



Midland Football League Newsletter

2nd August 2017

League News

The FA have released the draws for the early rounds of this season's FA Cup and FA Vase

With the FA Cup Extra-Preliminary round taking place this weekend, the draw for the next round is as follows;

The Emirates FA Cup

Preliminary Round, Saturday August 19th

Sporting Khalsa or **Stourport Swifts** vs Market Drayton Town

Alvechurch vs Hanley Town or **Atherstone Town**

Walsall Wood or Whitchurch Alport vs Tividale or **Highgate United**

Bedworth United vs Wolverhampton Sporting Community or **Haughmond**

Coventry United or **Rugby Town** vs Romulus

Bromsgrove Sporting or **Rocester** vs **Coleshill Town** or Wellington

Wolverhampton Casuals or Malvern Town vs **Coventry Sphinx** or **Boldmere St Michaels**

Daventry Town or **Worcester City** vs Chasetown

Brocton or **Cadbury Athletic** vs Gresley

AFC Wulfrunians or **Shawbury United** vs **Westfields** or Bewdley Town

Birstall United or **South Normanton Athletic** vs Cleethorpes Town

Rainworth MW or **Shepshed Dynamo** vs Kimberley MW or Blaby & Whetstone Athletic

Harrowby United or Grimsby Borough vs **Leicester Road** or Sleaford Town

Worksop Town or **Hinckley AFC** vs **Heanor Town** or Aylestone Park

Retford United or **Quorn** vs AFC Mansfield or Hall Road Rangers

Staveley MW or **Loughborough University** vs Basford United

Bottesford Town or **Long Eaton United** vs Clipstone or West Bridgford

In the Buildbase FA Vase, the following clubs are all exempt to the Second Round proper – Bromsgrove Sporting, Coleshill Town, Hinckley AFC, Shepshed Dynamo, Sporting Khalsa

The Buildbase FA Vase

1st Round Qualifying, Saturday September 9th

Cadbury Athletic vs Littleton

Pegasus Juniors vs **Droitwich Spa**

Lutterworth Athletic vs **AFC Wulfrunians**

Boldmere St Michaels vs Coventry Alvis

Coventry United vs Tipton Town

Bewdley Town vs **Rugby Town**

Heather St Johns vs Coventry Sphinx

Barnt Green Spartak vs Walsall Wood

Westfields vs Stapenhill

Studley vs Long Buckby

Leicester Road vs Racing Club Warwick

Chelmsley Town vs AFC Bridgnorth

Uttoxeter Town vs Gornal Athletic

Ellesmere Rangers vs **Highgate United**

Nuneaton Griff vs Rocester

Paget Rangers vs Wolverhampton Casuals

Hanley Town vs **Lichfield City**

Shawbury United vs Wellington

Whitchurch Alport vs **Pershore Town**

Bilston Town vs **Bolehall Swifts**

Coton Green vs Heath Hayes

Tividale vs **Brocton**

Long Eaton United vs Rainworth MW

Quorn vs Oadby Town

Loughborough University vs Winterton Rangers

Heanor Town vs Holbrook Sports

Birstall United vs **South Normanton Athletic**

The Buildbase FA Vase

Second Round Qualifying, Saturday September 23rd

Ellesmere Rangers or **Highgate United** vs Whitchurch Alport or **Pershore Town**

Bilston Town or **Bolehall Swifts** vs **Haughmond**

Wellington Amateurs or Dudley Town vs **Atherstone Town**

Shawbury united or Wellington vs **Cadbury Athletic** or **Littleton**

Chelmsley Town or AFC Bridgnorth vs Lutterworth Athletic or **AFC Wulfrunians**

Dudley Sports vs Tividale or **Brocton**

Shifnal town vs Pegasus Juniors or **Droitwich Spa**

Cradley Town or Bromyard Town vs **Barnt Green Spartak** or **Walsall Wood**

Heather St Johns or **Coventry Sphinx** vs **Nuneaton Griff** or **Rocester**

Westfields or Stapenhill vs Daventry Town

Stourport Swifts vs **Paget Rangers** or Wolverhampton Casuals

Malvern Town or Smethwick vs Bewdley Town or **Rugby Town**

Stafford Town vs Ashby Ivanhoe or St Martins

Studley or Long Buckby vs Hanley Town or **Lichfield City**

Boldmere St Michaels or **Coventry Alvis** vs **Worcester City**

Leicester Road or **Racing Club Warwick** vs **Coventry Copsewood**

Coton Green or **Heath Hayes** vs Wolverhampton SC or FC Oswestry Town

Uttoxeter Town or Gornal Athletic vs Bardon Hill

Coventry United or Tipton Town vs Hereford Lads Club or Stone Old Alleynians

Grimsby Borough or Shirebrook Town vs **Long Eaton United** or Rainworth MW

Heanor Town or Holbrook Sports vs **Quorn** or Oadby Town

Loughborough University or Winterton Rangers vs Staveley MW

Boston Town vs Birstall United or **South Normanton Athletic**

The draws have also been made for the various MFL cup competitions

POLYMAC PACKAGING LEAGUE CUP ROUND 1

match 1	Stafford Town	v	Nuneaton Griff	Tues 19 Sep
match 2	Brocton	v	South Normanton Athletic	Tues 19 Sep
match 3	Lichfield City	v	Long Eaton United	Tues 19 Sep
match 4	Pershore Town	v	Bromsgrove Sporting	Tues 19 Sep
match 5	Stourport Swifts	v	Cadbury Athletic	Tues 19 Sep
match 6	Coventry Alvis	v	Loughborough University	Wed 20 Sep
match 7	Rugby Town	v	Coventry Sphinx	Tues 19 Sep
match 8	Shepshed Dynamo	v	Coventry United	Tues 19 Sep
match 9	Walsall Wood	v	Chelmsley Town	Tues 19 Sep
match 10	Lye Town	v	Paget Rangers	Tues 19 Sep
match 11	Bolehall Swifts	v	Highgate United	Tues 19 Sep
match 12	Heanor Town	v	Ilkeston Town	Tues 19 Sep
match 13	Coton Green	v	Leicester Road	Tues 19 Sep
match 14	Barnt Green Spartak	v	Heather St John	Tues 19 Sep
match 15	AFC Wulfrunians	v	Droitwich Spa	Tues 19 Sep

POLYMAC PACKAGING LEAGUE CUP ROUND 2

match 16	winner 12	v	winner 1	
match 16	Uttoxeter Town	v	Heath Hayes	Tues 19 Sep
match 17	winner 3	v	Rocester	
match 18	winner 2	v	winner 6	
match 19	Hinckley AFC	v	match 14	
match 20	winner 13	v	winner 8	
match 21	winner 7	v	Coventry Copsewood	
match 22	Quorn	v	Atherstone Town	Wed 20 Sep
match 23	winner 9	v	winner 11	
match 24	Boldmere St Michaels	v	winner 10	
match 25	Haghmond	v	Coleshill Town	Tues 19 Sep
match 26	Shawbury United	v	Sporting Khalsa	Wed 20 Sep
match 27	winner 5	v	Westfields	
match 28	Racing Club Warwick	v	Studley	Tues 19 Sep
match 29	Littleton	v	Worcester City	Wed 20 Sep
match 30	winner 15	v	winner 4	

LES JAMES CHALLENGE CUP ROUND 1

match 1	Pelsall Villa	v	FC Stratford	
match 2	Knowle	v	Leamington Hibernian	26 Aug
match 3	Feckenham	v	GNP Sports	
match 4	AFC Solihull	v	Smithswood Firs	26 Aug
match 5	Fairfield Villa	v	Continental Star	
match 6	Coton Green	v	Coventrians	
match 7	Castle Vale Town	v	Birmingham Tigers	26 Aug
match 8	Bloxwich Town	v	Droitwich Spa	12 Aug
match 9	Denville Athletic	v	Bartestree	
match 10	Earlwood Town	v	Alcester Town	
match 11	Redditch Borough	v	Montpellier	26 Aug
match 12	NKF Burbage	v	Hampton	
match 13	Boldmere Sports	v	CT Shush	26 Aug
match 14	Moors Academy	v	Central Ajax	
match 15	Barnt Green Spartak	v	Ships ton Excelsior	
match 16	Northfield Town	v	Inkberrow	

PRESIDENTS CUP ROUND 1

match 1	Droitwich Spa	v	Knowle	
match 2	Montpellier	v	Smithswood Firs	
match 3	NKF Burbage	v	Fairfield Villa	
match 4	Earlwood Town	v	Hampton	19 Aug
match 5	Feckenham	v	Coton Green	
match 6	Barnt Green Spartak	v	Redditch Borough	
match 7	Bloxwich Town	v	Moors Academy	
match 8	Northfield Town	v	Pelsall Villa	

CHALLENGE VASE ROUND 1

match 1	Enville Athletic	v	Coventrians	
match 2	Boldmere Sports	v	Leamington Hibernian	
match 3	Bartestree	v	GNP Sports	
match 4	Central Ajax	v	Shipston Excelsior	26 Aug
match 5	Inkberrow	v	Birmingham Tigers	
match 6	Alcester Town	v	Continental Star	26 Aug
match 7	Castle Vale Town	v	FC Stratford	
match 8	CT Shush	v	AFC Solihull	

Under 21 Divisions

CHALLENGE BOWL ROUND 1

match 1	AFC Rushden & Diamonds	v	Bedworth United	
match 2	Football CV Reds	v	Kettering Town	
match 3	Tamworth	v	Highgate United	26 Aug
match 4	Coventry United	v	Leicester Nirvana	
match 5	Brocton	v	Worcester City	
match 6	Atherstone Town	v	Sutton Coldfield Town	26 Aug
match 7	Alvechurch	v	Continental Star	26 Aug
match 8	H O W Academy	v	Heath Hayes	26 Aug
match 9	Redditch Town	v	Aylestone Park	
match 10	Coleshill Town	v	Rushall Olympic	

CHALLENGE BOWL ROUND 2

match 11	winner 10	v	Boldmere St Michaels
match 12	Droitwich Spa G & B	v	Wychall Wanderers
match 13	winner 1	v	winner 9
match 14	winner 4	v	winner 7
match 15	Milton Keynes College	v	winner 2
match 16	winner 8	v	winner 6
match 17	winner 3	v	Quorn
match 18	Evesham United	v	winner 5

The future of **Coventry Sphinx Football Club** has now been successfully secured as the management committee at Coventry Sphinx Sports & Social Club are in the final throes of signing a new 25-year lease with Rolls Royce for their Head Quarters at Sphinx Drive. The news comes with the immediate start on ground improvements namely the exterior rendering to the club house and the resurfacing of the whole car park including the driveway. As part of our comprehensive business plan presented to Rolls Royce work has also started on the installation of a new 9 a side 3G pitch with floodlights which will easily service all the training requirements of the whole football club. That said, there will also be availability for other users, contacts details can be found below. There will also be an 18-hole floodlit putting green available for those up and coming golfers wanting to improve their skills while enjoying the excellent hospitality on offer.

Coventry Sphinx Football Club Chairman, Dannie Cahill, Joey Fletcher, Chairman of Coventry Sphinx Sports and Social Club and Neil Buswell, the Social Club Treasurer are the Trustees of the Social Club who have all worked tirelessly in securing its future. Both the football club and social club go hand in hand with both playing their part in securing their long-term futures at Sphinx Drive.

Joey Fletcher commented "this now gives us a platform to grow the business to the level of sustainability moving forward and for the benefit of the local community and beyond. Therefore, we urge all our neighbours and potential customers to come along and have a look around our facilities which consists of the "Trophy Bar", "Legends Lounge" and a function room for all manner of parties, conferences and banqueting"

Dannie Cahill commented "together we have now put in place the security of the football club and with us being in existence for 71 years we are proud that the club will still be around in a 100 years' time. The football club now

boasts 26 teams who will all benefit the new facilities. We decided that we will stick to traditional grass pitches where ever possible as we have our own full time Groundsman. Currently all our training requirements are scattered all around the Coventry area but with the new 3G facility we will all be together at our Sphinx Drive headquarters which further underpins our culture of being as one club. I'm also delighted for all our volunteers who put in so much time and effort for the benefit of others."

Shawbury United have started their season with some silverware, lifting the Shropshire Senior Cup in the final played at the home of Whitchurch Alport. The competition, played in pre-season, saw Shawbury win their quarter final against MFL new boys Haughmond 2-0. The semi-final took place at Ludlow Stadium and saw Shawbury beat Shrewsbury Town on penalties after drawing 1-1. The final at Yockings Park pitted Shawbury against The New Saints, the Welsh champions. 7 of the TNS starters featured in the Champions League qualifiers but it was to no avail as Shawbury won by a single goal from Liam Armstrong.



Ron Flowers, a member of England's 1966 World Cup winning squad, officially unveiled Brocton FC's brand new hospitality suite recently (Saturday 29 July). The project was made possible thanks to a grant from the Premier League, through the Football Stadia Improvement Fund (FSIF).

The funding has enabled Brocton to make much-needed improvements to their existing hospitality area. The upgraded facility now includes a club room and kitchen, both of which will support classroom-based sports training and use by community groups. The club will now be able better cater for its teams, which play in the Midland Football League, and its increasing number of fans on match days. Brocton will also be able to host other teams more comfortably post-match.

Recently, links have been forged with Burnley FC, after two of Brocton's young players progressed to the club's Under-23 squad. Brocton FC hopes that by meeting the Grade F requirements of the FA National Ground Grading Criteria, through the hospitality suite project, they will be able to give more of their players similar opportunities.

The club received £65,219 from the Premier League, through the Football Stadia Improvement Fund, which helped to make the hospitality suite project a success. Other funding for the project includes: £10,000 from the Football Foundation; £59,660 from Sport England; £8,300 from Brocton FC's own funds; £4,500 from Comic Relief and £2,500 from Sport Stafford Borough.

Funded with £6.5m each year from the Premier League, the FSIF – the sister organisation of the Football Foundation – is the country’s largest provider of grants towards projects that help improve the comfort and safety of lower league football grounds in both the professional and amateur game. These improvements range from new football stands and turnstiles to floodlighting and improved provision for disabled supporters. Founded in 2000, the Football Foundation is the largest sports charity in the UK funded by the Premier League, The FA and Government, via Sport England. It develops new and refurbished grassroots sports facilities in order to improve the quality and experience of playing sport at the grassroots level.

Ron Flowers, who scored 10 goals for the England team between 1955 and 1966, said: *“I’d like to thank Brocton FC for inviting me to do the official unveiling of their new hospitality suite. I am very glad to hear that the upgrade will help the club to better support their teams, and improve the match day experience for all. This will help them to foster love of the game in its players, fans and this community as a whole. Well done to them and the Premier League’s investment, for making this project a success.”*

Brian Townsend, Chairman of Brocton FC, said: *“I am very grateful to all of the grant funders who have come together to make this new facility possible. The new hospitality suite adds to our excellent sporting venue at Silkmore Lane.”*

Peter McCormick OBE, Chairman of the FSIF, said: *“I am pleased that this grant from the Premier League, through the FSIF, has enabled Brocton FC to upgrade their hospitality suite. I’d like to thank Ron Flowers for taking the time to unveil it.”*



Travels of The Press Officer

A pre-season that seems to have consisted of seeing every member of the Trailist family featuring for teams all across the Midlands! There have been some eye-opening results and performances from MFL sides which augurs well for the 2017/18 season. Due to the lack of team sheets no reports have been produced.

Pre-season started at Wolverhampton North East Academy with AFC Wulfrunians hosting Black Country Rangers with former £1m midfielder, Steve Daley on the touchline watching his grandson. It closed with a visit to the Bentley Leisure Pavilions to see Darlaston Town take on Smithswood Firs. Back in the 1970s, this was the Sports ground of a local engineering company where I spent the summer playing cricket. 40 years on, I saw Smithswood put on a sparkling performance as they beat Darlo 6-2. A great place to watch football, a good pitch and decent facilities – stick it on your list of places to visit.

Next week, there will be reports from the FA Cup and possible replays



Bentley Leisure Pavilion, the home of Darlaston Town (1874)

Preview

FA Cup

Friday evening

Heanor Town vs Aylestone Park

There is something special about the FA Cup under the lights on a Friday evening. The Lions get us underway at home to Step 6 Aylestone Park. The visitors finished 4th in the EMCL last season but you would expect Heanor to make home advantage count

Saturday

AFC Wulfrunians vs Shawbury United

A meeting of two Premier Division clubs with Shawbury having a good pre-season, lifting the Shropshire Senior Cup beating both Shrewsbury Town and TNS to lift the trophy. Wulfs have a home win over Hereford to give them encouragement. A replay would be no surprise

Birstall United Social vs South Normanton Athletic

Birstall finished one point and place below South Normanton in the East Midlands Counties League, and with both teams having some good results in pre-season, this one could go either way.

Bottesford Town vs Long Eaton United

NCEL Bottesford have had a mixed pre-season with a 6-0 defeat at the hands of Cleethorpes Town mixed with an 8-2 victory over Sleaford Town. Long Eaton have a new management team for this season and early results have been promising including a win over Conference North Boston United. A tough one to call, and another that could go to an extra game

Bromsgrove Sporting vs Rocester

Last season's all conquering Division 1 champions against the Premier Division experience of Rocester. Sporting have strengthened during the summer while Rocester have had some cracking results particularly at Hillsfield. Should be a really good game with the home crowd playing a decisive role.

Colehill Town vs Wellington

Colehill have a new look side for this season under the new management team of Cameron Stuart. Herefordshire based Wellington play in the WMRL Premier Division and finished 5th last season. The Coleman should have enough to progress.

Coventry Sphinx vs Boldmere St Michaels

The meeting of two Premier Division sides who have made significant signings and had excellent pre-seasons. This one promises to be full of goals and should be a real treat for the neutral.

Coventry United vs Rugby Town

This promises to be a special occasion for all at Coventry United as they play their first competitive game at their new home of the Butts Park Arena. And what a game to start with, with Rugby Town, relegated from the NPL last season, the visitors. Rugby will be backed by a large following and, if pre-season is anything to go by, they will be one of the sides to beat this season. Who handles the occasion best is likely to prevail.

Daventry Town vs **Worcester City**

From one big name MFL club to another, and the debut of Worcester City as an MFL club in the FA Cup. The management team of John Snape and Lee Hughes have put an attractive side together and results have improved as pre-season has gone on. Daventry were promoted to the UCL Premier Division after winning Division 1 last season. A win over Coventry United in pre-season shows that they will be more than competitive at Step 5. Not an easy start for Worcester but they would expect to go through.

Rainworth Miners Welfare vs **Shepshed Dynamo**

Both sides have beaten higher ranked opposition in pre-season with NCEL Rainworth's win over NPL Lincoln United stand out. Shepshed have made some eye-catching signings and should be challenging again this season. This game looks very tight and a replay would be no surprise.

Retford United vs **Quorn**

NCEL Division 1 Retford have had some heavy defeats in pre-season not least a 6-1 hammering at AFC Pennistone Church last weekend. Quorn are a side that always seem to go under the radar but with the installation of a new 3G pitch, things are looking good at Farley Way. Quorn should get through this one.

Sporting Khalsa vs Stourport Swifts

Khalsa have had a decent pre-season with a handful of new faces being added to last season's team which finished 3rd. A comfortable win over NPL Halesowen Town showed that they are preparing well. Swifts had a fine end to last season which saw them pull away from the relegation zone. A pre-season which has seen them suffer heavy defeats at the hands of higher ranked opposition may be a little misleading. Expect Khalsa to progress but with goals at either end.

Staveley MW vs **Loughborough University**

Staveley finished 6th in the NCEL last season in what is a very competitive division. A tough pre-season schedule will have them ready to start on the front foot. It is almost impossible to know what to expect of The Scholars in August. The number of players unavailable may well dictate whether they progress or not. On their day, they are one of the best footballing sides at Step 5.

Tividale vs **Highgate United**

Tividale were relegated from the MFL last season after a torrid season and re-join the WMRL with a chance for their young squad to bounce back. It will be tough for them at The Beeches as they face Highgate United who were inconsistent last season. Pre-season has been much the same for Highgate with wins mixed in with defeats – the stand out result being a win at SPL Redditch United. Highgate should have enough to go through but, you never know.

Westfields vs Bewdley Town

Last year's FA Cup heroes start off with a home tie against WMRL Bewdley Town. Westfields started the season like a train last year and will be hoping for much the same. Bewdley finished 6th in the WMRL last season and offer a decent test for Fields but expect the home side to get through.

Wolverhampton Sporting vs **Haughmond**

A game between two of the top three from last season's WMRL. Haughmond won the league with a 15-point margin in the end with the top 4 all scoring more than 120 league goals. Sporting have had an excellent pre-season and beat Shawbury United 2-0 at Ludlow Stadium last weekend. Haughmond have had mixed results in pre-season and may find Sporting a difficult proposition.

Brocton vs Cadbury Athletic

Brocton dropped through the Premier Division trap door last season and meet fellow Division 1 side Cadbury athletic at Silkmore Lane. Brocton have rebuilt their squad in the summer and look to bounce back under the new manager Sam Norton. The Chocolatemen had an excellent season finishing in a very healthy 5th position. Brocton have had slightly the better pre-season as far as results are concerned and they will start slight favourites.

Hanley Town vs Atherstone Town

The Adders have made some significant additions to their squad in the summer and they look likely to be challenging for promotion. Hanley finished in mid table in the NWCL but have had an excellent pre-season with a string of victories and their only defeats at the hands of higher ranked opponents. This should be an excellent game between two very good sides.

Leicester Road vs Sleaford Town

Leicester Road had an excellent first season in Division 1 last year and will be hoping to better that this. Pre-season has seen them perform well. They welcome UCL Sleaford Town this weekend and the visitors got their league campaign underway last weekend with a heavy defeat at Holbeach United. Despite a one-step difference, Leicester Road will be favourites to edge this one

Walsall Wood vs Whitchurch Alport

Walsall Wood find themselves in Division 1 after being relegated on the final day of last season. New manager Gary Birch has completely revamped the squad as they set out on an immediate return to Step 5. Visitors Whitchurch are in Division 1 of the North West Counties League and will be one of the favourites for promotion. An average home gate of 236 shows the potential that they have and expect a large following to swell the ranks at the ML Safety Stadium.

Worksop Town vs Hinckley AFC

A tough start in the FA Cup for Hinckley who had great cup success last season as well as finishing runners up to Bromsgrove Sporting in Division 1. Hinckley have lost a number of key players from last season however some positive results in pre-season indicate that they are still on the upward path. Worksop finished mid-table in the NCEL last season but a 5-0 win over NPL Matlock Town last weekend is probably a more accurate reflection on the strength of the side. A draw would be a good result for Hinckley

Division 1

The Division 1 season gets underway with 5 clubs on FA Cup duty. **Racing Club Warwick** had an excellent 2016/17 and they start their season at **Bolehall Swifts** who will be hoping for a better campaign. There is a Staffordshire derby at The Coppice Colliery ground as **Lichfield City** travel to **Heath Hayes**. **Littleton** begin their campaign at home to **Nuneaton Griff** with both sides looking to advance from their mid table finishes of last season. Promoted **Paget Rangers** welcome **Chelmsley Town** to The Trevor Brown Memorial Ground. Interestingly, the two sides met in pre-season in the Sutton Charity Cup with Paget winning 4-2. **Pershore Town** welcome new look **Heather St Johns** to Worcestershire with both sides having good victories in pre-season. **Stafford Town** welcome promoted **Coventry Alvis** to Evans Park. Town have rebuilt their squad in the summer and the results have been very promising. Alvis have had a tough pre-season however that schedule may stand them in good stead for the campaign ahead. **Studley** host **Coventry Copsewood** with the home side making significant additions to the squad which just avoided relegation last season. Copsewood have looked good in pre-season and have been scoring plenty of goals. All eyes will be on Oldfields when **Uttoxeter Town** welcome **Ilkeston Town** to Staffordshire. Ilkeston Town were only formed around a month ago so have had very little time to get things together. Under the management of Steve Chettle, expect a young, ambitious footballing side. The home side impressed many with their brand of football last season and expect a big crowd to get the season under way.

