i>	Peplinski	<i>Ellis</i>	<i>Jackson</i>	<i>Cristofaro</i>		
22 Aug	Sporting Khalsa	NPL M	H	0-1	L	Hedge	Pursey	Martin	L. Downes	Guest ©	Whiteside	Hayward	J. Downes	Shipman	Carey	Johnson	Parker	Ellis	<i>Peplinski</i>	<i>Cristofaro</i>	<i>Jackson</i>		
26 Aug	Spalding United	NPL M	A	4-0	L	Hedge	Pursey	Martin	J. Downes	Guest	Whiteside	Hayward	Woodward ©	Parker	Ellis	Johnson	L. Downes	Peplinski	<i>Cristofaro</i>	<i>Draper</i>			
28 Aug	Bedworth United	NPL M	H	0-1	L	Hedge	Pursey	Martin	L. Downes	Guest	Whiteside	J. Downes	Woodward ©	Parker	Cristofaro	Johnson	Phillips	Peplinski	Ellis	<i>Penton</i>			
2 Sep	Sutton Coldfield Town	NPL M	A	4-1	L	Fallows	Whiteside	Martin	J. Downes	Guest	Peplinski	Pursey	Woodward ©	<b>Shipman 1</b>	Redhead	Parker	<i>L. Downes</i>	Johnson	Ellis	Phillips	<i>Cristofaro</i>		
9 Sep	Quorn	FAT 1Q	A	4-0	L	Fallows	Whiteside	Phillips	L. Downes	Guest	Edjenguele	J. Downes	Woodward ©	Shipman	Redhead	Parker	Johnson	Carey	<i>Cristofaro</i>	<i>Peplinski</i>	Ellis	<i>Hedge</i>	
16 Sep	AFC Rushden & Diamonds	NPL M	H																				
30 Sep	Rugby Town	NPL M	A																				
7 Oct	Corby Town	NPL M	H																				
14 Oct	Shepshed Dynamo	NPL M	A																				
21 Oct	Coleshill Town	NPL M	H																				
28 Oct	Harborough Town	NPL M	A																				
4 Nov	Anstey Nomads	NPL M	H																				
11 Nov	Walsall Wood	NPL M	A																				
18 Nov	Hinckley LR	NPL M	H																				
25 Nov	Boldmere St Michaels	NPL M	A																				
2 Dec	Loughborough Dynamo	NPL M	H																				
9 Dec	Cambridge City	NPL M	A																				
16 Dec	Gresley Rovers	NPL M	H																				
23 Dec	Quorn	NPL M	A																				
26 Dec	Lye Town	NPL M	H																				
1 Jan	Bedworth United	NPL M	A																				
6 Jan	Spalding United	NPL M	H																				
13 Jan	Sporting Khalsa	NPL M	A																				
20 Jan	Harborough Town	NPL M	H																				
27 Jan	Coleshill Town	NPL M	A																				
3 Feb	AFC Rushden & Diamonds	NPL M	A																				
17 Feb	Rugby Town	NPL M	H																				
24 Feb	Corby Town	NPL M	A																				
2 Mar	Shepshed Dynamo	NPL M	H																				
16 Mar	Cambridge City	NPL M	H																				
23 Mar	Loughborough Dynamo	NPL M	A																				
30 Mar	Sutton Coldfield Town	NPL M	H																				
1 Apr	Lye Town	NPL M	A																				
6 Apr	Walsall Wood	NPL M	H																				
13 Apr	Anstey Nomads	NPL M	A																				
20 Apr	Boldmere St Michaels	NPL M	H																				
27 Apr	Hinckley LR	NPL M	A																				



Defender Will Edjenguele made his Sphinx debut against Quorn last weekend. (Photo: Stuart Guest)



## YOUTH TEAM FIXTURES

Thursday 17 August	1-4	L	Solihull Moors	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 31 August	2-1	W	Rugby Borough	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 7 September	5-2	W	Stourport Swifts	FA Youth Cup Preliminary Round
Thursday 14 September	19.45	H	Inkberrow	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 21 September	19.45	H	AFC Wulfrunians	FA Youth Cup First Round Qualifying
Thursday 28 September	19.45	H	Stratford Town	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 5 October	19.45	A	Rugby Town	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 12 October	19.45	H	P S Olympic	Joel Richards Memorial Cup R1
Thursday 19 October	19.45	H	Bedworth United	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Monday 23 October	19.45	A	Stourbridge	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		H	Alvechurch	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		A	Alvechurch	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		A	Bedworth United	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		H	Halesowen Town	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		A	Halesowen Town	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		A	Inkberrow	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		H	Kidderminster Harriers	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		A	Kidderminster Harriers	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		A	Rugby Borough	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		H	Rugby Town	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		A	Solihull Moors	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		H	Stourbridge	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		A	Stratford Town	MFYL Southern Premier Division



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# AFC RUSHDEN & DIAMONDS

## CLUB HISTORY

AFC Rushden & Diamonds were formed in July 2011 following the demise of Rushden & Diamonds FC as a supporter-owned, supporter-run football club.

After a season in youth football in 2011/12 they were allocated a place in the United Counties League Division One for 2012/13 (Step 6 of Non-League Football). Diamonds gained promotion in second spot in that league at the end of their first season and followed that with third place in the UCL Premier Division before winning the title in the 2014/15 season, backed up with the League Cup. This meant they won promotion to the Southern Football League Division One Central at Step 4.

In 2015/16 Diamonds finished fifth in the SL1C, reaching the play-off final and winning their County Cup. They were transferred to the Northern Premier League First Division South for the 2016/17 season where they again reached the end of season play-offs.

For 2017/18 they returned to the Southern League to play in Division One East, known as EVO-Stik League South, East, winning promotion at the end of that season to Step 3 of Non-League Football.

For the next 5 seasons Diamonds played in the Southern League Premier Division Central and finished the 2021/22 season in 6th place, missing out on the final play-off spot on the last day of the season.

The 2022/23 campaign proved to be the undoing for the Diamonds, eventually leading to their relegation to Step 4 of the Non-League Football pyramid.

## TODAY'S OPPONENTS

## PLAYER PROFILES



**Eniola Agemoh-Davies**

Northampton born defender, Eniola joined the Club in pre-season having previously played for Northampton Town, Pro Direct Academy – Northampton, Stratford Town, St Ives Town, and more recently Cambridge City.



**Pharrell Anderson**

A striker who joined the Club from local side Cogenhoe United in March 2023 and instantly became a crowd favourite after some impressive displays towards the backend of the season which continued into pre-season.



**Fraser Corden**

Corden, an attacking midfielder, made his first team debut as a second half substitute away at Northampton ON Chenecks in the Northants Hillier Senior Cup during the 2021/22 season and made his full first team debut in the Hillier Senior Cup win away at Cogenhoe United in August 2022.



**John Dean**

John was part of the Diamonds squad that won promotion from the Southern League Division One Central in 2018 and remained with the Club for the 2018/19 season at Step 3. Following his departure, John went on to play for Wisbech Town, Corby Town and St. Ives Town.



**Ben Garwood**

Young defender currently in his second spell with the Diamonds after playing last year at local side Bugbrooke St Michaels.



**Will Glennon**

Joined the Diamonds in March 2023 from local side Bugbrooke St Michaels. Equally at home playing in defence or midfield.



**Ben Gough**

Joined the Club in February 2023 from Cogenhoe United, A strong and tenacious defender who also participated in the AFC Rushden Diamonds Moulton sports scholarship programme.

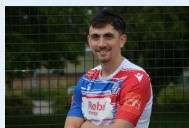
**Ryan Hughes**

21-year-old defender, Ryan joined the Diamonds following a successful loan spell from Northampton Town.



**Michael Harriman**

Michael Harriman is a former professional footballer who played as a defender with over 250 league appearances for Northampton Town, Wycombe Wanderers, Luton Town and Queens Park Rangers, joining the Diamonds in March 2023.



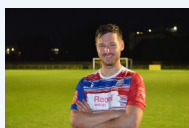
### Ethan Johnstone

Striker who joined in the summer of 2023 and has previous spells with St Ives Town, Kettering Town and Northampton Town.



### Will Jones

A striker who has returned to the Diamonds for the 2023/24 season after playing at local side Bugbrooke St Michaels last year, Will has represented the Diamond Academy at Under 18 and Under 21 levels.



### Jake Kerins

Defender in his first season with the Club having previously played for Kempston Rovers, King's Lynn Town and St Neots Town.



### Tom Lorraine

AFC Rushden & Diamonds all-time leading goal scorer, Tom Lorraine has returned to the Club ahead of the 2023/24 season. In previous spells Tom has scored a total of 100 goals in 307 appearances for the Club.



### Luke Massingham

21-year-old defender, Club Captain, Luke, recently joined the club from Thame United. He started his career in the youth set up at Wealdstone and Slough Town. At senior level, Luke has played at Staines Town, Bracknell Town, Chalfont St Peter, Rayners Lane and Kempston Rovers.



### Luis Pinto-Leite

An attacking midfielder who signed Southern League forms after an impressive 2021/22 campaign for the Scholar Under 23s where he contributed 16 goals and 6 assists in the 2021/22 season. He was the National Youth Football League South Premier Golden Boot winner for the 2021/22 season.



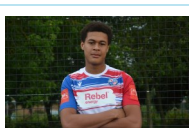
### Oliver Raymond

Young defender who joined the Club for the 2023/24 season.



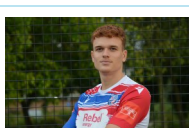
### George Rose

21-year-old goalkeeper who joined the Diamonds from Kempston Rovers after previous spells with MK Dons, Slough Town and AFC Dunstable.



### Tejan Thomas

Midfielder/defender in his first season with Diamonds after an impressive 2022/23 campaign for the Scholar Under 23s.



### Mitchell White

Mitch is a product of our U23 scholarship who played in last season's squad that reached the final of the National Football Youth League Cup.

LAST WEEK, I had the pleasure of speaking to a young man whose life had been turned upside down due to one innocuous moment on the football field.

"I went in for a 50/50 ball, nothing at all sinister, and ended up with his shin wrapped around his leg" Ashford United winger said Adem Ramadan speaking of the incident which occurred during the Nuts & Bolts' Bank Holiday Monday derby clash with Hythe Town.

"I went to get up and my leg just folded. It was just one of those things - an unlucky accident."

Sadly for Adem, that 'unlucky accident' had far-reaching consequences. The 27-year-old was taken to hospital with a horrific double leg break - an injury has now ruled him out of football for up to a year but, more importantly, forced him out of work, as a self-employed electrician, for the next six months.

Thankfully for Adem, an Isthmian League insurance policy through his club - coupled with a GoFundMe page set up by family and friends - Adem won't suffer too much in the way of undue financial hardship during his long period of recovery. It's hard for him to comprehend at the moment, but he is actually one of the lucky ones.

Adem told me of one of his teammates at Ashford who has just bought his first family home for his new wife and two young children. What if it was he whose leg buckled over and wasn't quite so lucky?

"Hindsight is a wonderful thing," Ramadan, the former Margate and Folkestone Invicta midfielder said. "You always think 'it won't happen to me', but it could, so easily.

"It makes you realise just how important it is for players of any level really to get protected. There are personal insurances

out there for between £7 and £10 a month. In hindsight, I'd have definitely paid that knowing what I know now.

"I'm a single man so, as a result, I don't have to worry too much about paying the bills while I'm off work. It's a huge weight off my shoulders.

"But if the same happens to my teammate it might be a different story and that's why I would urge players to get some advice and at least look into getting insured and protecting themselves.

"Paying £7-£10 a month, or whatever, is nothing compared to the risk of losing your house. It could be the best money you've ever spent."

One man who knows just how Adem is feeling right now is Francis Duku. Then at Gravesend & Northfleet, the 24-year-old had just been part of their 2001-02 Isthmian Premier title win and his performances were getting noticed.

"I was getting a lot of attention and, maybe, going back into the pro game," our old friend Duku told The NLP back in March. "But I broke my leg in pre-season at Weymouth. I had no idea it was broken. It was an attempt at an overhead clearance - it was hot and I didn't want to keep running so I thought I could hook it away and take a breather!"

An X-ray back in London showed a broken ankle and he was booked in for an op. "The guy who did it, fixed me as if I was a non-athlete - put pins in my ankle, which created loads of scar tissue and my ankle was never the same again. To this day you can see the difference. I still did alright, but I wasn't the level I was before."

Duku was able to use private medical care through his work in the city but it set the cogs whirring for Our Game Football, a membership service created

to ensure that UK football has access to a minimum level of care and support. For as little as £1 to register, members have access to affordable insurance policies as well as a whole network of benefits - and clubs can benefit too.

"There's a real motive to provide a route for change who want it," Duku says. "We've spoken to people time and again, they look at me and say, 'I get it, I get it'. But they don't want to do anything; players, chairmen, managers.

"For me, it's crazy. You know if you're playing football, you're going to get injured. You see GoFundMe pages from someone who is self-employed and needs to be on their feet to work, maybe they've got a young family. Everyone has shortfalls to cover. Rather than put structures in place, people choose to go that fundraising route.

"I am not here to lecture. But clearly there is a better route and that's what Our Game has built."

Our Game have also also launch Project 250 where if every member club can get 250 people to register as part as your community, a digital infrastructure is in place to help them create insurance benefits to cover costs of wages, contract liabilities or medical expenses when players are injured.

Whatever your financial position and whatever level you play, firms like Our Game can prove a lifeline to sportspeople everywhere in their hour of need. Don't delay, get yourself covered. As Adem says, it could be the best money you've ever spent.

[ourgamefootball.com](http://ourgamefootball.com)

Jon Couch

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## COVENTRY SPHINX 0 BEDWORTH UNITED 1

**Pitching In NPL**  
**Division One Midlands**  
Monday 28th August

After the thudding reality check of defeat at Spalding United, Coventry Sphinx were eager to pick up their first win in the Pitching In Northern Premier League Midlands when they hosted neighbours Bedworth United on Bank Holiday Monday.

For the second home match in a row Sphinx were on the wrong end of a single goal. Joint managers John Woodward and Shaun Thomas can certainly claim to have been the better team against Sporting Khalsa but a dearth of real chances in front of goal meant that Bedworth, though they had to work for the win, were seldom in danger of giving up their slender lead.

Sphinx were short-handed once more. Matty Shipman and Keelan Fallows remained unavailable, Kyle Carey was unable to play and Jordan Hayward's injury in the previous match kept him out of this one.

Woodward and Thomas started with Zach Hedge in goal behind Joe Pursey, Callum Whiteside, Louis Guest and Callum Martin in defence. Luke Downes came into the midfield alongside Jack Downes, Max Johnson and captain Callum Woodward, and there was a first start for Antonio Cristofaro off striker Dylan Parker.

Though absorbing, this wasn't a game for the purists. Goalmouth action was at a premium, shots on target few and far between. In that regard it was a typical derby match.

It was Sphinx who generated the first chance of the match. Woodward's fine work created it for Cristofaro, who cut inside well but saw his shot easily saved by Bedworth goalkeeper Sam Lomax.

The visitors made their presence felt quickly, with lots of early pressure on the Sphinx defence. A sequence of long throw-ins and a corner kept the home team honest before a Greenbacks shot on the turn was deflected wide of goal in the tenth minute.

But it wasn't one-way traffic. Sphinx had Bedworth working for everything. Another shot was deflected off target and, from the resulting corner, Whiteside and Hedge collided in the six-yard box.

The delay for Whiteside's subsequent treatment did the game no favours. There was no shape or rhythm in the first half. While the match wasn't exactly attritional, it was a scrap for the most part.

In the 29th minute, a Bedworth free kick nicked off the Sphinx defensive wall and flew wide. The next

chance was more than ten minutes away but it was ultimately the one that mattered most.

Bedworth's Leo Stone won the United Counties League Premier Division South with Sphinx last season, scoring one particularly crucial goal in the process, and his first-time finish past Hedge five minutes before half time was the difference here too.



The officials were kept busy at half time with tempers running hot at the end of a niggly half. There was more to come in the second period and that, really, is where the action was.

The visitors saw a volley blasted wide from a narrow angle before Sphinx made a couple of chances, beginning with their best of the match and one that really should have been taken.

Parker created it with a fine run before teeing up Cristofaro, who was unable to find the finish from close range. He did rather better in the 51st minute but his sharp run and shot didn't stretch Lomax in the Bedworth goal.

Just before Sphinx made some rearrangements to get an extra man up front and closer to Parker, captain Woodward fulfilled the role.

He drew the attention of Bedworth central defender Joe Mugunda, whose off-the-ball shenanigans in full view of the officials culminated in a kick and a stamp that should have led to a straight red card.

The unorthodox switch that followed brought centre back Dawid Peplinski off the bench to play up front with Parker, where he was an effective

challenge for Bedworth's aerial power and the catalyst for a good spell for the home team.

Despite this positive spell, Bedworth were the likelier scorers of a second goal against a Sphinx side who fell asleep too often two days after a long and difficult away trip.

Hedge made an easy save in the 70th minute and Sphinx's best move of the match took them straight to the other end, where Jack Downes smashed in a terrific cross. Parker headed wide but Sphinx continued to push.



Lomax's best save of the game came 15 minutes from time. Woodward delivered a long free kick and Guest did well to win the header and send the ball towards the bottom corner. It didn't have much on it but the Bedworth goalkeeper had to react quickly to get down in time.



After one final shot over the bar, Bedworth sought to take the sting out of the match through the last five minutes and a healthy chunk of stoppage time. When it comes to that particular task, there's nothing green about the Greenbacks.

If losing to Spalding was an eye opener, this defeat against Bedworth was an unwelcome glimpse of the familiar. Sphinx have had several tight games against Bedworth over the years and the truth is that some of them were closer than this.

Nevertheless, it's important that the players and management maintain their confidence.

They won't want to hear it again but Spalding aside, Sphinx have stepped up a level and competed in every game from the first whistle to the last.

They should have beaten Quorn, might have beaten Gresley Rovers and could have beaten high-flying Sporting Khalsa. A bad weekend with key players missing all over the pitch doesn't change that.

But the elusive first win has to come soon. Sphinx now revert to weekly Saturday matches for a while, the first being a visit to Sutton Coldfield Town and the second a vital tie against Quorn in the Isuzu FA Trophy.

### TEAMSHEET

1 Zach Hedge

2 Joe Pursey

3 Callum Martin

4 Luke Downes ▼ Ellis (74)

5 Louis Guest

6 Callum Whiteside ■

7 Jack Downes ■

8 Callum Woodward @ ■

9 Dylan Parker ■

10 Antonio Cristofaro ▼ Phillips (62)

11 Max Johnson ▼ Peplinski (57)

12 Leigh Phillips ▲ Cristofaro (62)

14 Dawid Peplinski ▲ Johnson (57)

15 Sam Ellis ▲ L. Downes (74)

16 Ralfie Penton

SPHINX MAN OF THE MATCH  
**CALLUM WOODWARD**

MATCH HIGHLIGHTS





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Sunday 17 September	14.00	A	Crusaders Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 24 September	14.00	H	Worcester City Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 8 October	14.00	A	Solihull Sporting Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 15 October	14.00	H	Stourbridge 1st	BCFA Women's County Cup
Sunday 22 October	14.00	H	Coundon Court Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 29 October	14.00	A	Kidderminster Harriers Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 12 November	14.00	H	Lye Town Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 19 November	14.00	H	Shrewsbury Town Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 26 November	14.00	A	Burton Albion Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 3 December	14.00	A	Worcester City Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 10 December	14.00	H	Knowle Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 17 December	14.00	A	Lichfield City Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 7 January	14.00	A	Lye Town Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 14 January	14.00	H	Crusaders Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 28 January	14.00	A	Shrewsbury Town Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 4 February	14.00	H	Burton Albion Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 11 February	14.00	H	Kidderminster Harriers Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 18 February	14.00	A	Coundon Court Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 25 February	14.00	A	Knowle Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 3 March	14.00	H	Shifnal Town Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
TBC		H	Lichfield City Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division



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# Transfers aren't football and summers are rubbish

Chris Nee | [hpbp.substack.com](https://hpbp.substack.com)

Football culture is fracturing. There are growing fault lines in a multitude of directions, each exacerbated by the tribal club loyalties that persistently chip away at any semblance of sane relations between supporters.

Within that monotonous fug lies an infinity of cracks. Between the polished elite sport and the game lower down. Between online fanatical weirdos and real-world participants. Between advocates and opponents of video assistant referees. Between those unwilling to endorse certain types of ownerships or politics or sponsors and those who simply define their football experience by winning.

If I listed out all of my football opinions, each would place me on the other side of a ravine from supporters of the opposite view. That much is obvious. But it also applies to preferences, likes, dislikes, tolerance levels – and that's pretty fascinating from a sociological perspective.

The same thing is happening in online culture. I used to work at a creative agency, We Are Social. In their 2023 *Think Forward* trends piece, they led with the idea of fragmentation in what defines online communities:

"On a cultural level, gone is the universal watercooler chat dictated by shared popular culture – today's agenda is set by ever-more niche and transient corners of the internet. And on a personal level, identities are more layered and fluid than ever before, more like an 'avatar du jour' than a static understanding of self."

The result is a sort of patchwork of cultural bits and pieces; an identity pick 'n' mix. As Facebook, Instagram and even Threads disappear up the recta that are their godforsaken algorithms, as Twitter nosedives into the dirt at the hands of

the world's most divorced dad, the places in which we gather online are changing.

People now congregate around increasingly specific strands of their identities. Subreddits and Discord servers are scooped up and dropped into our personality paper bags. A sports team here, a band there, a little art and professional interest and some laughs thrown in, and we can each build an online experience that reflects who we are and what we want from connected culture.

In football we at least retain that unified central point of interest, but no two ways of enjoying it are alike. We select the parts we like and don't like, and we each experience the game in our own way. That versatility helps to make the game special. It also means we can make these choices and decide how we interact with the game, flirting around the fringes of our personal football fiefdoms and getting into arguments about more or less anything.

Every summer we reach one of the edges of mine. If one of the dividing lines is between people who consider the summer transfer window to be a part of the spectacle and people who just want the football back, I'm ready to go full Braveheart in favour of the latter.

Transfers aren't football and summers are tedious. You will never persuade me otherwise.

This simmering distaste for transfer chatter is amplified by the absurd numbers and politics involved. Whether it's Saudi Arabia offering to make Kylian Mbappé richer than god twice over or just about any English player moving for upwards of £50m – to be clear, that is fifty million pounds – the whole thing seems to take on an almost abstract quality.

With no basis in a sensible reality, the summer transfer market has no consequence. And, as all intelligent football supporters know, football without consequence is barely football at all.

The eye-rolling tedium of transfer talk was highlighted during Bayern Munich's nakedly public courtship of England captain Harry Kane. With Tottenham Hotspur in Thailand at the start of their pre-season tour, manager Ange Postecoglou was faced with a press conference stunt by the risible German newspaper, *Bild*.

The awful rag's balding, bumfluff-bearded reporter, Max Schrader, later had his accreditation revoked for introducing into proceedings a Bayern jersey bearing Kane's name. Given the tepid nature of the gag, one can only assume the press ban received by Schrader was imposed on the grounds of weak patter. Even Bayern fans were annoyed.

That's the thing with these summer months of *mercato* back and forth. They're full to bursting with crap jibes, baseless rumours, the baffling trend of 'ITK' fakery and circuitous discussion about nothing.

Lurking within all that nonsense is the actual transfer market – real updates about things that are really happening. Until a player is holding up their new shirt that's boring too, yet millions obsess over it for weeks and weeks and weeks, apparently enjoying it as much as, if not more than, the football itself.

The sainting and celebration of football's leading transfer hacks and whatever it was Jim White claimed to be is confusing to me. Football happens on the pitch. The rest is just admin, yet here we are living in a world in which Fabrizio Romano has a catchphrase.

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# PITCHING IN NORTHERN PREMIER LEAGUE

## DIVISION ONE MIDLANDS FIXTURES

Saturday 16th September

Boldmere St Michaels	v	Shepshed Dynamo
Coleshill Town	v	Quorn
Coventry Sphinx	v	AFC Rushden & Diamonds
Gresley Rovers	v	Bedworth United
Hinckley LR	v	Corby Town
Loughborough Dynamo	v	Walsall Wood
Lye Town	v	Sutton Coldfield Town

Tuesday 19th September

Lye Town	v	Rugby Town
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Tuesday 26th September

Anstey Nomads	v	Spalding United
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Saturday 30th September

AFC Rushden & Diamonds	v	Hinckley LR
Corby Town	v	Lye Town
Harborough Town	v	Boldmere St Michaels
Quorn	v	Gresley Rovers
Rugby Town	v	Coventry Sphinx
Shepshed Dynamo	v	Coleshill Town
Spalding United	v	Bedworth United
Sporting Khalsa	v	Cambridge City
Sutton Coldfield Town	v	Loughborough Dynamo
Walsall Wood	v	Anstey Nomads

Tuesday 3rd October

Bedworth United	v	Cambridge City
Shepshed Dynamo	v	Harborough Town

Wednesday 4th October

Corby Town	v	Anstey Nomads
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# PITCHING IN NORTHERN PREMIER LEAGUE

## DIVISION ONE MIDLANDS LEAGUE TABLE

Pos	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Bedworth United	6	4	1	1	11	4	7	13
2	Spalding United	4	4	0	0	10	1	9	12
3	Sporting Khalsa	5	4	0	1	8	2	6	12
4	Quorn	6	3	2	1	10	7	3	11
5	Anstey Nomads	4	3	1	0	10	4	6	10
6	Corby Town	5	3	0	2	12	5	7	9
7	Hinckley LR	5	2	3	0	8	5	3	9
8	Coleshill Town	5	3	0	2	9	9	0	9
9	Loughborough Dynamo	6	2	2	2	11	12	-1	8
10	Lye Town	6	2	2	2	9	12	-3	8
11	Shepshed Dynamo	4	2	1	1	6	5	1	7
12	Boldmere St Michaels	6	2	1	3	10	10	0	7
13	Harborough Town	4	2	0	2	6	6	0	6
14	Walsall Wood	6	2	0	4	10	11	-1	6
15	Sutton Coldfield Town	6	2	0	4	7	9	-2	6
16	Rugby Town	5	2	0	3	3	10	-7	6
17	Gresley Rovers	6	1	2	3	8	11	-3	5
18	Cambridge City	5	1	1	3	6	9	-3	4
19	Coventry Sphinx	6	0	2	4	3	12	-9	2
20	AFC Rushden & Diamonds	6	0	0	6	1	14	-13	0

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