

2026/27 PRE-SEASON

DIGITAL PROGRAMME • ISSUE #1

THE WOOD



PRE-SEASON
FRIENDLY

SATURDAY 11 JULY 2026
15:00 KICK-OFF



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Club Honours

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2025/26

NATIONAL LEAGUE PLAY-OFF FINAL RUNNERS-UP:
2017/18, 2025/26

NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH PLAY-OFF WINNERS:
2014/15, 2024/25

ISTHMIAN PREMIER DIVISION PLAY-OFF WINNERS:
2009/10

ISTHMIAN PREMIER DIVISION RUNNERS-UP:
1997/98

ISTHMIAN DIVISION ONE CHAMPIONS:
1994/95, 2000/01

ISTHMIAN DIVISION TWO CHAMPIONS:
1976/77

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE CUP WINNERS:
1996/97

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE CUP RUNNERS-UP:
1998/99

FULL MEMBERS CUP RUNNERS-UP:
1994/95, 1995/96

SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE CHAMPIONS:
2005/06

FA CUP 1ST ROUND:
1973/74, 1977/78, 1998/99, 2002/03, 2003/04, 2012/13, 2013/14, 2015/16, 2016/17, 2018/19, 2023/24, 2024/25

FA CUP 2ND ROUND:
1996/97, 1997/98, 2017/18

FA CUP 3RD ROUND:
2020/21, 2022/23, 2025/26

FA CUP 5TH ROUND:
2021/22

FA TROPHY SEMI-FINALISTS:
2005/06

HERTS FA SENIOR CUP WINNERS:
1971/72, 1998/99, 2001/02, 2007/08, 2013/14, 2017/18, 2018/19

HERTS FA SENIOR CHARITY CUP WINNERS:
1980/81, 1983/84, 1985/86, 1988/89, 1989/90

LONDON FA SENIOR CUP WINNERS:
1997/98



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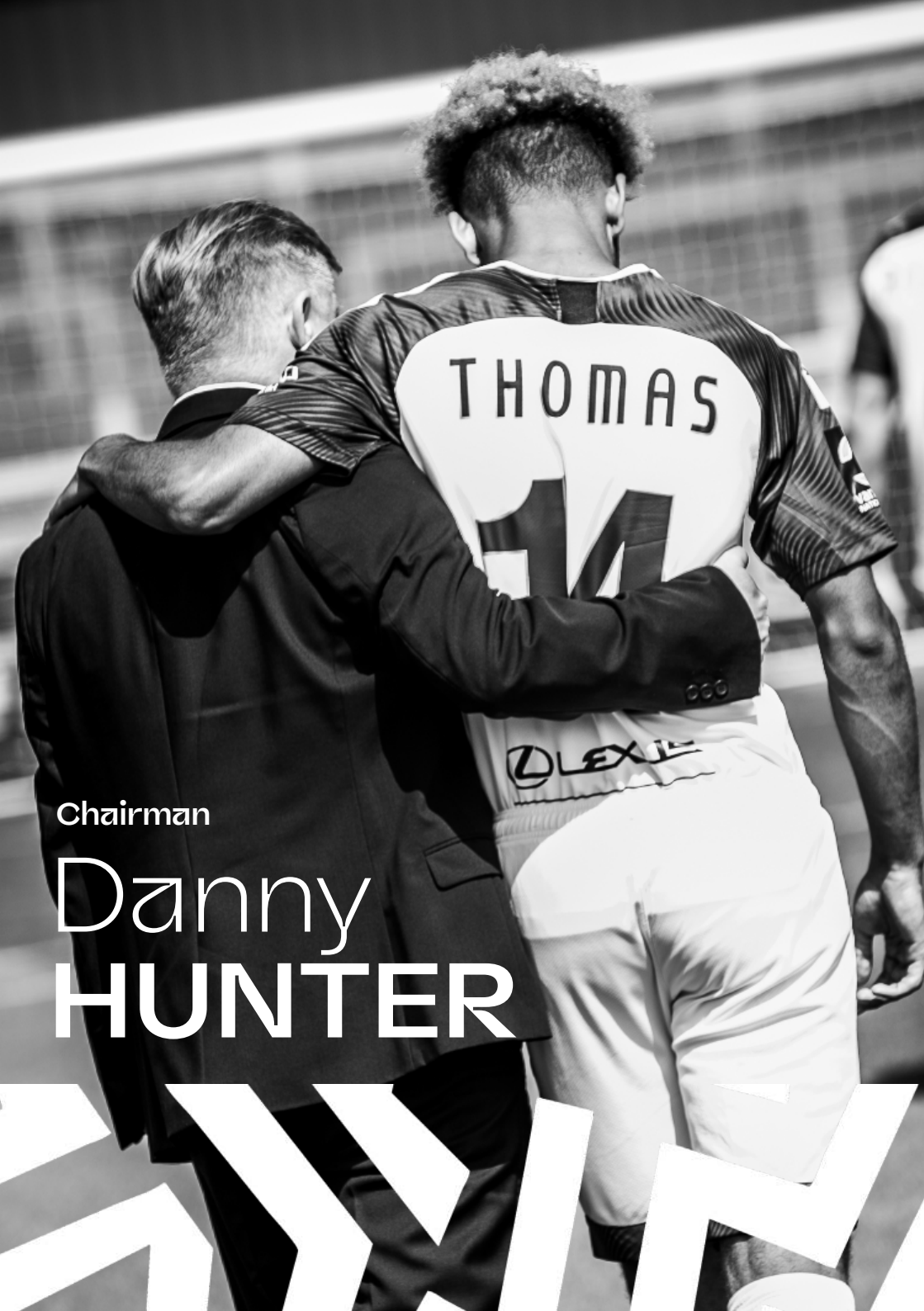
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Chairman

Danny
HUNTER

Good afternoon everyone and welcome back to Meadow Park for what is always one of the highlights of our pre-season schedule.

I'd like to extend a very warm welcome to everyone from Watford Football Club - the players, staff, directors and supporters - and thank them for joining us today. We also welcome today's match officials and, of course, all our own supporters.

It only feels like yesterday we were reflecting on the end of last season and dealing with the pain of defeat at Wembley, yet here we are preparing for another campaign full of optimism and ambition.

Pre-season though is all about looking forward, about hard work, fitness and giving the management team the opportunity to assess and build the squad, as we integrate new faces that hopefully build the foundations for what we all hope will be another successful year.

As many of you will have seen, the clearance work continues regarding our new South Stand and away fans zone, and I want to thank every resident, park user and supporter for the patience and understanding you've shown while the consultation and soon to be construction takes place.

Projects of this size don't happen overnight, but they are absolutely essential if we're going to continue

moving Boreham Wood Football Club forward. The South Stand is a major investment in the future of our club. It will improve the matchday experience, increase our capacity, provide better facilities for supporters and ensure Meadow Park continues to develop into a stadium that our community can be proud of.

Like everything we've achieved over the past two and half decades, this project is about third party spend, helping local retailers, pubs and restaurants, as well as filling car parks. It's about building for the future and ensuring Boreham Wood FC remains sustainable, ambitious and ready for the opportunities ahead.

Progress to date has been encouraging, and while there is still plenty of work to do, everyone at the club is excited about what the completed development will bring. We look forward to keeping supporters updated as the project continues to evolve and picks up pace over the coming months.

On the football side, I know Luke Garrard, his staff and the players have been working incredibly hard since returning for pre-season. These fixtures are an important part of the preparation process, and today's game against quality opposition will tell us plenty about where we are and what we still need to work on before the league season begins.

I'd also like to thank everyone behind the

scenes - our staff, volunteers, sponsors, counsellors and commercial partners - whose hard work and commitment allow this football club to continue growing both on and off the pitch. Their support is invaluable to me and very much appreciated.

Finally, to our supporters and the Wood Army, thank you once again for your incredible loyalty. Whether you've followed the Wood for decades or you're visiting Meadow Park for the first time today, your support means everything to us. Together, we will continue to build something that everyone connected with this club can be proud of.

Whoever you support this afternoon, let's hope for an open, attacking game played in the right spirit. Pre-season football is about preparing for the season ahead, giving supporters the chance to see their teams back in action and celebrating everything that's good about our game.

Enjoy this afternoon, thank you for your continued support, have a safe journey home and enjoy the game tonight. As you read these notes, I'm in Miami and getting ready to cheer on the Three Lions, continue the love-in with King Harry and our England boys.

Come on you Wood and Come on England!

Danny



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Manager

Luke
GARRARD

Good afternoon. Firstly, I would like to welcome Alessio Dionisi, his staff and his players to Meadow Park for our first pre-season friendly in preparation for 2026/26 season.

Welcoming Watford is always a great game and occasion, and always worthwhile exercise for both sets of players and staff, and today I can imagine will be no different.

Today we are very appreciative of the opposition we are facing as an established Championship side and we have been working tirelessly on the grass in prep for this fixture.

I now see pre-season a lot clearer and I have an understanding of how I want it to play out over the next four weeks. It's not just about "getting minutes" into the player's legs, there's way more going into it.

We look a lot deeper now and we have a clear vision of what pre-season look like. For example, our identity. We need all our players and staff to align to our playing philosophy, culture and standards from day one.

To ensure our identity is drilled into the players and staff, we present to the group daily on how we see us playing and our principles, ensuring we all have the same understanding of our core values and beliefs.

This includes our structure in and out of possession. This season, we want to be as close to the complete team as possible and to have a good structure with and without the ball is fundamental to that. As such, we have been working as much off of the training pitch and on it, in our analysis suite regularly delivering team meetings, unit meetings and also individual meetings.

For me, it's important we are continually drumming in our messaging, so the sooner it becomes second nature to everyone, the better.

Furthermore, our pre-season schedule has been meticulously planned. We are not just playing friendlies randomly, we are setting up against seven different oppositions and we will deliver meetings in prep for each of these games to replicate preparation for different types of National League opposition.

The reason for this is to get the group into a focused mindset early. Understanding our concepts against many different playing styles and assessing, acknowledging and adapting to best find a solution. The players need to problem solve on the pitch, just as much as me and the staff need to from the sideline.

We will also be reviewing every game, we call this "good practice". The idea of this is to show where we are improving but most importantly areas of growth.

We understand and appreciate we have a very receptive dressing room, but we also have new additions and we need them to get on board quickly, so we can continue to improve and be better than we were last season.

We have set targets as a team and also individually. I know this squad inside and out, and I appreciate what makes them tick. Setting them new targets for this campaign was important for me, as I need them to understand from day one what our objectives are for this season.

The response from the entire group over the past two weeks since returning has been incredible. I will be honest with you, I was anxious to

see how they returned after such heartbreak at Wembley, but the focus and professionalism has been elite and having seen the whites of their eyes, I'm already excited for the new season to start.

I would finally like to welcome a few new staff and players to the club. Firstly joining us in an Assistant Manager role will be Junior Lewis. Someone I previously worked with and someone who will add real value across the board with an understanding to the way we want to play.

Also joining the club is Lewis Herbert, will be joining the medical department alongside Ciaran Pack. Lewis is someone who worked at the club previously as a medical intern and totally understands us inside and out.

Lastly, welcome to the new additions on the pitch; Luca Gunter, Tarryn Allarakhia, Oli Bainbridge and Tylor Golden, all of whom will add real quality to an already very competitive squad.

This is my 12th season at the club as Manager and I can say with huge confidence we have never been in a better position at this stage of the pre-season in my whole time here. To have 18 players signed of this standard prior to our first pre-season fixture gives me great confidence that we can really put them to work, which will in turn take us to another level.

I hope you enjoy the game and look forward to seeing you all back at the club excited for a new journey together.

Be loud, be proud,
B'WOOD.

Luke



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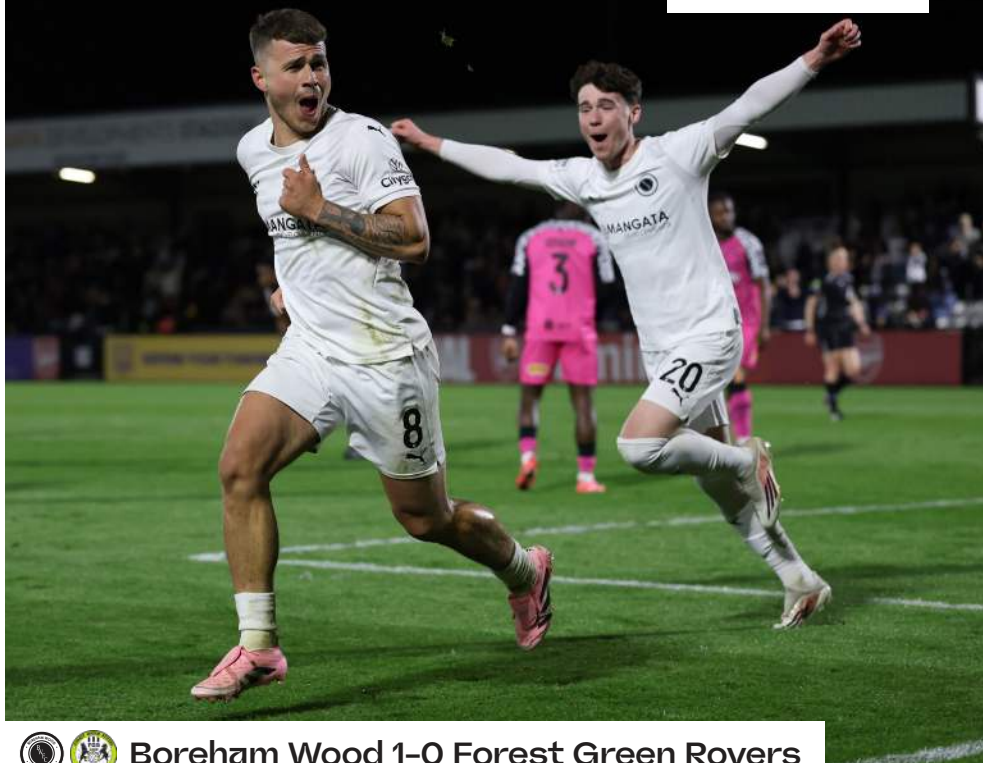
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Boreham Wood 1-0 Forest Green Rovers

Boreham Wood booked their place in the National League play-off semi-finals with a hard-fought victory over Forest Green Rovers in the eliminator at Meadow Park. A disciplined display saw Luke Garrard's side edge a closely contested encounter to keep their promotion hopes alive.

With chances at a premium, Boreham Wood made the most of their opportunities and defended resolutely to protect their advantage. Forest Green pushed for an equaliser in the closing stages, but the home side remained organised to see out the result.

The victory secured Boreham Wood's place in the play-off semi-finals and set up a trip to Carlisle United for a place in the National League Promotion Final. It was another determined performance that highlighted the resilience and character shown by the squad throughout the campaign.

Boreham Wood (4-2-3-1)

Curd, Ilesanmi, Bush, O'Connell, Clarke (Coxe 109), White, Booty (Reynolds 72), Ayinde (Richardson 74), Brunt (Landers 109), Abdulmalik (Sousa 109), Rush.

Unused subs: Ashmore, Henry.
Goals: Brunt (105).

FGR (4-2-3-1)

Isted, Pemberton (Doidge 105), Mingi, Mendy, Buyabu (Kengni 96), Campbell (Haughton 105), Clarke, Etaluku (Rees 72), McAllister, Knowles (Nwoko 100), Mellor.

Unused subs: Pagel, Kircough.
Goals: None.

Attendance: 2,452.





Carlisle United 1-2 Boreham Wood

Boreham Wood secured their place in the National League Promotion Final with a 2-1 extra-time victory over Carlisle United at Brunton Park. Abdul Abdulmalik and Zak Brunt were on target as Luke Garrard's side produced another determined display to book a return to Wembley Stadium.

Abdulmalik gave Boreham Wood an early advantage before Morgan Feeney equalised for the hosts before half-time. With neither side able to find a winner in the second half, the tie went into extra time, where Carlisle were reduced to 10 men before Brunt struck the decisive goal.

The victory earned Boreham Wood a place at Wembley Stadium in the National League Promotion Final. It was another resilient performance from Garrard's side, who carried their impressive play-off form into a memorable afternoon to move within one game of promotion.

Carlisle United (4-3-3)

Breeze, Feeney, Hayden, Galvin (Mugabi 113), Williams, Whelan (Conn-Clarke 79), Wearne (Yeboah 104), Macadam (Ellis 100), Ajiloye (Luamba 79), Linney, Armstrong (Kelly 79).

Unused subs: Mair.

Goals: Feeney (40).

Boreham Wood (4-2-3-1)

Curd, Ilesanmi, Bush, O'Connell, Clarke, Brunt (Landers 111), Abdulmalik (Coxe 116), White, Booty (Reynolds 70), Ayinde (Richardson 82), Rush.

Unused subs: Ashmore, Sousa, Henry.

Goals: Abdulmalik (28), Brunt (106).

Attendance: 13,814.





Boreham Wood 2-2 Rochdale*

The Wood suffered heartbreak in the National League play-off final as Rochdale came from two goals down to secure promotion to League Two with a penalty shootout victory following a 2-2 draw at Wembley. Goals from Matt Rush and Abdul Abdulmalik looked to have put Luke Garrard's men on course for promotion before Rochdale staged a late comeback.

Tyler Smith pulled a goal back before Emmanuel Dieseruvwe equalised deep into stoppage time to send the contest into extra time. Despite chances for both sides, neither team could find a winner in the additional 30 minutes.

The match was ultimately decided on penalties, where Rochdale held their nerve to complete the turnaround and seal a return to the English Football League. While Boreham Wood fell just short, they can take plenty of pride from an outstanding campaign and will look to build on their success next season.

Boreham Wood (4-2-3-1)

Curd, Ilesanmi (Sousa 105), Bush, O'Connell, Clarke, Brunt (Landers 89), Abdulmalik (Richardson 82), White (Henry 103), Booty (Reynolds 70), Ayinde (Coxe 82), Rush.

Unused subs: Ashmore.

Goals: Rush (22), Abdulmalik (69).

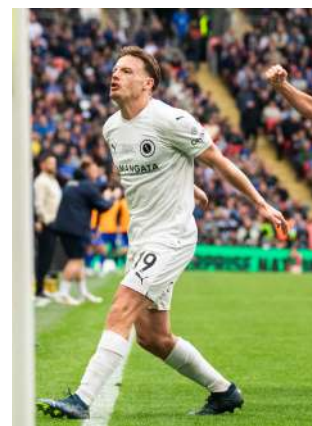
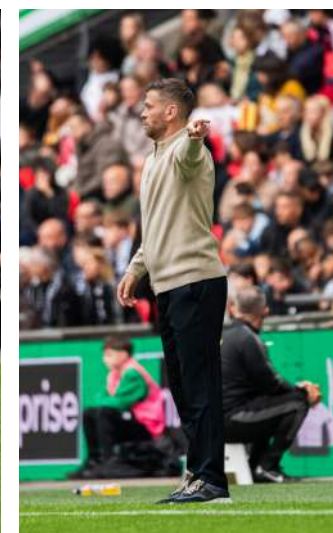
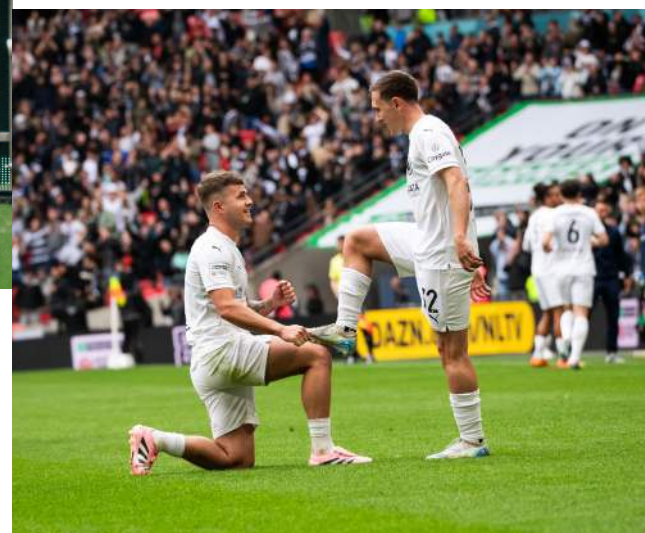
Rochdale (3-4-2-1)

Whatmuff, Gordon, Ebanks-Landell, Adebayo-Rawling (Beckwith 75), Perry, East (Pettit 86), Gilmour, Hannant (Smith 75), Barlow (Pritchard 45), Dieseruvwe, Rodney (Henderson 75).

Unused subs: Baptiste.

Goals: Smith (78), Dieseruvwe (90).

Attendance: 17,740.





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WATFORD FC

Factfile

Nickname(s)

Hornets, Yellow Army, The 'Orns

Stadium

Vicarage Road

Capacity

22,200

Head Coach

Alessio Dionisi

2025/26 Finish

16th, EFL Championship

1881

Review: 2025/26 season



Watford finished 16th in the Championship after a season that promised much but faded in the closing months. Memorable victories over Middlesbrough and Birmingham City during Javi Gracia's second spell briefly lifted the Hornets into the play-off places, but they were unable to maintain that momentum.

Gracia's departure in February saw Edward Still take charge, but results quickly deteriorated as Watford slipped down the table. The Hornets won just three of Still's 15 league matches and ended the campaign with five successive defeats, ultimately finishing well adrift of the top six.

Despite the disappointing finish, there were positives to take from the campaign, with several young players continuing their development and Luca Kjerrumgaard ending the season as the club's leading scorer. Watford will now look to regroup over the summer and mount a stronger challenge in the Championship next season.

In the dugout: Alessio DIONISI



Alessio Dionisi was appointed as Watford's Head Coach ahead of the 2026/27 season, becoming the latest Italian to take charge at Vicarage Road. The 46-year-old arrives with an impressive coaching CV, having managed Empoli, Sassuolo, Palermo and Venezia, while also enjoying successful spells with Imolese and Fiorentina earlier in his career. He guided Empoli to the 2020/21 Serie B title before leading them to safety in Serie A, later spending almost three seasons in charge of Sassuolo in the Italian top flight.

Known for his organised, front-foot style of football and commitment to developing young players, Dionisi brings valuable experience to Watford as they target a return to the Premier League. The Hornets will hope his promotion-winning pedigree and coaching philosophy can help build a side capable of challenging near the top of the Championship.

Haven't we met before?

One's to watch



 **Boreham Wood 0-2 Watford**

Boreham Wood were beaten 2-0 by Championship side Watford in their second pre-season friendly of the summer at Meadow Park. Imrân Louza and Amin Nabizada scored in either half as the visitors enjoyed the better of the contest, although Luke Garrard's side produced an encouraging display against higher-level opposition.

Nathan Ashmore made a number of impressive saves to keep Boreham Wood in the game, while Junior Dixon and Matt Rush both went close at the other end. After a host of second-half changes, Watford eventually doubled their lead through Nabizada to secure victory.

Despite the result, Boreham Wood took plenty of positives from a disciplined performance against Championship opposition. Valuable minutes across the squad and another competitive pre-season outing provided strong preparation ahead of the new National League campaign.



Mattie POLLOCK



Mattie Pollock began his senior career with Grimsby Town, making his first-team debut as a teenager and establishing himself as a regular in the heart of defence. His performances earned him a move to Watford in 2021, before loan spells with Cheltenham Town and Aberdeen gave him valuable experience.

After returning to Watford, Pollock gradually established himself as an important member of the first team and a commanding presence at the back. His consistent performances and leadership qualities saw him become a key figure for the Hornets, with his progress recognised by winning the club's Player of the Season award and establishing himself as one of Watford's standout performers.

Edoardo BOVE



Edoardo Bove came through the academy at Roma, making his senior debut in 2021 before establishing himself as an energetic and talented midfielder. A major highlight came in 2023, when he scored against Bayer Leverkusen in the Europa League semi-final as Roma went on to reach the final.

Bove later joined Fiorentina, where he became a regular in midfield and continued to impress with his work rate and technical quality. He later moved to England with Watford, beginning a new chapter in his career at Vicarage Road.

Othmane MAAMMA



Othmane Maamma began his senior career with Montpellier, progressing through the club's academy before breaking into the first team as a teenager. The talented winger quickly impressed with his pace, direct running and ability to create opportunities in attacking areas.

Maamma later joined Watford to continue his development in English football. He also starred for Morocco at youth level, playing a key role in their FIFA U-20 World Cup success and earning the Golden Ball as the tournament's best player.

WATFORD FC

Football historian **Leigh Edwards** profiles ten leading Watford FC Managers

Harry KENT

Long-serving manager Harry Kent took Watford to the Southern League championship in 1914-15. A former centre-half, he played for Brighton and Middlesbrough prior to joining Watford in August 1909. He succeeded John Goodall as player-boss in June 1910 and was unlucky not to achieve further success in 1919-20 when Watford were pipped to the Southern League title on goal average. Steering the Hornets into the Football League in 1920, he led them to sixth place in the Third Division in 1920-21. He remained in charge until May 1926, then was landlord of the Wellington Arms in Watford and died in December 1948.

Neil McBAIN

Former Scotland international wing-half Neil McBain managed Watford to the 1935 Third Division (South) Cup final. He impressed with Ayr United, moving to Manchester United in November 1921, then Everton in January 1923. After spells with St Johnstone and Liverpool, he joined Watford in November 1928 and became player-manager. He netted five goals in 85 League games and guided them to the FA Cup sixth round in 1931-32. Leaving in August 1937, he managed Luton Town, New Brighton, Leyton Orient, Ayr United, Watford again from August 1936 until February 1959 and Ayr again. He died in Ayr in May 1974.

Ron BURGESS

Former Welsh international wing-half Ron Burgess plotted Watford's 1959-60 promotion success and FA Cup run. Initially with Cwm Villa, he joined Tottenham Hotspur in May 1936 and captained their 'Push & Run' side to the Second Division title in 1949-50 and League Championship in 1950-51. He moved to Swansea as player-coach

in August 1954 and became player-manager for three years. After a spell as Watford's coach, he was manager at Vicarage Road from March 1959 until May 1963. He then managed Hendon, Bedford Town and Harrow Borough, residing in Swansea until his death in February 2005.

Bill McGARRY

Ex-England international right-half Bill McGarry managed Watford's 1963-64 promotion near-miss. Initially with Port Vale, he joined Huddersfield in March 1951, starring in their 1952-53 promotion success and 1954-55 FA Cup run. He became Bournemouth's player-boss in March 1961 and plotted their 1961-62 promotion near-miss, then managed Watford from July 1963 until taking charge of Ipswich in October 1964. Guiding them to the Second Division title in 1967-68, he then plotted Wolves' 1974 League Cup final triumph. He later managed Newcastle, then Wolves again and died in South Africa in March 2005.

Ken FURPHY

Ken Furphy managed Watford to the Third Division title in 1968-69. Initially with Everton, the wing-half moved via Runcorn to Darlington in August 1953 and starred in their 1957-58 FA Cup run. He became Workington's player-boss in July 1962, plotting promotion in 1963-64 and successive Cup runs. Joining Watford as player-manager in November 1964, he guided them to the FA Cup semi-finals in 1969-70 and remained in charge until moving to Blackburn Rovers in August 1971. He later managed Sheffield United, then coached New York Cosmos, Detroit Express and Washington Diplomats. He died in January 2015.



Graham TAYLOR

Graham Taylor managed Watford from the Fourth Division to First in five seasons. A former full-back with Grimsby and Lincoln, he became the Imps' manager in December 1972 and plotted their 1975-76 Fourth Division title triumph. Appointed Watford's boss in June 1977, he guided them to League Championship runners-up in 1983 and the FA Cup final in 1984. Joining Aston Villa in July 1987, he plotted promotion in 1987-88, then managed England and Wolves. He rejoined Watford in February 1996 and led them back to the top-flight. Later managing Villa again, he became Watford's chairman and died in January 2017.

Aidy BOOTHROYD

Aidy Boothroyd managed Watford's 2006 Championship play-off final triumph. Initially with Huddersfield Town, he joined Bristol Rovers in June 1990 and featured in their 1991-92 FA Cup fourth round replay at Liverpool. He moved via Hearts to Mansfield in December 1993 and helped qualify for the Third Division play-offs in 1994-95. Joining Peterborough in August 1996, he later coached at Norwich City and Leeds United. He was Watford's boss from March 2005 until November 2008, taking them to the FA Cup semi-finals in 2006-07, since managing Colchester, Coventry, Northampton, England U-21s and Jamshedpur.

Slavisa JOKANOVIC

Serbian manager Slavisa Jokanovic plotted Watford's 2014-15 promotion success. A former defensive midfielder with Novisad and Vojvodina, he helped Partizan win the Cup and League title, then had spells with Oviedo, Tenerife and won the La Liga with Deportivo la Coruna. Moving to Chelsea in October 2000, he rejoined Partizan as manager and twice led them to the 'double', then managed Muangthong, Levski Sofia, Hercules, Watford from October 2014 until June 2015 and Maccabi Tel Aviv. He guided Fulham to the top-flight in 2017-18, since managing Al-Gharafa, Sheffield United, Dynamo Moscow and Al-Nasr.

Javi GRACIA

Former Spanish U-21 midfielder Javi Gracia managed Watford to the 2019 FA Cup final. He played for Athletic Bilbao, then starred in Lleida's 1992-93 promotion success before spells with Valladolid, Real Sociedad, Villarreal and Cordoba. Briefly Villarreal's youth team boss, he managed Pontevedra, then plotted Cadiz's 2008-09 promotion triumph. He later managed Olympiacos Volou, Kerkyra, Almeria's 2012-13 promotion success, Osasuna, Malaga and Rubin Kazan. Watford's boss from January 2018 until September 2019, he has since managed Valencia, Al Sadd, Leeds United and briefly Watford again.

Xisco MUNOZ

Former Spanish U-21 winger Xisco Munoz managed Watford back to the Premier League at the first attempt in 2020-21. Initially with Mallorca, he starred as Valencia won the Spanish League title and were UEFA Cup finalists in 2003-04. He was later at Recreativo, Tenerife, Betis and Levante, then top scorer as Dinamo Tbilisi twice won the Georgia League and Cup 'double'. Briefly at Gimnastic, he rejoined Tbilisi as manager, plotting their 2020 Georgia League title win. He managed Watford from December 2020 until October 2021, then Huesca, Anorthosis, Sheffield Wednesday, Dunajska Streda and Johor Darul Ta'zim.

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2026/27 season

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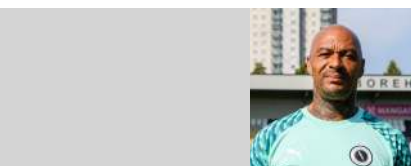


Pete Hudson

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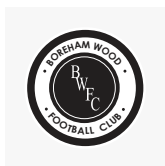


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McATEER



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Manager

Luke **GARRARD**



Head Coach

Alessio **DIONISI**

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- 2 James **CLARKE**
- 3 Oliver **BAINBRIDGE**
- 4 Tom **WHITE**
- 5 Chris **BUSH**
- 6 Charlie **O'CONNELL**
- 7 Lewis **RICHARDSON**
- 8 Zak **BRUNT**
- 10 Abdul **ABDULMALIK**
- 11 Tarryn **ALLARAKHIA**
- 14 Aaron **HENRY**
- 16 Callum **REYNOLDS**
- 17 Tylor **GOLDEN**
- 18 Luke **NORRIS**
- 21 Marley **MARSHALL-MIRANDA**
- 23 Regan **BOOTY**
- 25 Ollie **KENSDALE**
- 32 Matt **RUSH**

- 1 Egil **SELVIK** ^{GK}
- 2 Jeremy **NGAKIA**
- 4 Kévin **KEBEN**
- 5 Hector **KYPRIANOU**
- 6 Mattie **POLLOCK**
- 9 Luca **KJERRUMGAARD**
- 10 Imrân **LOUZA**
- 11 Rocco **VATA**
- 15 Edoardo **BOVE**
- 16 Marc **BOLA**
- 18 Vivaldo **SEMEDO**
- 20 Mamadou **DOUMBIA**
- 24 Tom **DELE-BASHIRU**
- 29 Jeremy **PETRIS**
- 34 Kwadwo **BAAH**
- 39 Edo **KAYEMBE**
- 41 Alfie **MARRIOTT** ^{GK}
- 42 Othmane **MAAMMA**
- 43 Jack **GRIEVES**
- 53 Amin **NABIZADA**
- 66 Nestory **IRANKUNDA**

Today's match officials



Craig **HICKS**



Sam **LEWIS**



Jake **HILLIER**



Harry **YELLEN**

Next up at Meadow Park



FRIDAY 17 JULY 2026

19:00 KICK-OFF

**PRE-SEASON
FRIENDLY**



TUESDAY 21 JULY 2026

19:30 KICK-OFF

**PRE-SEASON
FRIENDLY**



TUESDAY 4 AUGUST 2026

19:30 KICK-OFF

**PRE-SEASON
FRIENDLY**