



# V **BOLDMERE ST MICHAELS**

**Saturday 20th April 2024**  
Pitching In Northern Premier League - Midlands



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## 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

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

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



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## Final 2023/24 Fixtures

HOME



### Coventry Sphinx v Walsall Wood

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

HOME



### Coventry Sphinx v Shepshed Dynamo

Pitching In Northern Premier League - Midlands  
Tuesday 9th April 2024 | 7.45pm  
Sphinx Industrial Supplies Arena  
Sphinx Drive

AWAY



### Anstey Nomads v Coventry Sphinx

Pitching In Northern Premier League - Midlands  
Saturday 13th April 2024 | 3.00pm  
Cropston Road  
Cropston Road, Anstey, LE7 7BP

HOME



### Coventry Sphinx v Boldmere St Michaels

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

AWAY



### Hinckley LR v Coventry Sphinx

Pitching In Northern Premier League - Midlands  
Saturday 27th April 2024 | 3.00pm  
Leicester Road Stadium  
Leicester Road, Hinckley, LE10 3DR



CoventrySphinx



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Coventry Sphinx's first season in the Pitching In Northern Premier League Midlands hasn't ended with quite the energy we might have hoped it would.

Though keeping our heads above the relegation zone for almost the entire season and coming into the final two games with safety in our hands was an outcome we'd probably have taken in August, arriving at this point on the back of two heavy defeats isn't ideal.

The matches against Shepshed Dynamo and Anstey Nomads were not alike. Shepshed was our worst performance since before the pandemic. At Anstey, we were second best to a team that might well go on to win the division.

Where we've invested in our new ground grading requirements, Anstey have instead focused their considerable resources on the playing side.

It showed in both areas, and while the match didn't go our way I'm sure it was an eye-opening afternoon for the people at our club who've moved heaven and literal earth to make Sphinx Drive fit for purpose.

Boldmere St Michaels are our visitors today and they've done a huge amount of work at their own ground over the last few years. They've built a hell of a football team as well.

We welcome the supporters, players, management and officials of the Mikes to the Sphinx Industrial Supplies Arena. It's a pleasure to have you back here and I'm sure the match will live up to its billing.

This is our final home fixture of 2023/24 and it's been a season of which we can be proud. It's had a lot of downs but plenty of ups to go with them, and

I'm immensely proud of how we've tackled this historical challenge on and off the pitch as a club. We've come an incredibly long way in a very short amount of time.

John and Shaun have done a fantastic job to get us to this point. The job isn't done yet and one more big push is required, but to win the games we have, at a level we've never reached before, is an achievement we'll be looking back upon for years to come. It's been quite a ride.

The committee, officials and volunteers have more than played their part. I'd like to thank them all for their graft and dedication this season. Coventry Sphinx is a bigger and better club than it was when we came out of lockdown, and it's down to you.

Finally, to our loyal supporters as we reach the end of the season with just Hinckley LR away to come next weekend: thank you.

We punch above our weight in a lot of ways but seeing the Sphinx massive out in numbers at away games is quite something. I know the players appreciate it, and with our backing I know they'll finish on a high.

Another area where we've made improvements is on the media side. You've all seen our match highlights and interviews. You might also have noticed we have a new website to go with them.

It's all part of progressing as a club. Bit by bit, week by week, we're moving forward. That's the only promise we'll make, but it's one all of us take very seriously.

So here we are. 180 minutes to go. One last push for another piece of history. We're all behind you, boys. Go and make it happen.



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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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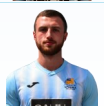












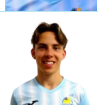





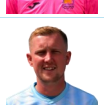

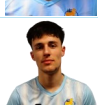



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# MEET THE SQUAD

	<b>Leo Brown</b>	Talented striker who rejoined the club from Alvechurch in March 2024 after a successful loan spell earlier in the 2023/24 season.	Sponsored by <b>MANDY SEDDON</b>		<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>Alfonso Castellano</b>	All-round midfielder who joined Coventry Sphinx in the summer of 2023 and played his way into the team at the end of an injury-hit season.			<b>Callum Martin</b>	Pacy former Coventry City junior full back who loves a tackle and causes opponents problems in the attacking third.	
	<b>Antonio Cristofaro</b>	Skilful former Walsall youth midfielder with dribbling ability, sharp creative instincts and an eye for goal.			<b>Cam Moore</b>	Dynamic attacking player who joined the club from Loughborough Dynamo in March 2024.	Sponsored by <b>STUART GUEST</b>
	<b>Ashton Demulder</b>	A former Sphinx junior player who rejoined the club on loan from Solihull Moors after a spell with Coleshill Town.	Sponsorship available		<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>Jack Downes</b>	Versatile, battling midfielder with a tremendous engine. Outstanding since returning to Sphinx Drive and a league winner in 2022/23.			<b>Joe Pursey</b>	Sturdy defender who came in late in 2022/23 and had an instant impact in Sphinx's title quest.	 024 7644 2838
	<b>Luke Downes</b>	Creative midfield player who returned to Sphinx in 2021 after countless impressive performances here as a youngster.			<b>Jac Redhead</b>	Creative midfield player with experience at Barwell and Halesowen Town.	 024 7644 2838
	<b>Jamie Draper</b>	Defender who emerged from the Sphinx youth team and has become a regular starter in our best ever team.			<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</b> 07927 649288
	<b>William Edjenguele</b>	Experienced former Coventry City central defender who joined from Bedworth United after spells with Barwell and Nuneaton Borough.			<b>Finlay Shorrocks</b>	Versatile left-sided player who joined Sphinx in September 2023 and debuted in our first win in eighth tier football.	
	<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>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>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>Leo Wood</b>	Promising striker who joined Sphinx on loan from Solihull Moors in early 2024.	Sponsorship available
	<b>Tyler Haddow</b>	Dynamic and respected wide attacker who arrived at Sphinx in January 2024 with a fearsome reputation locally.	Sponsorship available		<b>Callum Woodward</b>	Long-serving legendary club captain, a battling mainstay in the Sphinx midfield and a vital source of goals and creativity.	 <small>Exhibitors · Displays · Bespoke Fitings</small>

## 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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## COVENTRY SPHINX 1 WALSALL WOOD 2

**Pitching In NPL**  
**Division One Midlands**  
Saturday 6th April 2024

Coventry Sphinx produced an impressive response to going down to ten men but were unable to avoid defeat against Walsall Wood in the Pitching In Northern Premier League Midlands.

The sending off of Keelan Fallows was a controversial decision by the referee with the Wood already leading 2-1 and it threatened to spoil the game. Instead, Sphinx rallied behind captain Callum Woodward, who went in goal for an hour, and looked as likely as the visitors to score the game's fourth goal.

Woodward did his bit, keeping a clean sheet and making a string of saves to keep the match on an even keel despite the disadvantage in numbers. His double save from the penalty spot in the immediate aftermath of the red card was merely the start.

The skipper began the game in a new-look midfield, where he anchored Jack Downes, Alfonso Castellano and Cam Moore. Joe Pursey, Louis Guest, Jamie Draper and Finlay Shorrock made up an unchanged back four, while there was a start up front for Leo Wood alongside Leo Brown.

Walsall Wood settled into the game immediately despite the wind whipping around Sphinx Drive. They had a foot on the ball early, got forward quickly and were soon on top. The first shot on goal fell for the hosts, though, and Wood goalkeeper Dale Eve had to save well from Brown and react sharply to thwart Wood as he followed in.

But by the time the visitors took the lead, it had been coming. A neat passing move culminated in excellent footwork by Kevin Monteiro as he strode into the Sphinx penalty area. He kept his composure, opened the space up for a shot, and slotted it past Fallows and into the bottom corner.

The away side continued to have the bulk of the possession but Sphinx again had a good look at goal against the run of play in the 18th minute. This time, they took the chance.

Wood's determined work and deft touch in the penalty area allowed him to tee up Moore, who

swung a sweetly struck left-footed shot into the corner of Eve's net.

The frantic first half continued and Walsall Wood's winning goal was scored as early as the 23rd minute. The referee awarded them a free kick not far outside the box and Corey Cooper's low shot found its way through the wall and had plenty of power to hit the bottom corner.

Walsall Wood used the ball nicely throughout the first quarter of the match and were good value for the lead, with Sphinx barely at the races before the game's big talking point seemed to kick them into gear.

With half an hour played, the Wood got in behind and Fallows came off his line to meet Charlie Manners. Manners beat the goalkeeper, took a step past him and missed the target with a shot off-balance. Having allowed the forward to go on and shoot, the referee pulled it back and awarded a penalty for what he deemed a foul by Fallows.

If Walsall Wood were as surprised as anyone else at the awarding of a penalty, they were stunned by the red card. Fallows had made a genuine attempt to play the ball and Manners was forced wide by his touch past the goalkeeper. Without a substitute goalkeeper, Sphinx had to turn to their skipper.

Monteiro, with a goal already to his name, stepped up to take the resulting penalty but was denied by Woodward, who also got down to block another attempt on the follow-up. Sphinx had cleared the first hurdle and started working towards digging out a second equaliser.

It's not always easier to play against ten men. Sphinx were clearly lifted by the adverse circumstances and had more of an edge when they were a man down than they had in the first half an hour.

Guest headed wide of the back post from a Moore corner before half time, and a partially cleared Downes cross from the right ended up with Castellano just outside the box. The midfielder didn't quite catch his volley but it didn't go far wide of Eve's post.

Sphinx were further inconvenienced at half time, when Brown had to be withdrawn with a knock. Jordan Hayward's introduction from the bench necessitated some tweaks on the field and, while Sphinx were naturally up against it in the early knockings of the second half, the set-up after the break started to work in their favour.

Woodward was tested. On the hour, he made a superb diving save to keep out a shot from the edge of the penalty area. He made an even better save in the middle of the half but on either side of those stops, Sphinx fought hard to protect him and made plenty of headway at the other end too.



With 20 minutes left, Walsall Wood won another free kick from relatively close range. Cooper beat the wall again, over the top this time, and Woodward's best save of the half was needed to keep his team within a goal.

The captain wasn't alone in performing well. The second half display from the Sphinx was gutsy, not just defensively but in terms of attacking intent.

They were further hindered by injury with quarter of an hour remaining, when Draper was taken off and replaced by Will Edjenguele in the middle of the defence.

The home team pushed on regardless and nearly got caught out six minutes from time. Walsall Wood broke away and reached the final third with three attackers facing just Edjenguele and Woodward.

They found their spare man to the runner's right but Woodward, yet again, was able to make the save.

Eve didn't have nearly as many efforts to save in the second half but Sphinx's determination was such that the visitors sought to manage the last few minutes and stoppage time by playing in the corners. With a midfielder in goal, that says plenty about the level of opposition they were facing.

Sphinx couldn't overcome the odds after going down to ten men but Woodward's heroics in goal gave his teammates a platform from which to fight.

They certainly did that, and could have grabbed a second equaliser on another day.

Ultimately, with ten men against eleven for an hour, the hill was just too big to climb.

The management team can take encouragement from the character on display but the need for points remains and Sphinx are not yet safe from relegation.

They face a crucial fixture against Shepshed Dynamo, one point ahead of them with a game in hand, before the remaining games pit them against Anstey Nomads, Boldmere St Michaels and Hinckley Leicester Road.

### TEAMSHEET

- 1 Keelan Fallows ■
- 2 Joe Pursey ■
- 3 Finlay Shorrock
- 4 Callum Woodward @
- 5 Louis Guest
- 6 Jamie Draper ▼ Edjenguele (76)
- 7 Jack Downes
- 8 Alfonso Castellano
- 9 Leo Brown ▼ Hayward (HT)
- 10 Cam Moore @ ▼ Demulder (66)
- 11 Leo Wood
- 12 Will Edjenguele ▲ Draper (76)
- 14 Luke Downes
- 15 Jordan Hayward ▲ Brown (HT)
- 16 Ashton Demulder ▲ Moore (66)

SPHINX MAN OF THE MATCH  
**CALLUM WOODWARD**



# 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	4	133	1	0	3	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	10	853	10	8	0	2	0	0	4	1	0.044	0.011	0.056
Bryson, James	13	951	11	9	2	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Carey, Kyle	7	530	6	5	1	2	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Castellano, Alfonso	10	405	4	2	6	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	9	534	7	1	2	1	0	0	2	1	0.022	0.011	0.033
Demulder, Ashton	13	737	9	1	4	2	0	0	1	2	0.011	0.022	0.033
Downes, Jack	33	2731	30	23	3	13	2	0	2	1	0.022	0.011	0.033
Downes, Luke	34	2066	23	14	11	7	1	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Draper, Jamie	5	358	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Edjenguele, Will	26	2101	24	20	2	4	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	36	3181	36	35	0	5	0	1	0	1	0.000	0.011	0.011
Guest, Louis	34	2922	33	31	1	8	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Haddow, Tyler	8	614	7	5	1	2	0	0	1	2	0.011	0.022	0.033
Harkin, Ryan	1	46	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Hayward, Jordan	24	1416	15	8	9	1	0	0	3	3	0.033	0.033	0.067
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	17	1009	11	7	6	4	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
Moore, Cam	6	406	5	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0.011	0.000	0.011
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
Purseley, Joe	36	3135	35	33	1	7	0	0	1	1	0.011	0.011	0.022
Redhead, Jac	19	1436	17	7	2	5	0	0	3	3	0.033	0.033	0.067
Shipman, Matty	32	2880	32	32	0	9	0	0	13	5	0.144	0.056	0.200
Shorrock, Finlay	30	2393	29	20	1	2	1	0	1	2	0.011	0.022	0.033
Whiteside, Callum	27	1951	22	18	5	6	0	0	1	0	0.011	0.000	0.011
Wood, Leo	12	439	3	2	9	0	0	0	1	1	0.011	0.011	0.022
Woodward, Callum	25	2059	25	16	0	8	0	1	1	3	0.011	0.033	0.044

# 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
Adams, Jamal	4	133	1	0	3	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	10	853	10	8	0	2	0	0	4	1	0.044	0.011	0.056
Bryson, James	13	951	11	9	2	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Carey, Kyle	5	404	5	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Castellano, Alfonso	9	385	4	2	5	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	8	464	6	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	0.011	0.011	0.022
Demulder, Ashton	13	737	9	1	4	2	0	0	1	2	0.011	0.022	0.033
Downes, Jack	30	2461	27	20	3	12	2	0	2	1	0.022	0.011	0.033
Downes, Luke	31	1824	20	12	11	6	1	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Draper, Jamie	4	268	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Edjenguele, Will	25	2011	23	19	2	4	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	33	2911	33	32	0	4	0	1	0	1	0.000	0.011	0.011
Guest, Louis	32	2742	31	29	1	7	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Haddow, Tyler	8	614	7	5	1	2	0	0	1	2	0.011	0.022	0.033
Harkin, Ryan	1	46	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Hayward, Jordan	22	1290	14	7	8	1	0	0	3	3	0.033	0.033	0.067
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	16	955	10	7	6	4	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
Moore, Cam	6	406	5	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0.011	0.000	0.011
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
Purseley, Joe	34	2955	33	31	1	6	0	0	1	1	0.011	0.011	0.022
Redhead, Jac	18	1346	16	6	2	5	0	0	3	3	0.033	0.033	0.067
Shipman, Matty	29	2610	29	29	0	9	0	0	13	5	0.144	0.056	0.200
Shorrock, Finlay	29	2339	28	20	1	2	1	0	1	2	0.011	0.022	0.033
Whiteside, Callum	24	1695	19	16	5	6	0	0	1	0	0.011	0.000	0.011
Wood, Leo	12	439	3	2	9	0	0	0	1	1	0.011	0.011	0.022
Woodward, Callum	24	1997	24	16	0	8	0	1	1	3	0.011	0.033	0.044



At the age of 22, Lewisham-born Ruben Loftus-Cheek was named in Gareth Southgate's England squad for FIFA World Cup 2018 in Russia. With ten minutes left of the opening fixture against Tunisia in Volgograd and England in need of a goal to secure a late win, Southgate turned to Loftus-Cheek.

The young Londoner came off the bench to replace Dele Alli, winning his fifth international cap in the process. England got their goal and Loftus-Cheek started the next two group games against Panama and Belgium. He then embarked upon his best Premier League season to date, playing under Maurizio Sarri for Chelsea.

2018/19 was the fulfilment of Loftus-Cheek's Chelsea destiny. He'd been at Stamford Bridge since he was eight years old and spent ten years working his way up the youth ranks – winning the FA Youth Cup twice – and into the first team. He made his debut late in 2014 but barely played as the Blues won the title in 2016/17.

He was loaned to Crystal Palace in the following season and played his way into the England reckoning thanks to an impressive Premier League campaign.

After the World Cup he was even better, this time for Sarri's Chelsea. They won the UEFA Europa League, beating Arsenal

in the final. Two weeks before the London derby in Baku, Loftus-Cheek ruptured his Achilles tendon.

He hasn't played for England since. At club level, his rehabilitation has been less than ideal. After fighting his way back to fitness and making a handful of Chelsea appearances, he went back out on loan to Fulham in 2020/21.

Just like Palace, Fulham seemed to be the making of him. Amid the reliably frenetic doings behind the scenes at Chelsea, Loftus-Cheek dragged himself back into the team. In the two seasons after he returned from Craven Cottage, he played 49 league games. Then he left.

Prior to his injury, the former Chelsea junior had attracted enormous attention as a potential star. As he grew into his career, he started to build a fearsome reputation as a promising and imposing all-round midfielder – imperfect, certainly, but a thoroughly exciting prospect for club and country.

Early assessments from the kind of people who'd know focused often on his maturity. Loftus-Cheek quickly looked assured; his composure on the ball and elegance of movement without it were matched by a rangy physicality

and an attacking threat that came to the fore in Chelsea's successful Europa League campaign.

When considering Loftus-Cheek's spluttering progress at Stamford Bridge since his injury in May 2019, the inability of a series of managers to unlock or even understand that offensive edge is undoubtedly an important factor. He struggled to crack the first team. When he did, the array of positions he filled weren't conducive to getting in the box and making things happen.

Though widely recognised as a talented player, Loftus-Cheek was a square peg in a round hole more often than not by the end of 2022/23. He was good. He was respected. At 27, he still had his peak ahead of him. But he was stuck.

The saving grace was that Loftus-Cheek only had a year left on his contract and he was snapped up for a reported fee of around £15 million by AC Milan, following in the footsteps of Jimmy Greaves and his own former Chelsea team-mate, Fikayo Tomori, in making the move from West London to San Siro. Ray Wilkins was another former Chelsea player who played for the Rossoneri, whose other English alumni are Luther Blissett, Mark Hateley and David Beckham.

Loftus-Cheek signed a four-year contract and, after a positive start to life in Serie A under Stefano Pioli, he was interviewed by *La Gazzetta dello Sport*.

"At Chelsea I felt like a caged animal," he said. "I didn't play as much as I wanted and when it happened I played in positions where I couldn't express myself. Here, however, I have a free mind. I play as a midfielder as I like, and it's like being a child again."

It doesn't take much imagination to read a depth of frustration and a degree of sadness into his comments, and you don't have to peel away too many layers to understand that Chelsea's changing ownership, ludicrous shopping sprees and a succession of managerial lurches from this to that and back again might not make for the best club for a player with his own challenges to overcome.

The sample size is still small but the early evidence suggests that Italy looks good on Loftus-Cheek. Pioli is unlocking his ability and Milan's system taps into both the attacking side of his game – not every Chelsea manager he's had tried to do that consistently – and his effectiveness out of possession. It might as well have been drawn up with Loftus-Cheek in mind.

He can look back on January 2024 as one of the finest months of his career. As well as making himself indispensable through his all-round play, he scored four goals in four games including both in a bonkers 2-2 draw against Bologna. A happy knack for being in the right spot for a tap-in or two is a considerable boon.

At the time of writing, Loftus-Cheek has started 16 matches in Serie A and made three appearances off the bench. He's only started more in a full season three times: his two loan seasons and last season at Chelsea. He will pass each of those tallies imminently.

Five goals (all recent) and two assists (both early in the season) is a respectable enough league return for an all-round midfielder. The timing suggests better to come.

Indeed, his 0.36 goals per 90 minutes is higher than all but 2018/19 when he was at the peak of his powers at Stamford Bridge.

That was his best season statistically in a number of regards but Loftus-Cheek's first order of business isn't to scale new heights, just revisit the old one. 2018/19 is the closest match for what he's doing in Milan and, after more than four years, a bad injury and shoddy management, it's starting to look like one hell of a comeback.

He only outscored his expected goals once in the Premier League – curiously, his xG is essentially the same in Serie A as his Premier League average – and that was in his best season at Chelsea. He's outscoring it again now.

He's shooting more than he has in most seasons but he's passing less, a function of his more advanced position and licence to attack. Indeed, his pass completion rate is good but no better than it was in England; he's always been a highly competent footballer.

Loftus-Cheek isn't in the form of his life. To suggest he is would be reductive and a little disrespectful to Chelsea, to Palace, to Fulham, and to the man himself. But he is starting to recapture it. Statistically, it's all going fine. He's passing the eye test too.

Now 28, Loftus-Cheek is a senior player. New club or not, he's expected to be a leader on the pitch. He expects it of himself too, and it was the focus of his comments when he agreed the move to San Siro.

"I understand the weight of the shirt and my responsibility coming into this club," he said. "I've had a lot of experience in football and I can use that. I feel ready and good physically to produce performances for the team, and I'm ready to be a leader."

"I was happy playing for my boyhood club but I didn't really feel content with how much I was contributing to the team. I feel like I have more to give so I thought it was a good time to make a fresh start."

So far, it's going to plan – at least on an individual level. Milan are still working their way out of a lengthy spell of volatility in their fortunes. First- and second-placed finishes haven't been beyond them of late but nor have they been anything like guaranteed.

Loftus-Cheek has played his part in Milan's place in an historically familiar top three at the time of writing, albeit with the Rossoneri realistically looking in on the Scudetto race from the outside.

He's got a few years to make his mark. If his first half a season is anything to go by, Loftus-Cheek is more than capable of making a great success of his time in Serie A and Milan will count him as a smart buy.

Sometimes a change is as good as a rest.

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	Purse	Hayward	L. Downes	Guest ©	Whiteside	Parker	J. Downes	Shipman	Carey	Johnson	Ellis	Jackson	Peplinski	Cristofaro	Billing	Martin	Selley-Haywood
12 Aug	Quorn	NPL M	H	1-1	D	Fallows	Purse	Hayward	J. Downes	Guest	Whiteside 1	Parker	Woodward ©	Shipman	Carey	Johnson	L. Downes	Ellis	Phillips	Cristofaro	Martin		
15 Aug	Gresley Rovers	NPL M	A	1-1	D	Fallows	Purse	Martin	L. Downes	Guest	Whiteside	Parker	Woodward ©	Shipman 1	Carey	J. Downes	Johnson	Peplinski	Ellis	Jackson	Cristofaro		
22 Aug	Sporting Khalsa	NPL M	H	0-1	L	Hedge	Purse	Martin	L. Downes	Guest ©	Whiteside	Hayward	J. Downes	Shipman	Carey	Johnson	Parker	Ellis	Peplinski	Cristofaro	Jackson		
26 Aug	Spalding United	NPL M	A	4-0	L	Hedge	Purse	Martin	J. Downes	Guest	Whiteside	Hayward	Woodward ©	Parker	Ellis	Johnson	L. Downes	Peplinski	Cristofaro	Draper			
28 Aug	Bedworth United	NPL M	H	0-1	L	Hedge	Purse	Martin	L. Downes	Guest	Whiteside	J. Downes	Woodward ©	Parker	Cristofaro	Johnson	Phillips	Peplinski	Ellis	Penton			
2 Sep	Sutton Coldfield Town	NPL M	A	4-1	L	Fallows	Whiteside	Martin	J. Downes	Guest	Peplinski	Purse	Woodward ©	Shipman 1	Redhead	Parker	L. Downes	Johnson	Ellis	Phillips	Cristofaro		
9 Sep	Quorn	FAT 1Q	A	4-0	L	Fallows	Whiteside	Phillips	L. Downes	Guest	Edjenguele	J. Downes	Woodward ©	Shipman	Redhead	Parker	Johnson	Carey	Cristofaro	Peplinski	Ellis	Hedge	
16 Sep	AFC Rushden & Diamonds	NPL M	H	2-1	W	Fallows	Whiteside	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest	Edjenguele	Hayward	Woodward ©	Shipman 1	Redhead	J. Downes	Parker 1	Johnson	Ellis	Peplinski	Bryson		
30 Sep	Rugby Town	NPL M	A	1-2	W	Fallows	Bryson	Shorrock	J. Downes	Guest	Edjenguele	Whiteside	Woodward © 1	Shipman 1	Redhead	Parker	Edjenguele	Purse	Bailey-Nicholls	Castellano	Ellis	Phillips	
7 Oct	Corby Town	NPL M	H	0-1	L	Fallows	Bryson	Shorrock	Whiteside	Guest	Edjenguele	Purse	Woodward ©	Shipman	Ellis	Parker	Johnson	L. Downes	Phillips	Bailey-Nicholls	Redhead		
14 Oct	Shepshed Dynamo	NPL M	A	2-2	D	Fallows	Whiteside	Shorrock	L. Downes	Edjenguele	Bryson ©	Purse	J. Downes	Shipman 1	Lock	Parker 1	Guest	Ellis	Johnson	Cristofaro			
21 Oct	Coleshill Town	NPL M	H	0-0	D	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest ©	Edjenguele	Parker	J. Downes	Shipman	Lock	Dainty	Whiteside	Bryson	Redhead	Ellis	Johnson		
4 Nov	Anstey Nomads	NPL M	H	2-2	D	Fallows	Whiteside	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest ©	Edjenguele	Purse	Lock	Shipman 1	Redhead	Brown 1	Parker	Johnson	Bryson	Reed	Hedge		
11 Nov	Walsall Wood	NPL M	A	1-1	D	Fallows	Whiteside	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest ©	Edjenguele	Purse	Lock	Shipman	Redhead	Brown 1	Dainty	J. Downes	Johnson	Parker	Hayward		
14 Nov	Nuneaton Borough	BSC 2R	H	2-3	L	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	L. Downes ©	Whiteside	Draper	Parker 1	J. Downes	Shipman	Lock	Dainty 1	Martin	Hayward	Castellano	Guest	Redhead		
18 Nov	Hinckley LR	NPL M	H	1-1	D	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest ©	Whiteside	Brown	Lock	Shipman	Redhead 1	Dainty	Edjenguele	Hayward	Bailey-Nicholls	J. Downes	Draper		
21 Nov	Harborough Town	NPL M	A	6-1	L	Fallows	Whiteside	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest ©	Edjenguele	Purse	J. Downes	Shipman	Brown	Dainty	Redhead 1	Lock	Bailey-Nicholls	Hayward			
25 Nov	Boldmere St Michaels	NPL M	A	3-1	L	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest ©	Whiteside	J. Downes	Redhead	Shipman	Brown	Dainty 1	Woodward	Edjenguele	Lock	Bailey-Nicholls	Hayward		
9 Dec	Cambridge City	NPL M	A	0-1	W	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	J. Downes	Guest	Edjenguele	Lock	Woodward ©	Shipman 1	Redhead	Hayward	L. Downes	Adams	Bailey-Nicholls	Whiteside			
16 Dec	Gresley Rovers	NPL M	H	1-1	D	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	J. Downes	Guest	Whiteside	Adams	Woodward ©	Shipman 1	Redhead	Hayward	L. Downes	Bailey-Nicholls	Lock	Bryson			
23 Dec	Quorn	NPL M	A	4-2	L	Fallows	Whiteside	Shorrock	L. Downes ©	Edjenguele	Bryson	Purse	J. Downes 1	Shipman	Redhead 1	Lock	Woodward	Hayward	Dainty	Adams	Bailey-Nicholls		
26 Dec	Lye Town	NPL M	H	2-0	W	Fallows	Whiteside	Shorrock	J. Downes 1	Edjenguele	Bryson	Purse	Woodward ©	Shipman	Redhead	Dainty	L. Downes	Adams	Hayward 1	Lock			
1 Jan	Bedworth United	NPL M	A	1-0	L	Fallows	Bryson	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest	Edjenguele	Purse	Woodward ©	Shipman	J. Downes	Dainty	Hayward	Adams	Lock	Martin	Cristofaro		
6 Jan	Spalding United	NPL M	H	0-1	L	Fallows	Bryson	Hayward	Lock	Guest	Edjenguele	J. Downes	Woodward ©	Shipman	Redhead	Carey	Purse	Whiteside	L. Downes	Dainty	Shorrock		
13 Jan	Sporting Khalsa	NPL M	A	3-0	L	Fallows	Purse	Hayward	L. Downes	Guest	Bryson	Lock	Woodward ©	Shipman	Redhead	Carey	Edjenguele	Whiteside	Harkin	Martin			
27 Jan	Coleshill Town	NPL M	A	2-3	W	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock 1	Castellano	Edjenguele	Guest	Demulder	Woodward ©	Shipman 2	Redhead	Haddow	L. Downes	Lock	Wood	Whiteside	Bryson		
3 Feb	AFC Rushden & Diamonds	NPL M	A	0-0	D	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	Castellano	Guest ©	Edjenguele	Demulder	J. Downes	Shipman	Redhead	Haddow	L. Downes	Lock	Whiteside	Wood			
17 Feb	Rugby Town	NPL M	H	1-1	D	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	J. Downes	Edjenguele	Guest ©	Wood	Lock	Shipman	Redhead	Haddow 1	L. Downes	Demulder	Bryson	Whiteside	Castellano		
24 Feb	Corby Town	NPL M	A	3-0	L	Fallows	Whiteside	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest ©	Bryson	Purse	Castellano	Shipman	J. Downes	Wood	Demulder	Hayward	Haddow	Redhead			
5 Mar	Loughborough Dynamo	NPL M	H	2-2	D	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	J. Downes	Edjenguele	Bryson	Haddow	Woodward ©	Shipman 1	Demulder 1	Hayward	L. Downes	Whiteside	Lock	Wood	Castellano		
9 Mar	Harborough Town	NPL M	H	1-2	L	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	J. Downes	Edjenguele	Bryson	Haddow	Woodward ©	Shipman	Demulder	Hayward	L. Downes	Guest	Wood 1	Castellano			
16 Mar	Cambridge City	NPL M	H	2-2	D	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest	Edjenguele	Haddow	Woodward ©	Shipman 1	Demulder	Hayward 1	Moore	Wood	Bryson	Castellano			
23 Mar	Loughborough Dynamo	NPL M	A	2-3	W	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest	Edjenguele	Demulder	Woodward ©	Shipman 1	Moore	Hayward 1	Castellano	Wood	Draper				
30 Mar	Sutton Coldfield Town	NPL M	H	0-1	L	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	L. Downes	Edjenguele	Guest	Demulder	Woodward ©	Brown	Moore	Hayward	J. Downes	Draper	Haddow	Castellano	Wood		
1 Apr	Lye Town	NPL M	A	1-1	D	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest	Draper	Demulder	Woodward ©	Brown 1	J. Downes	Moore	Edjenguele	Wood	Castellano				
6 Apr	Walsall Wood	NPL M	H	1-2	L	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	Woodward ©	Guest	Draper	J. Downes	Castellano	Brown	Moore 1	Wood	Edjenguele	L. Downes	Hayward	Demulder			
9 Apr	Shepshed Dynamo	NPL M	H	1-5	L	Fallows	Purse	Shorrock	L. Downes	Guest	Edjenguele	Hayward	Woodward ©	Brown 1	J. Downes	Moore	Haddow	Demulder	Wood	Castellano	Van Den Top		
13 Apr	Anstey Nomads	NPL M	A	5-1	L	Fallows	Draper	Shorrock	J. Downes	Guest	Edjenguele	Purse 1	Woodward ©	Brown	Demulder	Haddow	L. Downes	Moore	Wood	Hayward	Castellano		
20 Apr	Boldmere St Michaels	NPL M	H																				
27 Apr	Hinckley LR	NPL M	A																				

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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!

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- SCD is the leading cause of death in young athletes during sport and the majority of deaths occur with NO SYMPTOMS or family history.
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- Every week in the UK, 12 apparently fit and healthy young people (aged 35 and under) die from previously undiagnosed heart conditions.
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## 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.**

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**Division One Midlands**  
Tuesday 9th April 2024

Coventry Sphinx produced their worst performance of the season just when they needed it least, losing heavily at home to Shepshed Dynamo and leaving themselves with work to do to avoid relegation from the Pitching In Northern Premier League Midlands.

Sphinx were second best from start to finish as a second goal for the visitors on the stroke of half time preceded a second-half collapse.

The final score was 5-1 and it didn't flatter the visitors, who bounced back impressively from their own defeat to Rugby Town a few days earlier.

Joint managers John Woodward and Shaun Thomas brought Will Edjenguele back into the defence with Jamie Draper joining the long list of Sphinx injuries. Joe Pursey, Louis Guest and Finlay Shorrock completed a back four in front of goalkeeper Keelan Fallows.

Luke Downes started in midfield alongside Jack Downes and captain Callum Woodward, who moved back into a more familiar role after a solid but unwelcome outing in goal in the previous match. Jordan Hayward and Cam Moore flanked Leo Brown up front.

Dynamo started as they meant to go on, forcing Fallows into a smart save in the first minute. Sphinx's poor start soon cost them and Fallows was beaten with five minutes played. Jack Lynch's low left-footed effort found the bottom corner from outside the penalty area and the visitors had the lead.

Sphinx looked to respond. Woodward's free kick in the eighth minute was met by Edjenguele, who guided the ball towards goal.

Shepshed goalkeeper Brandon Ganley made the save and a follow-up from Jack Downes was blocked too.

The visitors were already on top, moving the ball crisply, but it might have been a different game had Sphinx been able to capitalise on their brief spell of causing problems from set pieces at the right end. Woodward's free kick in the tenth minute was another but Guest's thumping header went over the crossbar.

Despite those two chances, the home team were doing all the defending. Second balls weren't going their way and they were losing the midfield battle, so it was very much against the run of play when they equalised after 26 minutes.

Sphinx broke quickly after clearing a Shepshed corner. Hayward won the ball and fed it forward for Brown in the left channel. Brown ran his man, faced him up and beat him in the box, cutting back onto his right foot to power a low shot past Ganley for 1-1.



Sphinx were back under pressure straight away but gradually grew into the fight.

Good feet from Jack Downes gave him the chance to slip a ball through for Brown, whose shot was saved this time, and both Edjenguele and Guest came close to forcing in a Woodward corner as the ball curled towards the back post.

The teams exchanged chances in the few minutes before time. Good battling by Shorrock led to Woodward shooting over from 25 yards before a neat piece of skill at the other end produced a shot for Dynamo that was diverted over by a corner.

It's hard to make the case that a team taking the lead before going on to win comfortably was a turning point, but the goal that resulted from another corner was certainly a kick in the teeth on this occasion.

Taken from the Dynamo right, it curled right under the crossbar and was headed in from close range by Niall Prenderville in the fourth minute of first-half stoppage time.

The second half started badly and Shepshed grabbed another early goal. Just before the hour a free kick was lifted into the box and an own goal made it 3-1. The visitors were good value for the lead but Sphinx made it easy for them and were well beaten even with half an hour remaining.

Tyler Haddow, Ashton Demulder and Leo Wood came off the bench and gave Sphinx a different kind of threat but the moments of danger for Dynamo were few and far between. After their own ambitious shot over in the middle of the half, Brown fired over on the turn from a long free kick into the box.

A badly defended throw-in led to a low shot dragged wide by the visitors in the 74th minute but they didn't have to wait long before scoring their fourth on the counter-attack.



Sphinx's corner went wrong and they were caught out as Shepshed broke. The home team were wide open at the back and were punished for getting into a three-on-one situation by a clean square pass for Shaun Ruzvidzo and a composed finish past Fallows to make it 4-1 with seven minutes remaining.

Haddow zipped a shot just wide in the 89th minute but the final chance of the game went to Dynamo and it was another gift.

Three minutes into stoppage time they were awarded a penalty for a foul by Guest. Kyle Dixon hit the spot kick

straight down the middle to bag Shepshed's fifth and final goal.

To say this was a dismal night for the club would be an understatement.

Sphinx started the game within striking distance of Shepshed and in apparently better form, but the outcome was a sound and deserved thrashing at the most inopportune time.

There are now three games remaining to get out of trouble and there's nothing easy about any of them.

Sphinx have a buffer but they'll have to beat title-chasing Anstey Nomads, a Boldmere St Michaels team who beat them earlier in the season or play-off contenders Hinckley LR if they're to avoid needing it.

Boldmere visit the Sphinx Industrial Supplies Arena on Saturday 20th April in between two visits to Leicestershire.

### TEAMSHEET

- 1 Keelan Fallows
- 2 Joe Pursey
- 3 Finlay Shorrock ▼ Wood (69)
- 4 Luke Downes ▼ Haddow (59)
- 5 Louis Guest
- 6 Will Edjenguele
- 7 Jordan Hayward
- 8 Callum Woodward @
- 9 Leo Brown ⚽
- 10 Jack Downes
- 11 Cam Moore ▼ Demulder (59)
- 12 Tyler Haddow ▲ XX (XX)
- 14 Ashton Demulder
- 15 Leo Wood
- 16 Alfonso Castellano
- 20 Duncan Van Den Top



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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
Monday 8 January	5-3	L	Bedworth United	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 11 January	5-1	L	Inkberrow	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 1 February	1-3	W	Stratford Town	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Friday 9 February	1-2	W	Alvechurch	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Monday 12th February	6-3	L	Solihull Moors	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Monday 26th February	1-6	W	Rugby Borough	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 7th March	6-2	W	Halesowen Town	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Monday 25th March	4-1	L	Halesowen Town	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Tuesday 2nd April	5-2	W	Kidderminster Harriers	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Monday 8th April	5-3	L	Kidderminster Harriers	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 25th April	19.45	H	Alvechurch	MFYL Southern Premier Division
Thursday 2nd May	19.45	H	Bedworth United	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		H	Rugby Town	MFYL Southern Premier Division
TBC		H	Stourbridge	MFYL Southern Premier Division

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## ANSTEY NOMADS 5 COVENTRY SPHINX 1

**Pitching In NPL**  
**Division One Midlands**  
Saturday 13th April 2024

One of the obvious conclusions from Coventry Sphinx's first season of away games in the Pitching In Northern Premier League Midlands is that there's a noticeable gap between the top of the division and the bottom when the leading teams have their tails up at home.

A second 5-1 defeat of the week was far from ideal as Sphinx chase safety from relegation but Anstey Nomads are in the hunt for the title and ultimately overpowered the visitors thanks in large part to two goals in three minutes in the second half.

Joint managers John Woodward and Shaun Thomas reverted to a back three. Jamie Draper, Louis Guest and Will Edjenguele played in front of goalkeeper Keelan Fallows, with Joe Pursey and Finlay Shorrock starting as wing backs.



Jack Downes and Callum Woodward got the nod in the centre of midfield, Ashton Demulder played in the hole, and Tyler Haddow came back into the starting eleven to play alongside striker Leo Brown.

The home team had the initiative from the start. Sphinx showed some early nerves and struggled at times to clear their lines. The resulting pressure told in the ninth minute. Anstey opened the scoring with a goal that

couldn't have been simpler from their perspective. A corner kick was delivered, Brad Wilson was wide open for a free header and the hosts were in front.

The momentum showed little sign of shifting immediately after the goal but Sphinx replied with one of their own just six minutes later. It was the highlight of a bleak afternoon.

A nice move wide on the left led to a crossing opportunity for Shorrock. His brilliant delivery was impossible to defend and was met at the back post by Pursey, who thumped in an unstoppable header to make it 1-1.

The Nomads weren't knocked off their stride. Fallows had to get down very smartly to turn away a scuffed shot in the 19th minute before a free kick drifted well wide of his post in the 22nd minute.

But Sphinx were in the game and the contest was more even for a brief spell in the middle of the first half. Haddow got in behind and rolled the ball across for Brown, who was just beaten to it by a defender and rightly surprised by the awarding of a goal kick.

The visitors instantly paid the price in the form of the subsequent second Anstey goal.

A cross came in from the left, Zayn Hakeem got across his marker too cheaply and guided a stooping header past Fallows and into the net for 2-1.

The lead restored, Anstey found it relatively easy to play round their opponents. Their progress was smoothed further by the consistent refusal of the referee to apply the same standards to both teams.

In the 38th minute, Haddow was fouled in a full-blooded challenge on the touchline.

Anstey were given the free kick, the Sphinx player was shown a yellow card and was unable to continue because of the injury he sustained.

Both teams had time remaining in the half to shoot over the crossbar, with more good work

by Shorrock teeing up Brown to blast one high deep into stoppage time for the away side. Sphinx made a decent start to the second half.

Four minutes in, Woodward's corner to the back post was headed back across goal by Edjenguele. Brown headed over with his shirt up around his head.



Despite better Sphinx play and that chance from a set piece, Anstey had a clear territorial advantage and Fallows had to save well with his feet in the tenth minute of the second half. Another shot went safely wide but the crucial few minutes came either side of the hour mark.

In the 60th minute, the Nomads made it 3-1. Another cross in was finished neatly, this time by Corey Armeni. His volley guided the ball into the corner to give the visitors a mountain to climb.

Two minutes later, Kyle Tomlin was played in behind and flicked the ball past Fallows with the outside of his right boot. At 4-1 the contest was beyond Sphinx but they didn't let their heads drop and they weren't found wanting for effort.

Brown had a couple of good looks at goal in the shadow of Anstey's quick-fire double. A nice touch by Demulder set the ball for the striker to drill it into the side netting, before a shot from just outside the box went over the crossbar. But, in truth, there was only really one team in it after Anstey's third goal, at least in terms of possession of the ball and field position. To add insult to injury, the home team made it two 5-1 defeats in a row for Sphinx by adding a fifth in stoppage time.

The visitors turned the ball over on the edge of their own box thanks to Nyle Blake's tenacity after losing possession himself, and he turned to fire over Fallows to conclude the scoring and end a difficult match for Sphinx.

It was an unpleasant afternoon on the outskirts of Leicester in just about every way but the overall

performance was by no means as disheartening as the previous defeat against Shepshed Dynamo in midweek.

Sphinx know better than most that it's not over until it's over and this relegation battle is no different. Time might be on their side but form is not, and they're not out of the woods yet with two games left to play.

Thomas and Woodward's team have work to do against Boldmere St Michaels and Hinckley Leicester Road in order to guarantee safety.

Boldmere visit the Sphinx Industrial Supplies Arena on Saturday 20th April before Sphinx end their first Step Four season at Leicester Road a week later.

### TEAMSHEET

- 1 Keelan Fallows
- 2 Jamie Draper
- 3 Finlay Shorrock ▼ Hayward (72)
- 4 Jack Downes
- 5 Louis Guest
- 6 Will Edjenguele
- 7 Joe Pursey ⚽
- 8 Callum Woodward @ ▼ L. Downes (63)
- 9 Leo Brown
- 10 Ashton Demulder
- 11 Tyler Haddow ▼ Wood (43)
- 12 Luke Downes ▲ Woodward (63)
- 14 Cam Moore
- 15 Leo Wood ▲ Haddow (43)
- 16 Jordan Hayward ▲ Shorrock (72)
- 17 Alfonso Castellano

**SPHINX MAN OF THE MATCH**  
**JOE PURSEY**





# BOLDMERE ST MICHAELS

## PEN PICTURES

### **Lewis Allison**

Lewis is a product of our Mikes youth policy and has recently stepped up to the first team squad from the U21 squad. He is equally at home at full back or in midfield.

### **Callum Ballinger**

Callum joined Mikes in December 2023 having previously played for Anstey Nomads. He is a product of Tamworth FC Academy.

### **Keiran Boucher**

Keiran is a late addition to the squad joining in March 2024 from Hednesford Town and with previous experience at Redditch United. He is a goalkeeper.

### **Andre Brown**

Andre signed for Mikes early in 2022-23 season from Bromsgrove Sporting. He is a strong player up front to supplement the strikers but is capable of finding the net himself.

### **Jack Byrne**

Jack joined Mikes in August 2023 from Halesowen Town. He is a midfielder who has had previous spells at Solihull Moors and AFC Telford United.

### **Tazivaishe Chibaya**

Taz is a young defender who has joined Mikes on a dual registration with Chelmsley Town. It's hoped he will grow into the football at this level and is showing great promise.

### **Harry Craven**

Harry is a product of Mikes Youth and is now in his eighth season with the first team. He has been a representative at County level. He plays at centre back where he has developed into a stalwart of the defence. He has been awarded the captain's armband on several occasions. He had exceeded 200 games for Mikes before his 24th birthday

### **Joe Daley**

Joe is an uncompromising midfielder who joined Mikes in 2021-22 season after time at Wolverhampton Casuals and after making his mark in Mikes first team is now a regular on the team sheet. He is currently back in training after a spell out with a shoulder injury and making good progress.

### **Ricardo Dudley**

Ricardo has joined Mikes for season 2023-24. He is a defender with previous experience at Barwell, Bedworth United, Racing Club Warwick and more recently Fairfield Villa.

### **Ben George**

Ben made the move to Mikes from local rivals Sutton Coldfield Town for the 2021-22 season. He is a right back who likes to get up the field and will support the midfield when the opportunities arise

### **Callum Gittings**

Callum is a midfielder who has joined Mikes for a second spell. He was originally at the club as a young

player before moving on to Alvechurch, Kidderminster Harriers and Stourbridge.

### **Daniel Gyasi**

Daniel is in his second spell at Mikes this season. Having previously joined Mikes from Walsall Wood he had a brief spell at Hednesford Town but ended up back at Mikes. He is an attacking winger with an eye for goal.

### **Joe Hull**

Joe signed for Mikes in August 2023 after a spell at Stourbridge. He is a central defender. His previous clubs include Alvechurch and Darlaston Town. He is currently the club captain during the long absence of Ben George due to a long standing injury.

### **Tommy Jackson**

Tommy has joined Mikes from Hanley Town after a spell at Sporting Khalsa. He is a goalkeeper and has come to Mikes to replace our previous goalkeeper who has moved up a level.

### **Kai Knight**

Signed in October 2023, Kai came to Mikes as a centre midfielder who has been playing in the MFL for DSC United. However, he has made a switch to left back, a position he has settled into very well.

### **Callum North**

Callum will almost certainly be the youngest squad member for the current season. He is a striker who has earned his place in the squad after a splendid season for Mikes U21s for whom he was the team captain.

### **Adrian Owiredu-Gyamera**

Adrian is a defender who joined Mikes in February 2024 having previously played for Coleshill Town.

### **Owen Parry**

Owen returned to Mikes in October 2022 after 2 seasons at Rushall Olympic. He is a midfielder/forward who was with Mikes from his academy days.

### **Pierre Phillips**

Pierre has recently ascended to the senior squad after a fine spell in Mikes U21 team. He is a central defender and gives the squad extra stability in that area.

### **Red Simmons**

Red is, at 17 years old, a long standing player at Mikes having come through the whole journey from

the U8s. He has been playing regularly for the U21 team this season and has signed for the seniors for some experience. He is a full back who likes to get forward.

### **O'Shane Stewart**

O'Shane came to Mikes from Redditch United in December 2023. He is a midfielder who has an eye for goal. He has previously played in the Home Counties for Kingstonian.

### **Harry Sweeney**

Harry joined Mikes from Chelmsley Town in 2019 and has been a regular left back in the first team. He is gradually developing into a wing back and that's probably where his future lies.

### **Ben Usher-Shipway**

Ben, who came through Mikes' youth set up and played for the seniors for three seasons before moving to Solihull Moors, Stourbridge and Leamington, has returned in September 2023 and will be deployed in a wide role.

### **George Washbourne**

George has recently signed for Mikes after many seasons at Coleshill Town. He is a forward and will give some alternatives to Mikes' squad.

### **Danny Wood**

Danny is still captain of Mikes' U21 team and has signed for the senior team to accustom himself to the higher level of football that he'll undoubtedly be playing before very long. He is a midfielder.

## BOLDMERE ST MICHAELS HISTORY

The club was established in 1883 as a youth football team attached to the local church and soon progressed from playing to playing competitive league football. As the boys outgrew youth football, they organised an open-age team, which played in various local leagues. In the 1947-48 season, they reached the semi-finals of the FA Amateur Cup, losing 2-0 to Barnet in front of 27,000 at Highbury. In 1949, the club joined the Birmingham & District League.

During the 1950s the club's fortunes declined somewhat, as they resolved to remain staunchly amateur at a time when their rivals were becoming semi-professional. In 1963 the club moved leagues to the Worcestershire Combination, later re-named the Midland Football Combination, where they were to remain for thirty years.

The most successful period was during the 1980/90s when they claimed the championship on three occasions (1985/86 under John Morris) and 1988/89 and 1989/90 plus two league cup triumphs in 1989/90 (the double) and 1990/91 (under Alan Parsons).

This level of success saw the Mikes become founder members of the Midland Alliance in 1994, where they played until 2013-14, generally finishing in the top half of the table.

The club has won the Walsall Senior Cup on five occasions 1986/87 (under John Morris), 2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08 (under Mick Bayley) and 2018/19 (under Stuart Grosvenor).

In the final season of the Midland Football Alliance, 2013-14 the club achieved its best position of runners-up (under Stuart Grosvenor). The Mikes were the only club to play in all twenty seasons in the Midland Alliance, reaching the league cup final twice in that time losing on both occasions to Market Drayton

Town and Stratford Town. In 2014-15 they became founding members of the Midland Football League Premier Division, scoring the first goal in the new competition in a 9-1 opening day win at Rokester.

The most exciting chapter in the club's history took place in 2016 with a total stadium refurbishment and installing the latest artificial turf pitches, including two new floodlit courts for training and small-sided matches. Vice-Chairman Ralph Simmons was the driving force in this major change. The project was funded primarily by private investment to secure the club's future by investing in junior teams from age seven upwards.

The Junior section was awarded the FA Charter Standard and made its first move into Saturday Development football with two Midland Junior Premier League teams for 2017-18. The club has also been awarded Wildcats status as an FA-affiliated centre for girls' football.

2017-18 also saw the launch of two new senior teams. Our brand new Academy in partnership with BMet (Sutton College) saw our BTEC students enter the National League Under 19 Youth Alliance, with the club also introducing an Under 21 team to bridge the gap to first-team football, playing in the MFL Under 21 Division.

The Junior section now has eight teams competing in the Midland Junior Premier League and two Under 18 sides playing in the Midland Floodlit Youth League. In all the club has over fifty teams playing on Saturdays or Sundays.

The Women's team at the club won the National League Division 1 (Midlands) last season and will be playing in the National League Northern Premier Division in 2022/23. Unfortunately, they had a disappointing time and finished second last so the 2023/24 season will see the team competing back in the National League Division 1 (Midlands).

The floodlights installed circa 1990 have recently been upgraded due to the generosity of the Sutton Coldfield Town Council and a new dressing room block incorporating Hospitality and Boardroom facilities was brought into full use during the 2021/22 season. The clubhouse was refurbished in 2019 with further in hand now the new dressing room block in use. Work is now underway to demolish the old dressing rooms, introducing a junior recreation area, offices and a sensory room.

Managerial changes at the club are few current President Alan Parsons, a John Morris signing in 1987 held the hot seat for 16 years following Morris' departure to Halesowen Town; Rob Mallaband, the current Chairman has had two spells split by Mick Bayley's three-year reign whilst Stuart Grosvenor's tenancy lasted six seasons. In early September 2019, the club Board decided a change of football manager was required and following great interest were delighted to appoint former player Neil Kitching along with his assistants Nick Amos and Ian Cooper to the hot seat. Taking over with the club in the lower reaches of the table the management improved matters as the season progressed and were in a healthy position before COVID struck the country. Their efforts were finally rewarded in the 2021/22 season when a second-placed finish saw them win a promotion/relegation playoff game at Chalfont St Peter 4-0.

In the debut season in The Northern Premier League Midlands Division the final placing of ninth was a disappointment as the club had occupied fourth or fifth place throughout the season and looked to have secured a play-off place. Injuries plus defeats in the last three matches proved the undoing. The highlight of the campaign was the double over promotion favourites (they went through via the pay-offs) Halesowen Town. Will the 2023/24 season better last season's efforts?



## 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	4-0	L	Lye Town Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 14 January	4-3	W	Crusaders Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 21 January	2-1	W	Shrewsbury Town Women	West Mids Premier Cup QF
Sunday 28 January	4-0	L	Shrewsbury Town Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 4 February	2-3	L	Burton Albion Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 25 February	3-0	L	Knowle Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 24 March	1-1	D	Lye Town Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 7 April	3-0	W	Lichfield City Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 14 April	2-1	W	Shrewsbury Town Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 21 April	14.00	H	Worcester City Women	West Mids Premier Cup SF
Sunday 28 April	14.00	A	Lichfield City Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 5 May	14.00	H	Shifnal Town Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Thursday 9 May	14.00	A	Coundon Court Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 19 May	14.00	H	Coundon Court Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division
Sunday 26 May	14.00	H	Kidderminster Harriers Women	West Mids Regional Premier Division
TBC		H	Knowle Ladies	West Mids Regional Premier Division

# PITCHING IN NORTHERN PREMIER LEAGUE

## DIVISION ONE MIDLANDS FIXTURES

Saturday 20th April

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

Saturday 27th April

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

# PITCHING IN NORTHERN PREMIER LEAGUE

## DIVISION ONE MIDLANDS LEAGUE TABLE

Pos	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Spalding United	36	26	5	5	83	32	51	83
2	Anstey Nomads	35	24	9	2	90	36	54	81
3	Harborough Town*	36	27	4	5	84	24	60	79
4	Hinckley LR	36	19	9	8	62	47	15	66
5	Quorn	36	18	8	10	76	53	23	62
6	Loughborough Dynamo	36	18	7	11	67	58	9	61
7	Lye Town	36	17	7	12	54	42	12	58
8	Corby Town	35	15	9	11	75	44	31	54
9	Sutton Coldfield Town	36	15	6	15	54	55	-1	51
10	Bedworth United	37	14	8	15	49	44	5	50
11	Walsall Wood	36	15	5	16	57	64	-7	50
12	Sporting Khalsa	36	15	5	16	51	64	-13	50
13	Boldmere St Michaels	36	14	5	17	64	53	11	47
14	Shepshed Dynamo	36	11	6	19	46	60	-14	39
15	Coleshill Town	36	10	5	21	52	83	-31	35
16	Coventry Sphinx	36	6	13	17	37	68	-31	31
17	Cambridge City	36	8	7	21	44	78	-34	31
18	AFC Rushden & Diamonds	36	7	5	24	35	78	-43	26
19	Rugby Town	36	7	5	24	38	82	-44	26
20	Gresley Rovers	37	6	8	23	37	90	-53	26

\* Harborough Town deducted 6 points

16/4/2024



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