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Tuesday 26th December 2023
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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)



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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
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

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Upcoming fixtures

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Bedworth United v Coventry Sphinx

Pitching In Northern Premier League - Midlands
Monday 1st January 2024 | 1.00pm
The Oval
Coventry Road, Bedworth, CV12 8NN

HOME



Coventry Sphinx v Spalding United

Pitching In Northern Premier League - Midlands
Saturday 6th January 2024 | 3.00pm
Sphinx Industrial Supplies Arena
Sphinx Drive

AWAY



Sporting Khalsa v Coventry Sphinx

Pitching In Northern Premier League - Midlands
Saturday 13th January 2024 | 3.00pm
Guardian Warehousing Arena
Noose Lane, Willenhall, WV13 3BB

HOME



Coventry Sphinx v Loughborough Dynamo

Pitching In Northern Premier League - Midlands
Tuesday 16th January 2024 | 7.455555555pm
Sphinx Industrial Supplies Arena
Sphinx Drive

HOME



Coventry Sphinx v Harborough Town

Pitching In Northern Premier League - Midlands
Saturday 20th January 2024 | 3.00pm
Sphinx Industrial Supplies Arena
Sphinx Drive

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What a year we've had. Winning the United Counties League Premier Division South in the manner we did wasn't just a piece of Coventry Sphinx history but a phenomenal football achievement. I don't think it's quite sunk in for most of us just what a turnaround these brilliant lads produced.

It's easy to get behind a winning team but that doesn't take away from my praise for them, which is as full all these months later as it was last season. To watch them chase that title, win match after match, sweat blood for the cause and never know when they were beaten was a real privilege and one I'll never forget.

2023/24 is a whole different ball game but I'm honestly as proud of our club for what we're doing right now as I was last season. Every week is new territory at a whole new level and we're showing an ability to gather points at a pretty satisfactory rate. We shouldn't underappreciate that.

When I think back to the matches Sphinx won in March and April, particularly those away from home, I see that it wasn't just about what happened on the pitch. Those days were special and I truly believe that we found the character of our club.

The challenge that lies ahead is clear. Sphinx's aim since promotion has always been to not just be happy to make up the numbers and, while we've relied quite heavily on draws up to this point, we've been able to dish out a few bloody noses along the way. We're competing in eighth-tier football and that's pretty astounding when you think about it.

Of course, the very fact we got promoted means that the fixture list gets no easier at any point in the season. After beating Cambridge City and drawing with Gresley Rovers, we went into Saturday's visit to Quorn knowing all we need to know about them.

We drew with Quorn here at Sphinx Drive in the first league match of the season but came up against a very different challenge in the FA Trophy. By now, you'll know how our second visit to Farley Way of the season went. I'm hopeful we'll have shown a bit more than we did the last time.

Today we welcome the supporters, players, management and officials of Lye Town, who've shown plenty since their own promotion and recently enjoyed a not insignificant number of days at the very top of the Pitching In Northern Premier League Midlands table. Congratulations to them on a terrific first half of 2023/24.

We know the Flyers very well from our time together in the Midland Football League and it was great to see them coming up from Step Five with us in April. We have a good relationship with them behind the scenes and my family connections in the area meant I was especially pleased for them.

After today we face an exciting and testing winter schedule. On New Year's Day we'll be at the Oval to take on Bedworth United in an early kick-off. We know we can play at their level and it would be nice to prove it with the points.

The rest of January brings Spalding United to Sphinx Drive (Saturday 6th) before a visit to Sporting Khalsa (Saturday 13th) and a home back-to-back against Loughborough Dynamo (rearranged for Tuesday 16th) and Harborough Town (Saturday 20th). There's no rest for the wicked, and no respite for a team whose assignment is just to keep on rolling.

Everyone here at Coventry Sphinx hopes you had a wonderful Christmas and that you enjoy today's match. Have a very Happy New Year and we'll see you in Bedworth on New Year's Day to kick off another banner year. 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.





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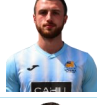


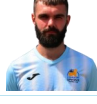







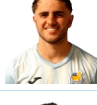







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MEET THE SQUAD

	Jamal Adams	Talented striker who was part of Sphinx's title-winning team in 2022/23 and returned to the club in November 2023.	Sponsorship available		Louis Guest	A former Sphinx junior and now a leader in our squad, Guesty is a long-serving central defender and the club's vice captain.	
	Khaelem Bailey-Nicholls	Explosive forward player with high-level experience. Signed for Sphinx in the autumn of 2023.	 024 7644 2838		Jordan Hayward	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 IAN AND PAULINE MCINTOSH
	Harvey Billing	Former Sphinx youth team captain who returned to the club after spells with Stratford Town and Easington Sports.	 HELPING GOALKEEPERS SINCE 1999		Alex Lock	Highly rated midfield player signed from Rugby Town in October 2023.	Sponsorship available
	James Bryson	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 MANDY SEDDON		Callum Martin	Pacy former Coventry City junior full back who loves a tackle and causes opponents problems in the attacking third.	
	Antonio Cristofaro	Skilful former Walsall youth midfielder with dribbling ability, sharp creative instincts and an eye for goal.			Dawid Pepinski	Future Pro Academy scholar and former Sphinx youth central defender who joined the first team ranks after playing Step 5 football in 2022/23.	
	Gio Dainty	Experienced and versatile midfield player who returned to Sphinx in 2023 after a long and successful spell with Coleshill Town.	Sponsored by STUART GUEST		Leigh Phillips	Experienced wide player who returned to Sphinx ahead of 2023/24 after a successful career in armed forces football.	 024 7644 2838
	Jack Downes	Versatile, battling midfielder with a tremendous engine. Outstanding since returning to Sphinx Drive and a league winner in 2022/23.			Joe Pursey	Sturdy defender who came in late in 2022/23 and had an instant impact in Sphinx's title quest.	Sponsorship available
	Luke Downes	Creative midfield player who returned to Sphinx in 2021 after countless impressive performances here as a youngster.			Jac Redhead	Creative midfield player with experience at Barwell and Halesowen Town.	Sponsorship available
	Jamie Draper	Defender who emerged from the Sphinx youth team and has become a regular starter in our best ever team.			Matthew Shipman	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 BF ESSENTIALS 07927 649288
	William Edjenguele	Experienced former Coventry City central defender who joined from Bedworth United after spells with Barwell and Nuneaton Borough.	Sponsorship available		Finlay Shorrock	Versatile left-sided player who joined Sphinx in September 2023 and debuted in our first win in eighth tier football.	INSTARMAC
	Sam Ellis	Entertaining attacking midfielder who joined Sphinx after spells with Sutton Coldfield Town and Hinckley in 2022/23.			Callum Whiteside	Versatile defensive player who joined Sphinx at the start of 2022/23 and quickly became a reliable regular for John Woodward and Shaun Thomas.	
	Keelan Fallows	Talented goalkeeper who joined from Tamworth at the start of Sphinx's first season in the eighth tier of English football.			Callum Woodward	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
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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WHERE WE ARE WITH VAR

Chris Nee | hpbp.substack.com

VAR. According to a large section of Wolverhampton Wanderers supporters who demonstrated their disgruntlement at the Premier League fixture against Nottingham Forest, it's good for absolutely nothing. On the same day Match of the Day host Gary Lineker revoked his advocacy for VAR, denounced it as spoiling football and asked why the game's lawmakers are trying to stop goals, an important question that's at the very heart of the issue.

The Video Assistant Referee was voted into the Premier League more than five years before the protest at Wolves and debuted in August 2019. Since then, it's wreaked all the havoc predicted by sceptics and much more besides. Its impact on top-level football in England has been wholly detrimental, not to mention disruptive to the matchday experience, and it hasn't even guaranteed that the big decisions are correct. It was never going to achieve that because it can't. That's not hindsight.

Football's powers that be have suggested a number of corrective measures in the last half a decade, most of them dead on arrival. None has been stupider than the idea that what's needed is more VAR. The state of play is horrific. Everything VAR should theoretically improve – and I'm talking here about in the media and supporters discourse, not officiating – has in fact worsened, albeit as a result of social media and the disintegration of sensible society rather than technology in football.

What we've been left with is a broken game, a barrage of myths and a cycle of conversation in which reflection and rumination are at once constant and entirely absent. In short, football is so in thrall to VAR that it knows the handbrake is on but keeps its pedal to the metal anyway, paralysed by its own great misstep.

If there is a truth at all it is that VAR is spoiling the game and there is no excuse for it. Football has had Full Kit Referees holed away in hideouts for five years and

there are more controversies every weekend than ever before.

Sometimes it's the on-field officials who bear the brunt, sometimes it's the video assistant, but it always grows from the very seed that spawned all this in the first place: that every decision has a right and wrong, and only right will do. The trouble is that this quest for perfection was folly from the start.

VAR is not new. VAR is here (VARs are here; whatever) and it's fully formed and operating at its maximum potential, unless you happen to be involved in a league where the astounding decision has been made to bring in the system with fewer cameras. It's past testing. Then again, if it was being tested on competitive football matches then it wasn't really testing. It's past trials. Then again, if the decision had already been made then they weren't really trials but a farce carried out in broad daylight.

It's past teething problems. Then again, if the issues with VAR are fundamental to its use and impossible to iron out then they weren't really teething problems or growing pains but the actual future laid out for all to see. For more than five years football supporters who'd already been manipulated into believing in the sanctity of decisions have been duped and misled. The result is plain to see. Step back from the controversies of the weekend, any weekend, and consider where we are.

In the cold light of a weekday morning think of the hesitation you feel when a goal is scored, the central feeling of the football experience kneecapped. Think of the obsessive rummaging through footage to find a reason to disallow a goal when no single reason has been identified prior to the check.

Think of the long delays, of nonsense offsides openly disregarding the stated inaccuracy of the technology. Think of the fracture between two codes of what's supposed to be a beautifully simple sport, of the fact that all of this is

happening in order to improve a decision rate that was already in the high nineties by percentage and will not, cannot, reach infallibility. It's insane. Supporters are divided. The rank stupidity is obvious to those of us who didn't and don't want VAR. That's how bias works and it would be disingenuous to deny that. But what about people who are in favour or on the fence? Five years in, are minds beginning to change?

What is perhaps most surprising is that those who demand flawless refereeing decisions either because of VAR or because they just do seem to be the least willing to rail against VAR's disruption to the game. It is the promise to them that it breaks, after all, and it's strange that their tolerance of its failure is so steadfast. In a sense it's immaterial. For all the talk of right calls and wrong, they're actually what matters least.

The ecstasy of goals trumps officiousness. The flow of football outranks millimetre offsides. This is a game of jeopardy and chance and skill and speed, not a television show. Our clock does not stop. Our plays roll into one. There is no icing. There is no measured yardage. Decisions that are deemed subjectively wrong after the fact are a minuscule price to pay.

VAR now dominates match coverage, highlights and Premier League discussion to an extraordinary degree, arguably more even than refereeing did before.

Its effect on matches is enormous. Greater still is its outsized impact on the football conversation and on the experience of going to football, watching football on television and just being a football supporter.

It's too much. VAR is doing huge damage to the intangibles of the game while having little to no positive effect. It doesn't and can't do what it's there for and it's past time the game acknowledged the outright failure of this shambolic experiment and cast it out once and for all.

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
Adams, Jamal	2	88	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Bailey-Nicholls, Khaellem	6	96	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Brown, Leo	5	448	5	4	0	1	0	0	2	1	0.022	0.011	0.033
Bryson, James	5	258	3	2	2	1	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
Castellano, Alfonso	1	20	0	0	1	0	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
Dainty, Gio	6	382	5	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	0.022	0.011	0.033
Downes, Jack	19	1557	17	13	2	8	1	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Downes, Luke	18	1232	14	10	4	5	1	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Draper, Jamie	1	90	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Edjenguele, Will	10	828	10	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Ellis, Sam	10	239	2	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Fallows, Keelan	18	1620	18	18	0	3	0	0	0	1	0.000	0.011	0.011
Guest, Louis	20	1680	19	18	1	5	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Hayward, Jordan	10	519	7	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	0.000	0.011	0.011
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	12	539	5	2	7	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Lock, Alex	9	627	7	5	2	3	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Martin, Callum	7	463	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Parker, Dylan	15	1125	12	7	3	3	0	0	3	3	0.033	0.033	0.067
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	18	1606	18	17	0	4	0	0	0	1	0.000	0.011	0.011
Redhead, Jac	12	891	10	4	2	2	0	0	2	2	0.022	0.022	0.044
Shipman, Matty	19	1710	19	19	0	4	0	0	8	2	0.089	0.022	0.111
Shorrock, Finlay	13	1091	13	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Whiteside, Callum	21	1650	19	16	2	5	0	0	1	0	0.011	0.000	0.011
Woodward, Callum	11	885	11	5	0	3	0	0	1	2	0.011	0.022	0.033

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
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Bailey-Nicholls, Khaellem	6	96	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Brown, Leo	5	448	5	4	0	1	0	0	2	1	0.022	0.011	0.033
Bryson, James	5	258	3	2	2	1	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
Castellano, Alfonso	0	0	0	0	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
Dainty, Gio	5	312	4	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0.011	0.011	0.022
Downes, Jack	16	1287	14	10	2	7	1	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Downes, Luke	15	990	11	8	4	4	1	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	9	738	9	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Ellis, Sam	8	183	2	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Fallows, Keelan	15	1350	15	15	0	2	0	0	0	1	0.000	0.011	0.011
Guest, Louis	18	1500	17	16	1	4	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Hayward, Jordan	8	393	6	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0.000	0.011	0.011
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	10	449	4	2	6	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Lock, Alex	8	573	6	5	2	3	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	12	891	9	5	3	2	0	0	2	3	0.022	0.033	0.056
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	16	1426	16	15	0	3	0	0	0	1	0.000	0.011	0.011
Redhead, Jac	11	801	9	3	2	2	0	0	2	2	0.022	0.022	0.044
Shipman, Matty	16	1440	16	16	0	4	0	0	8	2	0.089	0.022	0.111
Shorrock, Finlay	12	1037	12	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Whiteside, Callum	18	1394	16	14	2	5	0	0	1	0	0.011	0.000	0.011
Woodward, Callum	10	823	10	5	0	3	0	0	1	2	0.011	0.022	0.033

COVENTRY SPHINX 1 GRESLEY ROVERS 1

Pitching In NPL
Division One Midlands
Saturday 16th December 2023

Coventry Sphinx and Gresley Rovers shared the points with a repeat of their reverse result early in the 2023/23 Pitching In Northern Premier League Midlands season. Both teams came away disappointed with a draw but 1-1 was ultimately a fair outcome from a feisty affair at the Sphinx Industrial Supplies Arena nine days before Christmas.

Sphinx joint managers John Woodward and Shaun Thomas were without Will Edjenguele, so Louis Guest was joined by Callum Whiteside at centre back in front of goalkeeper Keelan Fallows. Joe Pursey and Finlay Shorrock continued in the full back positions.



An unchanged midfield saw Jack Downes and Callum Woodward anchor Jac Redhead, while Jamal Adams was given a first start wide of striker Matty Shipman. Jordan Hayward kept his place on the opposite flank.

The physical tone of the game was set from the early minutes and Sphinx made a good start. Their shape was effective out of possession and their use of the ball was aggressive. Hayward was a useful outlet in the first quarter as Gresley started to come into the match.

There was little in the way of goalmouth action in the first 20 minutes. Gresley were the first to mount some consistent attacks after successfully pushing the hosts back in the middle of the first half.

John King fired in the first shot in anger, flashing his effort across the Sphinx goal and

just beyond the frame from a tight angle on the right. Fallows would argue he had the shot well covered.

The match came to life ten minutes before half time and Sphinx might have had a lead. Callum Woodward's clipped pass into the left channel deceived Harvey Woodward in the Gresley goal, who found Shipman nipping in front of him to head the ball out of his reach as he came to the corner of the box.

Shipman kept the ball in play on the byline and played it across for Redhead, whose shot gave the recovering Moatmen stopper enough of a chance to keep it out.

He did the same again in the 40th minute when Redhead turned provider and threaded a brilliant through ball for Hayward, who went clear on goal but was denied by a solid piece of goalkeeping when the goal seemed the likelier result.



The home team paid the price for not taking their two golden chances. Gresley progressed the ball forward quickly in the aftermath of Woodward's second save and manoeuvred a clear chance for Nathan Banton.

Banton neatly lifted the finish beyond the grasp of goalkeeper Fallows into the net, leaving Sphinx to chase an equaliser as Gresley had to do in the reverse fixture in August.

Guest's glancing header from one Woodward didn't test another and Sphinx headed in at half time with work to do and a goal to find before the game got away from them.

They didn't wait long. With Adams and Hayward switching wings at the break the hosts started the second half well and quickly levelled the scores. Redhead was instrumental.



The creative midfielder's clever footwork kept Gresley penned in and generated a yard of space for himself outside the box.

He picked a lovely pass for Shipman, who showed good strength as he turned in the penalty area and cracked a powerful left-footed shot into the corner for the second consecutive Saturday.

Sphinx enjoyed a brief spell of dominance – enabled by more patient play and keeping the ball on the ground – but Gresley weren't for turning over.

The visitors went back to basics and played safe as Sphinx edged a full-blooded encounter.

Fallows watched a speculative curling shot sail wide and over in the middle of the second half, by which time Sphinx's play was much improved but no more dangerous than Gresley's.

Luke Downes, on as a late substitute for his captain, sent a shot wide in stoppage time but noteworthy chances were otherwise limited at both ends of the field as the inevitability of a second 1-1 draw between these two teams became clear.

Both sides will look back on this game with some regret. Gresley were pegged back after taking the lead and a case

can be made that they kept Harvey Woodward largely untroubled after the equalising goal from the home team.

Sphinx will rue missed opportunities to create rather than actual chances, but their long stretches of improved possession in the second half should have yielded more.

For the second week in a row the supporters of Sphinx's opponents subjected the match officials to the kind of abuse that suggests the result was in some way unjust.

Against Cambridge City, Sphinx luffed and puffed for just about long enough to punish the Lilywhites for putting themselves at a disadvantage.

Against Gresley, neither side did enough in the attacking third to warrant much more than they got and the strategy of intimidating the officials went unrewarded.

TEAMSHEET

- 1 Keelan Fallows
- 2 Joe Pursey
- 3 Finlay Shorrock
- 4 Jack Downes
- 5 Louis Guest
- 6 Callum Whiteside
- 7 Jamal Adams ▼ Bailey-Nicholls (68)
- 8 Callum Woodward @ ▼ L. Downes (79)
- 9 Matty Shipman ⚽
- 10 Jac Redhead
- 11 Jordan Hayward ▼ Lock (62)
- 12 Luke Downes ▲ Woodward (79)
- 14 Khaellem Bailey-Nicholls ▲ Adams (68)
- 15 Alex Lock ▲ Hayward (62)
- 16 James Bryson

SPHINX MAN OF THE MATCH
JAC REDHEAD



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	Whiteside 1	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 ©	Shipman 1	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 ©	Shipman 1	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	Edjenguuele	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	2-1	W	Fallows	Whiteside	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest	Edjenguuele	Hayward	Woodward ©	Shipman 1	Redhead	J. Downes	Parker 1	Johnson	<i>Ellis</i>	<i>Peplinski</i>	Bryson		
30 Sep	Rugby Town	NPL M	A	1-2	W	Fallows	Bryson	Shorrock	J. Downes	Guest	Edjenguuele	Whiteside	Woodward © 1	Shipman 1	Redhead	Parker	<i>Pursey</i>	Bailey-Nicholls	<i>Castellano</i>	Ellis	<i>Phillips</i>		
7 Oct	Corby Town	NPL M	H	0-1	L	Fallows	Bryson	Shorrock	Whiteside	Guest	Edjenguuele	Pursey	Woodward ©	Shipman	Ellis	Parker	Johnson	L. Downes	<i>Phillips</i>	Bailey-Nicholls	<i>Redhead</i>		
14 Oct	Shepshed Dynamo	NPL M	A	2-2	D	Fallows	Whiteside	Shorrock	L. Downes	Edjenguuele	Bryson ©	Pursey	J. Downes	Shipman 1	Lock	Parker 1	Guest	Ellis	Johnson	<i>Cristofaro</i>			
21 Oct	Coleshill Town	NPL M	H	0-0	D	Fallows	Pursey	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest ©	Edjenguuele	Parker	J. Downes	Shipman	Lock	Dainty	Whiteside	<i>Bryson</i>	Redhead	<i>Ellis</i>	Johnson		
4 Nov	Anstey Nomads	NPL M	H	2-2	D	Fallows	Whiteside	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest ©	Edjenguuele	Pursey	Lock	Shipman 1	Redhead	Brown 1	Parker	Johnson	Bryson	<i>Reed</i>	<i>Hedge</i>		
11 Nov	Walsall Wood	NPL M	A	1-1	D	Fallows	Whiteside	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest ©	Edjenguuele	Pursey	Lock	Shipman	Redhead	Brown 1	Dainty	J. Downes	<i>Johnson</i>	<i>Parker</i>	<i>Hayward</i>		
14 Nov	Nuneaton Borough	BSC 2R	H	2-3	L	Fallows	Pursey	Shorrock	L. Downes ©	Whiteside	Draper	Parker 1	J. Downes	Shipman	Lock	Dainty 1	Martin	Hayward	Castellano	Guest	<i>Redhead</i>		
18 Nov	Hinckley LR	NPL M	H	1-1	D	Fallows	Pursey	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest ©	Whiteside	Brown	Lock	Shipman	Redhead 1	Dainty	<i>Edjenguuele</i>	<i>Hayward</i>	<i>Bailey-Nicholls</i>	J. Downes	<i>Draper</i>		
21 Nov	Harborough Town	NPL M	A	6-1	L	Fallows	Whiteside	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest ©	Edjenguuele	Pursey	J. Downes	Shipman	Brown	Dainty	Redhead 1	Lock	Bailey-Nicholls	Hayward			
25 Nov	Boldmere St Michaels	NPL M	A	3-1	L	Fallows	Pursey	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest ©	Whiteside	J. Downes	Redhead	Shipman	Brown	Dainty 1	<i>Woodward</i>	<i>Edjenguuele</i>	Lock	Bailey-Nicholls	Hayward		
9 Dec	Cambridge City	NPL M	A	0-1	W	Fallows	Pursey	Shorrock	J. Downes	Guest	Edjenguuele	Lock	Woodward ©	Shipman 1	Redhead	Hayward	<i>L. Downes</i>	Adams	Bailey-Nicholls	Whiteside			
16 Dec	Gresley Rovers	NPL M	H	1-1	D	Fallows	Pursey	Shorrock	J. Downes	Guest	Whiteside	Adams	Woodward ©	Shipman 1	Redhead	Hayward	L. Downes	Bailey-Nicholls	Lock	<i>Bryson</i>			
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																				
16 Jan	Loughborough Dynamo	NPL M	H																				
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																				

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The
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*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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THE NORTH ATLANTIC LEAGUE

In the gilded corridors of football it's long been said that 2024 might prove a watershed in the sport, that television deal renewals will coincide with the European Championships and UEFA-CONMEBOL's silent war on FIFA to usher in a new era.

There's money to be made in tension and politics. The European Super League was considered a real possibility. A restructuring of the Champions League to make it more lucrative for a handful of protected clubs was always more likely. Whatever the outcome, powerful people we've never heard of were talking about 2024.

Football's already dealt with some of the significant orders of the day that will never come. The Super League went off half-cocked after getting all excited with the world falling apart and squandered what Florentino Pérez and his pals thought was its moment.

The Champions League will do what the Champions League does and the clubs that reach the latter stages are now so disgustingly rich that the rest of us don't really care. The same goes for international television rights. You'll forgive me for not

being bothered what happens to a sport run for morons by scumbags.

The 2024 chatter sashayed into my realm of knowledge three or four years ago, around the time one of football's unsquashable harebrained ideas cropped up most recently. Silly and unworkable it may be, but from the standpoint of the cynical supporter there's no denying that a merger of leagues as a reaction to the status quo is more intriguing than the basic action of institutional greed that caused it.

There's no reason to be more receptive to the idea of the Atlantic or North Atlantic League than the hated European Super League. It's effectively the same thing, after all: a handful of clubs coming together across borders in order to further their economic interests. It mightn't be Super, but it's still a European League.

Yet when big clubs, proper clubs, traditional clubs in these nations are willing to rally against the prevailing congealment of football glory, it's easy to find the suggestion seductive. Ajax and PSV, Celtic and Rangers, Copenhagen and Brøndby,

have no automatic right to European success. But it shouldn't be beyond the realms of possibility and when it is, well, football is broken.

The Atlantic League seems like one of those conceptual flights of fancy that used to come around every now and again before being forgotten about, but it has figureheads and drivers just like the Super League and it's nearly quarter of a century old. Plans emerged with the stink of fireworks still in the air in January 2000.

They wafted up on the smoke from Eindhoven, where PSV chairman Harry van Raaij and executive Peter Fossen hatched the Atlantic League concept in order to bridge the growing chasm between Europe's most powerful clubs and the rest.

Van Raaij, who passed away in late 2020, was clear about the problem he and Fossen sought to fix by bringing together clubs from the Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal, Scotland and Scandinavia.

"The bigger clubs in smaller countries will come to a position when they cannot compete with the bigger clubs from the bigger countries," he told *BBC Radio 5 Live*. "We are planning to meet each other in order to investigate the possibilities to improve our position in Europe."

In the past 23 years the willingness or otherwise of the Glasgow giants has been accepted as a make-or-break matter. In 2000 the Atlantic League had the explicit support of Celtic, whose chief executive Allan McDonald considered Scottish football a "bankrupt hindrance" and made no attempt to pretend television revenue wasn't the Bhoys' motivation.

"The major clubs in those countries find that they have little in the way of competition to attract audiences, and that prevents clubs with ambition and huge fanbases from realising their potential," he said in an interview with the *Bhoyszone* website in 2000.

"We see the Atlantic League as a way of attracting larger TV audiences, and of increasing our revenue. But more importantly it is an opportunity to get a better level of competition than we get at the moment, and a bigger stage to play our football on."

Slated to start as early as 2002, Van Raaij and Fossen envisioned a superleague in the strictest Latin sense – it would sit above the domestic leagues, complete with promotion and relegation, and feed into UEFA's continental competitions.

UEFA rejected the idea and responded by expanding the UEFA Cup. The Atlantic League was eventually booted into the long grass by a threat to expel any participating club from the Champions League.

In 2002 the Atlantic League returned, this time without any involvement from Scandinavia. Van Raaij and PSV were again the source but the proposal coincided with an ugly pinch point between the Old Firm and the rest of the Scottish top flight. Nevertheless, Rangers secretary director Campbell Ogilvie denied a claim in Eindhoven that talks had begun.

The stated ambition of Atlantic League Version 2002 was to become Europe's sixth league. The invited clubs would cease to be part of their domestic competitions but promotion and relegation were again a part of the plan.

At the start of Scotland's 2002/03 season McDonald's successor was bullish. Ian McLeod told *BBC Scotland* that the Atlantic League could be just months away. By now, talks between the clubs were reportedly advanced.

If in doubt, switch it out. 2003's Atlantic League refresh was in fact a proposal for a cup competition between sixteen clubs comprising the top four league finishers from the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Scotland. It fizzled out.

Five years later, the late Rangers manager Walter Smith indicated his support for what was now more specifically a North Atlantic League concept. Version 2008 went nowhere, thankfully; it would have left ghost teams rattling around in the relevant domestic leagues.

Ajax chairman and KNVB president Michael van Praag distanced himself and the Dutch governing body from the Northern Atlantic League idea the following year by writing to the Scottish Football Association to assure them it wasn't something he planned to raise with UEFA. After going quiet for the better part of eight years the idea popped up again in early 2016. If somehow squeezing a meritocratic buffer league between domestic and continental competitions has some pros, Version 2016 was all con.

It returned to the Atlantic League's original invitational form. FC Copenhagen, Ajax, PSV, Feyenoord, Anderlecht, Club Brugge, Celtic, Rangers, Malmö, Rosenborg, HJK Helsinki were the listed clubs in what would have nakedly been a play for television revenue by a cabal of clubs. It was the North Atlantic Super League by any other name. Very advanced talks were confirmed with Van Raaij again at the helm but progress was halted by UEFA once more.

The North Atlantic League hasn't gone away. Andrew Doyle, a co-owner of League of Ireland club Shelbourne and the head honcho of SAL Sports Capital, was apparently willing to put his outfit's money where his mouth was in 2020. £350 million in broadcast rights is no joke.

Doyle's proposal was to include clubs from Ireland, Scotland, Norway, Denmark and Sweden but was dead on its arse

because Celtic's interest had eroded to such a degree that they didn't want to know. By the end of the year Norway's football authorities had dealt another fatal blow.

Fossen is now the CEO of AIM Sport, a tech-based sports marketing and digital advertising firm, having left PSV after nearly three decades in the autumn of 2021. His and PSV's remaining interest in the North Atlantic League is unknown, publicly at least, but it might now be more viable than ever before – which is to say, barely viable.

The matter has been quiet for some time but the unexpected supporter du jour is one Aleksander Čeferin, President of UEFA.

A couple of years ago Čeferin revealed that the confederation's executives were discussing the idea of regional leagues and that conversations had been had with some national federations.

"More and more countries are interested in the possibility of a regional league because that would increase the value of clubs, as well as income from sponsors and the sale of TV rights," he said.

"UEFA, in principle, has nothing against regional leagues. The main problem is how to go from those leagues to European competitions. UEFA would have to solve that problem.

"In addition, we do not want to create some regional leagues that would destroy national championships. So, regional leagues are a serious undertaking and nothing concrete has been decided yet, but it is being considered."

If UEFA's outlook has thawed in the Čeferin era, a significant obstacle has been removed. Another is feasibility, however, and doubts are held strongly and widely, and with no little justification. Čeferin's penultimate point is a sticky one.

Scotland's involvement has been ever-present in the theoretical stages but there's no reason to assume a regional league in Northern Europe could happen without it. Nevertheless, Scottish opinion carries weight and the days of Rangers managers and Celtic executives shouting its virtues from the rooftops of Glasgow are long gone.

Scottish Professional Football League chief executive Neil Doncaster is no stranger to football's corridors and his comments in April 2021 suggest a more measured view. Doncaster pointed out the inherent structural difficulties of cross-border merged leagues.

While recognising UEFA's apparent understanding of the problem – inequality – and openness to a solution, he made clear that there are fundamental challenges in bringing such a league to life even with UEFA's acquiescence.

One of those challenges? Inequality even between the national leagues and clubs involved. Doncaster, an Englishman, had his gaze to the south, not the east. If Scotland's geographical attachment to England suggests a British merger is the more logical option, the power dynamics between the two counties make it a non-starter.

Should the idea of crossing the Irish Sea come back around, it's likely to meet its warmest reception yet from UEFA. But Čeferin being more on the fence than in opposition fixes few of the obvious problems with any North Atlantic League concept.

It must still find a way to feed into the Champions League, for one, and indifferent presidential buy-in is hardly the silver bullet for that. Champions League participation is the end goal for the clubs in question; take that away, fail to make it work, and it's done.

As above, so below. The North Atlantic League would by definition have an uncomfortable and unorthodox interface with the national leagues from which its teams are either drawn or withdrawn. There is righteous opposition from the other clubs in those leagues and no way to avoid a detrimental impact domestically.

Realistically, the idea dies right there. Its headstone reads: "Here lies the North Atlantic Football League. Defeated by common sense and the cultural might of domestic football. 2000 - 2024."

But to be sceptical of the fix is not necessarily to ignore the fault. The Atlantic League and North Atlantic League were proposed by clubs because of the competitive imbalance to which they are artificially subjected in what's supposed to be a sport.

These clubs are stuck in between one thing and the other. They are big clubs held back by football's modern economics. They do have a case for a better share of television revenue on a continental and global level.

Heritage matters in this game and when the likes of Ajax, PSV, Celtic, Rangers and Anderlecht are frozen out, it's inevitable that they'll rail against the newly powerful.

That doesn't mean they're right. They're simply fighting their own corner, after all. But Fossen and Van Raaij planted a seed at the turn of the millennium and the influx of monstrous amounts of money from outside the sport have only exacerbated their reasoning.

The North Atlantic League will probably never happen. There's no doubt some other answer will grow in its place.

Chris Nee



Match winner Matty Shipman in action against Cambridge City. (Photo: Stuart Guest)



Sphinx celebrate their three points at Westwood Road. (Photo: Stuart Guest)

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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	1-1	D	Inkberrow	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 21 September	0-6	L	AFC Wulfrunians	FA Youth Cup First Round Qualifying
Thursday 28 September	3-1	W	Stratford Town	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 5 October	1-4	W	Rugby Town	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 12 October	4-0	W	P S Olympic	Joel Richards Memorial Cup R1
Monday 23 October	1-0	L	Stourbridge	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 9 November	3-4	L	Stourbridge	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 16 November	3-0	W	Atherstone Town	Joel Richards Memorial Cup R2
Tuesday 5 December	*1-1	D	Rushall Olympic	Colin Lowe Memorial League Cup R3
Thursday 14 December	1-6	L	Stourbridge	Joel Richards Memorial Cup QF
Thursday 4 January		H	Halesowen Town	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Monday 8 January		A	Bedworth United	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 11 January		A	Inkberrow	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Monday 22 January		A	Halesowen Town	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 1 February		A	Stratford Town	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		H	Alvechurch	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		A	Alvechurch	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		H	Bedworth United	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

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Finlay Shorrock taking stock of his options against Gresley Rovers. (Photo: Stuart Guest)



Callum Woodward back in the starting eleven against the Moatmen. (Photo: Stuart Guest)



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LYE TOWN

History

The club were established in 1930 as Lye & Wollescote Amateur Football Club and joined the Worcestershire Combination. They were renamed Lye Town the following year. The club were runners-up in the Worcestershire Combination in 1932-33 and won the Birmingham Junior Cup the following season. Lye were league runners-up again in 1934-35 before winning the league in 1935-36. Lye were runners-up in the Worcestershire Combination for a third time in 1937-38, also winning the Birmingham Junior Cup, retaining the Cup the following season.

Following World War II Lye played in the Central Amateur League in the 1946-47 season before joining the Birmingham & District League in 1947. Lye were placed in the South Division when the league was re-organised in 1954, with a tenth-place finish seeing us placed in Division One for the 1955-56 season. We subsequently finished bottom of the Division and were relegated to Division Two. The league reverted to a single division in 1960 and was renamed the West Midlands (Regional) League in 1962.

The league gained a second division in 1965, with Lye becoming members of the Premier Division. Despite finishing bottom of the Premier Division in 1965-66 and 1966-67, the club were not relegated to Division One. Lye were Premier Division runners-up in 1976-77 before finishing second in three consecutive seasons between 1978-79 and 1980-81. In 1997-98 the club were Premier Division champions, but were not promoted to the Midland Alliance due to ground grading regulations. 2010-11 Lye won the Birmingham Midweek Floodlit Cup, beating Nuneaton Griff 1-0 in the final. Lye were Premier Division runners-up in 2012-13 and won the Floodlit Cup for a second time with a 2-1 win over Southam United in the final.

The club went on to win both the Worcestershire Senior Urn and the Premier Division the following season, earning promotion to the Premier Division of the newly formed Midland League. In the 2021-22 season Lye won the JW Hunt Cup.

In 2022-23 Lye finished second to Walsall Wood in the Midland League Premier Division. Having come runners up they were drawn away to Cambridgeshire side St Neots Town in a Step 4/5 Inter Play-Off game. Lye won 6-1 and gained promotion to Step 4 for the first time in their history.

Ground

The club play at the Sports Ground on Stourbridge Road, which is shared with the local cricket club. a temporary rail is erected on the northern side of the pitch during the football season. A seated stand was built at the Stourbridge Road end after World War II. A new stand was built on the southern side of the pitch in 1971, with the seats from the post-war stand later moved into the newer stand when the older stand was demolished. The club has a covered standing area with a barrel roof built behind one goal.

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COVENTRY SPHINX LADIES FC

Sunday 3 September	0-4	L	Solihull Sporting Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 10 September	3-0	L	Shifnal Town Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 17 September	1-8	W	Crusaders Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 24 September	1-6	L	Worcester City Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 1 October	0-5	W	AFC Telford United	Women's FA Cup 2QR
Sunday 8 October	5-5	D	Solihull Sporting Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 15 October	0-5	L	Stourbridge 1st	BCFA Women's County Cup
Sunday 22 October	7-5	L	Northampton Town	Women's FA Cup 3QR
Sunday 29 October	3-4	W	Kidderminster Harriers Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 26 November	3-3	D	Burton Albion Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 3 December	3-2	L	Worcester City Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 17 December	5-1	W	Lichfield City Ladies	West Mids Premier Cup 1R
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
Sunday 10 March	14.00	H	Coundon Court Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 17 March	14.00	H	Lichfield City Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 24 March		H	Lye Town Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 14 April		H	Shrewsbury Town Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 28 April		A	Lichfield City Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
TBC		H	Knowle Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division



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PITCHING IN NORTHERN PREMIER LEAGUE

DIVISION ONE MIDLANDS FIXTURES

Tuesday 26th December

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

Saturday 30th December

Quorn	v	Hinckley LR
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Monday 1st January

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

PITCHING IN NORTHERN PREMIER LEAGUE

DIVISION ONE MIDLANDS LEAGUE TABLE

Pos	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Harborough Town	18	13	2	3	43	14	29	41
2	Spalding United	18	11	4	3	41	19	22	37
3	Lye Town	20	11	4	5	30	23	7	37
4	Anstey Nomads	17	10	6	1	38	21	17	36
5	Loughborough Dynamo	16	10	4	2	31	16	15	34
6	Hinckley LR	19	9	7	3	31	24	7	34
7	Quorn	17	8	4	5	34	24	10	28
8	Sutton Coldfield Town	19	8	4	7	31	26	5	28
9	Walsall Wood	16	8	2	6	29	25	4	26
10	Bedworth United	20	7	5	8	23	23	0	26
11	Sporting Khalsa	18	8	2	8	22	29	-7	26
12	Corby Town	18	7	3	8	41	27	14	24
13	Boldmere St Michaels	18	7	2	9	35	27	8	23
14	Coleshill Town	19	7	2	10	27	37	-10	23
15	Shepshed Dynamo	18	6	2	10	20	33	-13	20
16	Coventry Sphinx	18	3	8	7	17	31	-14	17
17	Cambridge City	18	4	3	11	20	36	-16	15
18	Gresley Rovers	20	3	6	11	23	52	-29	15
19	Rugby Town	18	4	1	13	18	43	-25	13
20	AFC Rushden & Diamonds	17	1	1	15	10	34	-24	4

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MATCH SQUADS

Jamal Adams	Isaac Adegoke
Khaellem Bailey-Nicholls	Lewis Archer
James Bryson	Jamie Ashmore
Alfonso Castellano	Fin Barker
Antonio Cristofaro	Ben Billingham
Gio Dainty	Kye Billingham-Belle
Jack Downes	Jack Bostock
Luke Downes	Ryan Bridgewater
Jamie Draper	Jason Chilton
Will Edjenguele	Lewis Clarke
Sam Ellis	Dennis Digie
Keelan Fallows	James Douglas
Louis Guest	Matt Funge
Jordan Hayward	Sam Hall
Zach Hedge	Jake Lloyd
Alex Lock	Adam Meacham
Callum Martin	Ben Newey
Dawid Peplinski	Maxwell Ngbeken
Leigh Phillips	Kieron Northwood
Joe Pursey	Joe Palmer
Jac Redhead	Jack Pearlman
Matthew Shipman	Nathan Scott
Finlay Shorrock	Bailey Storey
Duncan Van Den Top	Sam Tye
Callum Whiteside	Oliver West
Callum Woodward	Lewis Worsley

Referee: Simon Kavanagh

Assistant Referees: Matthew Broadhurst and Joshua East