

WINGGATE & FINCHLEY

ISTHMIAN PREMIER DIVISION



VS



3PM KO

Saturday 8th February
Maurice Rebak Stadium
Summers Ln London N12 0PD



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WINGATE & FINCHLEY FC

Hello and welcome to the Maurice Rebak Stadium! We hope that all associated with the club, the match officials and the staff, players and officials of Dover Athletic enjoy their stay in N12 this afternoon!

This afternoon is the first time that we are hosting Dover Athletic. Since our merger in 1991 and reforming in 1983, we have never played in the same division, with the Kent side generally playing at a higher level including in the Conference Premier.

Before this campaign, the two sides have only spent two seasons at the same level – 2006/07 and 2007/08. These campaigns we were separated into divisions – the Blues being placed in the Isthmian Division 1 North and Dover in Division 1 South.

We have also not been a cup tie between our two sides. Our only tie between our sides came earlier this season when we claimed a famous 2-1 win at The Crabble on Saturday 28th September, winning 2-1 with a goal each from Tanimowo and Obi.

Company Name and Number:

Wingate and Finchley Development Ltd, 6014465

Ground: The Maurice Rebak Stadium, Summers Lane, Finchley, London N12 0PD. Tel: 020 8446 2217

Company Number: 6014465

Training Ground: Barnet Lane, Barnet, EN5 2DN

League Match Ticket Prices:

£12 adults, £8 concession, £5 for ages 11-18, under 11 free

Chairman: Aron Sharpe

Vice Chairman: Nicky Rifat, Joe Sharpe

President: Harvey Ackerman

Life Vice President: David Ackerman

Life Vice President: David Wolff

Life Vice President: Peter Rebak

Life Vice President: Steven Astaire

Director: Paul Lerman

Secretary: Andrew Kouroushi

Finance: Liam Blaney

First Team Manager: Ahmet Rifat

First Team Coaches: Ruben Gaspar, Jonny Georgiou, Ricky Machel

First Team Goalkeeping Coach: Gavin King

First Team Analyst: Michael Smith

Kit Manager: Peter Barker

Head Groundsman: Andy Ward

Welfare Officer: Jonny Georgiou

Bar Manager: Lorraine Coleman

Matchday Hospitality: Tony Ward

Programme Editor: Joshua Palmer

CLUB NOTES

Congratulations David Wolff!

Our life vice-president David Wolff has recently received the London FA's Bobby Moore Award for 2024 Grassroots Heroes Award (sponsored by Panini!)

Congratulations David!

Mr Wolff is also chairman of the Maccabi (Southern) GB Football League (since 1970!), overseeing the organisation of the league.

His footballing career began back in the 1950s as a member of the Ivri Maccabi Youth League and is a supporter of West Ham United – once being asked to manage their under 16s team. He joined the MSFL Management Committee in December 1963 as assistant secretary, before rising to vice chairman in 1965 then chairman in 1970. During his directorship, the league has risen from 12 clubs to 66.

David has also chaired the London FA since 2022.

From all at the club, congratulations on your award David!

Season run-in

It may only be early February but today's game is our 14th last of the 2024/25 campaign! Having had its highs and lows we have already played 35 competitive fixtures.

New signing!

Please welcome our latest signing Benjamin Watt to the club!

Benjamin was previously in the Norwich City academy and spent last season at Braintree Town.

He can play as either a right back or in a midfield position!

Welcome Benjamin!

New signing!

Please welcome another new signing, goalkeeper Matteo Salamon!

A highly rated goalkeeper joins on a short-term loan agreement from Championship side QPR, featuring in the academy.

Top scorers 2024/25

Competitive first team games only.
Total games: 28 league, 7 cup:

	Lge	Cup	Tot.
Obi	21	3	22
Lowe	5	1	6
Georgiou	4	1	5
Drakes-Thomas	2	3	5
Frempah	4	0	4
Oladipo	3	0	3
Restrepo	3	0	3
Tanimowo	3	0	3
Deslandes	2	0	2
Newton	2	0	2
Briscoe	1	0	1
Iontton	1	0	1
Ward-Cochrane	1	0	1
Watt	1	0	1

LEAGUE RESPECT STATEMENT



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



Respect

A VIEW FROM AFAR

‘Come on Dover, move your bloomin’ arse!’ is a well-known line from which stage and film musical?

- Sunshine on Leith
- Oliver
- My Fair Lady

Answer at the end of the article

It’s always a pleasure to welcome a team that have recently been operating at a higher level in the so-called ‘Pyramid’. Dover are one such club and no doubt they will be pleased today to visit a ground that is the proud owner of a Grade 2 listed stand. In a similar way, fans of the likes of Curzon Ashton or Farsley Celtic must be thrilled to have a visit this season from Scunthorpe. (better check this, ed).

The most glamorous and highly publicised occasions of bigger clubs going to a new arena are nearly always Cup ties; these are sprung upon us by somebody pulling balls from a Perspex goldfish bowl and viewers gasping with anticipation as somebody announces ‘number 37’. Somehow the league games, the dates for which are published while we are building sandcastles the previous summer, are built into the calendar with a glow of anticipation, without quite the instant thrill. Perhaps the league games are the Lobster Thermidor to the Cup’s Big Mac.

I am old enough to recall each of Manchester United, Liverpool and Spurs playing in what was then called the Second Division. That seems almost unthinkable now – well certainly for Liverpool. They were actually in the second tier for eight years before somebody called Bill Shankly brought them back up and they have hardly looked back since. Well, only to see how far behind Everton are, I suppose. The other two bounced back at the first opportunity when they last went down and have had nothing but glory ever since. (this is getting silly, ed).

Way back in 1998, I was on a family holiday in Florida and we had spent a happy day at a Theme Park, during which I spotted that rarity, a teenager in a replica Rotherham shirt. That was nearly as much of a surprise as the occasion when a small boy was seen sporting a Berwick Rangers shirt in, err, Berwick.

At the end of the sunburnt day, we made our way to the bus stop to catch a shuttle back to our hotel. As we waited on the bus for departure time, a conversation broke out between an American gentleman – a bold and unlikely description, I know – and an English visitor. It turned to the subject of ‘soccer’ and the young Englishman was asked what team he ‘cheered for’. He responded with the name of a club that were battling for promotion from the third tier of English football.

A VIEW FROM AFAR

'I've never heard of them' came the reply, 'are they some kind of minor league team for the city's other side?'

Bristling slightly, the English holidaymaker decided to do his best not to provoke a diplomatic incident and calmly gave a brief description of how, unlike in the States, clubs could move fluidly through a system of promotion and relegation, which left the American scratching his head in bewilderment and becoming suddenly interested in something outside the window. Who were the team supported by our compatriot? It was somebody called Manchester City – I wonder whatever happened to them?

Which musical contained that line? It was My Fair Lady, when Eliza Doolittle rather lost her composure when encouraging a horse at Royal Ascot.

By Peter Brown

WINGATE & FINCHLEY CLUB HISTORY

Wingate and Finchley Football club can trace its roots back to the formation of Finchley Football Club in 1874 making it one of the oldest clubs in the country. Founded by Pa Jackson, who also was instrumental in the creation of the Corinthians, The London Football Association as well as later serving as secretary of the FA, Finchley became founder members of the Athenian League in 1912 after spells in the London League and North London League. They finished fourth in the maiden season, higher than such luminaries as Grays Athletic, Chelmsford City and Enfield.

However their stay was cut short due to the onset of World War One and they would only return for a lone season in 1929 before returning to the London League and forging success. The club's first piece of silverware was won during the 1934-1935 season when the League Cup was captured, with the taste of achievement forming Finchley went on to win the London League in 1936-1937 before World War Two scuppered their winning streak.

It was immediately after the conflict that saw Major Harry Sadow, Frank Davis, George Hyams and Asher Rebak form a Jewish Football Club believing the field of play was a ground of battling the ignorance of anti-Semitism. So in 1946 Wingate Football Club began life in the Middlesex Senior League. The club was named after General Orde C. Wingate who despite not being Jewish himself oversaw the creation of the Israeli Army during the Second World War. The club enjoyed early success and by 1952 they were promoted to the London League.

Meanwhile Finchley, back in the Athenian League, were in the middle of their glory years with the 1952-1953 season proving to be the pinnacle. That year saw their progression to the Third Round Proper of the FA Cup. Defeated along the way were Chelmsford City, Kidderminster Harriers (1-0 at Aggborough) and Crystal Palace (3-1 at Summers Lane) before the Finches were finally beaten 2-0 at Gay Meadow against Shrewsbury Town.

Despite an Amateur Cup semi-final appearance, losing to bitter local rivals Hendon at Highbury in 1965, a sense of decline was starting to emerge. A switch to the Isthmian Premier League failed to stop the halt, and in 1980-81 Finchley were relegated to the second division.

Wingate by now had become a senior club and were competing in the Athenian League. Many players had become members of the Middlesex FA representative side and also partook on behalf of Great Britain in the Maccabiah Games. Disaster struck though in 1972 when their Hall Lane ground in Hendon was lost to the M1 extension and despite a short ground share with Finchley FC the club reverted to junior football.

Wingate finally returned to the senior game with a brief merger with Leyton FC. This partnership proved to be unsuccessful and despite a 1984-1985 League Cup victory, ironically defeating Finchley in the final, both clubs went their separate ways.

In 1991 with Finchley struggling in the Isthmian League Second Division and with mounting debts it was announced that a merger with Wingate would take place in the

WINGATE & FINCHLEY CLUB HISTORY

summer. After extensive refurbishment and a name change of the Summers Lane ground in honour of long time Wingate supporter Harry Abrahams, Wingate and Finchley took to the field for the start of the 1991-1992 season.

Success was immediate and despite starting life in the South Midlands League the club were quickly competing in the Isthmian League and by season 2003-2004 were members of the newly formed Division One North.

In recent seasons the club has continued its growth. A brief flirtation with the Southern League was shortly followed by the arrivals of Manager Michael Stone and Chairman Aron Sharpe. Now back in the Isthmian League a youthful squad achieved seventh position in the First Division North in the 2008-2009.

Stone sadly left the club in 2009 after being offered the post of Assistant Manager at Conference giants Rushden and Diamonds. The club's first team manager in time for the start of the 2009/10 season was former Oswestry Town manager and Total Network Solutions Llansantffraid midfielder David Norman. At the end this season the Club finished in a record high position of 3rd in the Ryman Division One North, mainly thanks to a record run of 17 matches without defeat from the turn of the year, a run which included 13 wins. The Club reached the playoffs but lost out to Enfield Town in the semi-final 3-2 in an incredible match. This paved the way for what was to be a monumental and unforgettable 2010/11 season.

The Club was quickly becoming the most progressive non-league club in the area, thanks to Sharpe's focus on youth development. Bobby Aisien and Medi Alabimba had progressed from Hadley Wood and Wingate to earn professional contracts, and in 2011 over 20 of the U16-18 age group represented their County. Six boys at U16's were given scholarships with pro sides and the club developed into a community club with a Mencap disability initiative, work with schools, and it entered its fourth year of the Flex educational scheme.

A consistent league season for the First Team saw the side match their previous 3rd place league finish and earn a second crack at the playoffs. In the semi-final Harlow Town were beaten 4-2 after extra time, and promotion to the Ryman premier Division was won with a 118th minute winner over Brentwood Town in extra time of the final - The Blues winning 3-2 on their home turf.

This victory was the middle leg of a remarkable and unique Treble. Earlier that season the club had lifted the Ryman League Cup having beaten Dulwich Hamlet 2-0 at Imber Court, and London Senior Cup success was to follow shortly afterwards when Hendon were convincingly beaten 3-1 in the final.

Success flowed throughout the Club this year, with the youth teams also building on their previous season's work as they progressed superbly. The U18's won the Middlesex County Cup, and at U15 level the League Title and three Cup trophies followed (two County cups and the League cup). Even the Under 10's were getting in on the action as they lifted the Spring Cup!

WINGATE & FINCHLEY CLUB HISTORY

The first season in the Ryman Premier Division in 2011/12 saw the side secure safety in this new level with a comfortable mid-table finish, ending up closer to the playoffs than from relegation. The final third of the season saw breakthroughs for youth players Liron Mannie and David Smouha who both played big roles in the first team squad. Meanwhile there was huge cup success at youth level yet again; The Under 18's won the AFA Cup, beating Valley Park after extra time, as well as the London County Cup. The Under 17's won a double as they beat Thurrock in the EJA League Cup final to add to their earlier AFA Cup success having beaten Bethwin 8-1! The Under 16's also got in on the action securing their AFA Cup title beating Woodford FC, which they added later on securing their EJA (Herts) League title.

Success of the youth sides prompted three players - Ross Weinreb, Nathan Sollosi and Joe Sharpe - to earn selection to the Great Britain Maccabi Team for the world games in Israel during July 2013. Meanwhile the Barnet Mencap disability sides grew in strength as they entered the fourth season with the club, with three sides now competing in the Camden Step Leagues. The year ended on a high as McDonalds joined in lucrative sponsorship deal.

The following season, 2012-13, was a difficult one for the first team. Early season poor form led to the departure of Norman in November as ex-Northwood boss Gary Meakin came in. The Club flirted with relegation all season until a momentous 3-2 victory over Lowestoft two days before the final day secured survival. However Norman rejoined the Club in the summer as Director of Football, as veteran defender Daniel Nielsen was put in place as Head Coach. Meanwhile a new Under 21 Development squad was set up to compete in the inaugural Ryman U21 League.

There was continual success for the youth sides. The U17's added the London County Cup to an earlier EJA league title, the EJA cup and the AFA cup. These were also followed up with the League Regional Playoff title. The U16's won two cups in this season, the EJA and AFA trophies.

In 2014 the side faced another relegation fight in the league, which was lost on goal difference on the final day of the season despite a 5-0 victory over Billericay Town. However, when Worksop Town pulled out of the Southern League due to financial problems, Wingate & Finchley were the first in line to earn the reprieve back to the Ryman Premier Division.

The 2014-15 season resulted in a record finish of 12th place in the Ryman Premier League, and at the end of the season Norman departed, to be replaced by Simon Lane as Director of Football. However for the start of 2016 he was replaced by former Northern Ireland International Keith Rowland and the side finished in a stable 13th position. In August 2016 the stadium at Summers Lane was re-named after Wingate FC co-founder Maurice Rebak who had passed away in February of that year aged 95.

WINGATE & FINCHLEY CLUB HISTORY

The 2016-17 season saw the club set a new record, finishing in 5th place in the Ryman Premier League and qualifying for the end of season playoffs. A last-minute defeat at Bognor Regis Town in the semi-final ended the season, but this was a magnificent achievement and saw the Blues win the League's Team Performance of the Year Award.

A ninth-place finish followed in 2017-18 as the Blues narrowly missed out on a second successive play-off berth. There was success for the Under 23 side who won the Isthmian Development League North Division at a canter. Over the summer the Club embarked on an extensive state-of-the-art refurbishment of the stadium, for the first time since 1991's merger, giving the clubhouse a much-welcomed overhaul and making the stadium one of the most impressive in non-league football.

The subsequent three seasons saw a period of uncertainty both on and off the pitch, with short management stints for ex England International Nicky Shorey, ex Premier League stalwart Glen Little and ex West Ham Academy and Wingate & Finchley favourite Steve Clarke, followed by two null and void seasons under the stewardship of Spencer Knight due to the COVID pandemic. However, during this period there were still many successes, including U18s winning County Cup in consecutive seasons and the London Champion of Champions trophy, U23 Development Squad being victorious in Herts League Cup fielding a squad largely made up of Under 18s, while both U13s and U12s secured League Titles.

In the summer of 2021, Club legends Ahmet Rifat (Director of Football) and Marc Weatherstone (Manager) were appointed as a new Management Team after nearly 1000 first team appearances between them. Later in the 2022/23 season Ahmet Rifat was to take sole charge.

Season 2024/24 will go down on record as one of our finest if not the finest. Finishing in 4th position with a record haul of 76 points and scoring 78 goals. Ahmet Rifat's charges made it to the play offs on the last day of the season with a 3-0 win over Carshalton.

We faced local rivals Enfield Town in the play off Semi finals at the QE II Stadium. We narrowly lost a very tight match 1-0 in front of a crowd of 2,225 that night. A fine season was ended, but what memories it brought.

What does 2024/25 hold, a new revamped side, and a manager and coaching squad with that extra years experience. Looking forward to the journey.

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DOVER ATHLETIC FC CLUB HISTORY

DOVER FOOTBALL CLUB

The first football club in Dover played a few friendlies in the 1888-89 season - little is known about this club, however, as the Dover Express did not give much coverage to football. A second club was then formed in 1891. It was known as Dover Association Football Club, as there was already a Dover Football Club in existence - they are now known as the Rugby Club!

Anyway, various clubs have existed since then, all of which have been forced out of business due to financial problems. The most recent Dover Football Club was formed in 1934 as an amateur outfit, and it was re-formed in 1947 as a semi-professional club. This club existed until 1983, when it was forced to close by an Inland Revenue demand for unpaid tax. As you probably realise, Dover Athletic F.C. is now in existence, but we are not concerned with the present club here.

LEAGUE COMPETITIONS

In 1946-47, the last season of the amateurs, the Dover side found itself rather out of its depth playing in the Kent League Division One. Despite the austerity of the immediate post-War years, it was decided to turn professional to try and compete on equal terms with the majority of clubs. Dover played in the Kent League until 1959, when the club was admitted to the Southern League. Playing in the First Division, we eventually won promotion in 1967.

We then played in the Premier Division until relegation in 1978. Despite winning the First Division (South) title the following season, we were not promoted, and spent the next three seasons in the Southern Division. The last season of Dover F.C. was 1982-83, when we struggled in the Southern Division, with a very young and inexperienced side.

CUP COMPETITIONS

Dover F.C. had its successes in various cup competitions, and just like its successor, had awful trouble in beating various lesser clubs. Dover reached the Second Round of the F.A. Cup once, and was knocked out in the First Round three times. We won the Kent Senior Cup seven times, and the Kent Senior Shield once. Apart from that, it has been a history of 'so near, but so far', and as you know, Dover Athletic's record in this respect is no better.



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Toby Byron

Billy Cracknell

Jaiden Drakes-Thomes

Ben Frempah

Rhamar Garrett-Douglas

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Fergal Hale-Brown

Loic Hernandez

Arthur Iontton

Cain Keller

Ryan Lowe

Zack Newton

Ogo Obi

Camilo Restrepo

Matteo Salamon

Ayo Tanimowo

Ben Ward-Cochrane

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Francis Mampolo

Jacob Mensah

Charlie Naylor

George Nikaj

Harrison Pont

Fuad Sesay

Ruben Soares-junior

Joe Tennent

Mitch Walker (GK)

George Wilkinson

Henry Young

NEXT UP IN N12:

Whitehawk – ILP – 01/03/2025

Hashtag United – ILP – 15/03/2025

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: Samuel Olhausen

Assistants: Emmanuel Adeeko, Paul Sangster