



Midland Football League

Newsletter

2nd September 2020

League News

Welcome to the first newsletter of the 20/21 season. Let's hope for a more successful conclusion to this season after our curtailment in March. A warm welcome to the new clubs that have joined the league – we hope you enjoy your stay with us. We say goodbye to South Normanton Athletic and NKF Burbage which leaves our top two divisions with one team short, as the FA made the decision that promotion and relegation would not be permitted for Steps 5, 6 and 7.

With Covid-19 procedures in place across all our clubs, it is advisable to check if there are specific requirements before travelling, particularly for supporters. With spectator number currently limited, please check with the hosting clubs for ticketing arrangements

Good luck to all clubs and may you have a successful season

The draw for the FA Cup Preliminary Round is as follows: -

Evesham United vs **Coventry United**

Hanley Town vs **Gresley Rovers**

Leek Town vs **Sporting Khalsa**

Long Eaton United vs Bottesford Town

Maltby Main vs **Newark**

Market Drayton Town vs **Tividale**

Racing Club Warwick vs Bedworth United

Coventry Sphinx vs Coleshill Town

Worcester City vs **Walsall Wood**

Ties to be played Saturday September 12th

Review

FA Cup Extra Preliminary Round

With football supporters across the land starved of their live match day experience, bumper crowds (within Covid-19 guidelines) welcomed the start of this year's FA Cup competition. **Chelmsley Town** made their first ever appearance in the competition which attracted plenty of media interest with the BBC attending the game. Unfortunately for them, Shifnal Town failed to read the script and they progressed through to the next round with a 3-0 victory. Tom Hill scored twice for the West Midlands League outfit including a spectacular overhead kick to open the scoring. **Gresley Rovers** welcomed Wellington to The Moat Ground and progressed with two second half goals, 2-0 the final score. Gresley will travel to Hanley Town in the Preliminary Round after the North West Counties side beat **Lye Town** 3-1. Lye took a three minute lead through Jake Evans, but Hanley had turned it around before half-time. Two Premier Division sides met at St John's Park with **Walsall Wood** getting the better of **Heather St John's** with a solitary goal from Lewis Hayden, 13 minutes from time. The Wood will face another Premier Division side in the next round when they travel to Claines Lane to face **Worcester City**. A double from Liam Lockett in the second-half earned Worcester an excellent 2-0 win at Rugby Town. One of the shocks of the round came at The Coppice, as **Highgate United** were beaten 3-0 by West Midlands League AFC Bridgnorth. Two goals in two minutes late in the first half set The Meadowmen on their way and the result was settled with a 73rd minute penalty. **Long Eaton United** are through to the next round following a 3-1 win over Grimsby Borough at Grange Park. Kameron Campbell set them on their way with a goal in the 12th minute. Romaine Graham made it two before Grimsby pulled a goal back. The win was sealed in the last minute by Ryan Ingram. **Newark** made their debut in the FA Cup and made it a day to remember with a 4-0 win over Deeping Rangers. Goals either side of half-time from Danny Meadows and Liam King were the catalyst for the victory and Newark travel to Maltby Main in the next round. **Racing Club Warwick** met **AFC Wulfrunians** in the competition for the second season running and gained revenge for last season's defeat with a 3-0 win. Sam Jackson scoring twice for The Racers. **Romulus** and **Coventry Sphinx** shared a goalless draw at Castle Vale Stadium with the game going straight to penalties after 90 minutes. It was the away side that were successful, and they set up a home tie with Coleshill Town. **Sporting Khalsa** and **Boldmere St Michaels** fought out a cracking cup tie at Noose Lane. Lee Chilton gave Khalsa the lead just after the half-hour and the lead was doubled ten minutes after the break when Matt Cotton turned a Jake Gosling corner into his own net. Harry Craven gave The Mikes hope four minutes from time, but they could not breach the Khalsa defence with Khalsa taking the spoils 2-1. **Tividale** travelled to Wellbeing Park to face Stone Old Alleynians and 90 minutes of football could not produce a goal. Another penalty shoot-out and another win for the away side with Tividale winning 4-1 from the spot. **Stourport Swifts** welcomed fellow premier Division side **Coventry United** to Walshes Meadow and it was the Red and Greens that go through with a 3-1 win despite finishing the game with 10 men. Kye Carey scored twice for United who travel to Evesham United in the next round. **Brocton** made the long trip to Hereford to face former MFL side Westfields at Allpay Park. Westfields were fast out of the block with Keanu Cooper scoring twice in the opening 10 minutes which was the end of the scoring. **Haughmond** travelled to Whitchurch Alport and it was the home side that prevailed with a 3-1 victory, Haughmond's goal coming as a consolation seven minutes from time.

On Wednesday, **Selston** travelled to Bottesford Town and were beaten 2-1. Dayle Hutson scored either side of half-time and despite a late Jordan Black goal, it was the home side that will travel to Long Eaton United in the next round. **Kirby Muxloe** faced a difficult trip to Holbeach United and things were made more difficult when they were reduced to ten men. Holbeach clinched the tie in the 84th minute through Josh Ford.

Preview

Premier Division

Two of last season's top five meet at The Butts Park Arena as **Coventry United** host **Heather St Johns**. The Red & Greens have had a good summer, adding to a squad that were top of the pile when the league was curtailed. For the second summer running, Heather lost their manager to Romulus but have appointed the experienced Dave Stringer to replace Jason Lanns. A second game to feature two of last season's leading lights, takes place at Oak Park where **Walsall Wood** entertain the aforementioned **Romulus**. After changing management mid term last season, Wood start the campaign with Darren Byfield again in charge. There have been significant changes at Romulus, not least in the appointment of Jason Lanns and a new chairman in Matt Dainty. **Sporting Khalsa** were hot on the heels of Coventry United when everything stopped in March and they begin the campaign at home to **Haughmond**. Khalsa have been quiet over the summer however their squad looks as strong as ever with a couple of eye catching additions. Haughmond battled well on their return to the MFL last season and they appear to have a settled side who are a handful particularly at The Sports Village. **Newark** have dropped the Flowserve from their name and are expected to mount a serious challenge at the top of the table. They entertain **Worcester City** who are looking forward to playing in the City of Worcester after many years away. Both sides have recruited exceptionally well and with prolific new strikers in both camps, there should be no lack of entertainment. **Gresley Rovers** have also changed their name, reverting to Rovers which has been well received. They also have a new look side and it will be interesting to see how they perform when they welcome **Racing Club Warwick** to The Moat Ground. The Racers had a decent first season back at Step 5 and will be hoping to build on that particularly as the club is undergoing sufficient development off the field. **Boldmere St Michaels** entertain **Lye Town** and both will be expecting a far better start than they made last season. The Mikes turned their season around once they appointed Neil Kitching and a promotion challenge could be on the cards. Lye had a disappointing season and have made changes to their back room and playing staff and their exciting side could bring the good times back to Stourbridge Road. **Highgate United** are never far from peoples lists of potential promotion contenders and this will be the same again this season. They too have made some excellent additions. They welcome **AFC Wulfrunians** to The Coppice and Wulfs will be looking to build on last season's positive season. The addition of a couple of new frontmen gives Wulfs much need firepower and expect them again to be a surprise package. **Selston** had a difficult time of it last season but start with a clean slate when they welcome **Stourport Swifts** to Parish Hall. Selston have undertaken ground developments in the summer and they will have learnt a lot from last season's debut in the MFL. Swifts made a great start last season only to fade a little. They have been scoring plenty of goals in pre-season and have some exciting talent in their squad. **Tividale** welcome **Long Eaton United** to The Beeches. Tividale improved as last season went on and would hope to continue that improvement. Long Eaton have seen last season's top two scorers move on, but their squad has been augmented with some former MFL title winners.

MONDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2020

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|---------|---|-----------------|------|
| Romulus | v | Sporting Khalsa | 7.45 |
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TUESDAY 8th SEPTEMBER 2020

| | | |
|-------------------|---|----------------------|
| Coventry Sphinx | v | Selston |
| Haughmond | v | Highgate United |
| Heather St Johns | v | Walsall Wood |
| Long Eaton United | v | Boldmere St Michaels |
| Lye Town | v | Racing Club Warwick |
| Stourport Swifts | v | Gresley Rovers |

WEDNESDAY 9th SEPTEMBER 2020

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|-----------------|---|----------|
| Coventry United | v | Newark |
| Worcester City | v | Tividale |

Division 1

Last season's runaway league leaders, **Leicester Road**, begin their campaign with a trip to Pack Meadow to face **Chelmsley Town**. The Road scored goals for fun last term and their strike force remains intact. Chelmsley were in a relegation battle last season and would have wished for an easier start to this season. **Brocton** were second at the curtailment and they welcome **Coventry Copsewood** to Silkmore Lane in the opener. The Badgers have seen last season's leading scorer Regan Smith move to Step 4 and will be hoping his goals can be replaced elsewhere. Copsewood look significantly stronger on paper and will be hoping to have a much improved season. **Studley** were looking good for promotion and they start with a trip to Hillsfield to face **Rocester**, who improved as the season went on. Rocester have seen leading scorer Jordan Dodd go up a level to Step 5 which will give a chance to their exciting youngsters. Studley are blessed with attacking talent and should feature in the battle for a top four spot again. **Uttoxeter Town** were one of the success stories of last season, their young side finding admirers wherever they played. They welcome **GNP Sports** to Oldfields in their opening game. GNP have lost last season's leading scorer Chris Lloyd however he has been replaced with last season's Division 3 top marksmen, Nathan McGarrity from Coventrians. **Lichfield City** have made some significant changes with Ivor Green taking over the managerial reins and several high profile signings. They welcome **Kirby Muxloe** to the McDonalds Community Stadium on Saturday. Kirby had a decent first season in the MFL, but they too have seen the departure of their leading scorers from last season. A Chance for others to step up. **Atherstone Town** had excellent cup runs last season which impacted on their league position. They travel to **Heath Hayes** with both teams looking to make a good start. Both sides have plenty of talent and expect both to challenge. **Stafford Town** had a miserable season back in the MFL and avoided relegation due to the cancellation of the season. They have a new management team in place as they open the campaign with the visit of **Stapenhill** to Evans Park. The Swans will be hoping to build on last season and with some useful additions, an improvement on 10th should be on the cards. Town have a very youthful side and will need early positive results to give them momentum. **Nuneaton Griff** welcome **Cadbury Athletic** to The Pingles Stadium. Both sides struggled at the wrong end of the table last season and will be hoping for improvement. Both sides have the ability to kick on and a good start will help. **Ashby Ivanhoe** welcome **Paget Rangers** to the NFU Sports Ground. Both sides had good results mixed with bad last season and with changes to both squads, it is a chance to set out their stall.

TUESDAY 8th SEPTEMBER 2020

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|-----------------|---|--------------------|
| Atherstone Town | v | Chelmsley Town |
| Brocton | v | Ashby Ivanhoe |
| Hinckley AFC | v | Cadbury Athletic |
| Leicester Road | v | Studley |
| Paget Rangers | v | Kirby Muxloe |
| Stapenhill | v | Coventry Copsewood |
| Uttoxeter Town | v | Stafford Town |

WEDNESDAY 9th SEPTEMBER 2020

| | | |
|----------------|---|--------------|
| Lichfield City | v | G N P Sports |
| Nuneaton Griff | v | Heath Hayes |

Division 2

Solihull United started last season at a canter but had been caught when we went into lockdown. They start with a trip to **Fairfield Villa** who were mid-table last season. Solihull will have plenty of exciting youngsters on show while Ross Dempster will be expected to continue his goalscoring prowess for Fairfield. Game of the day should be at The Robins Nest with **Knowle** entertaining **Northfield Town**, 3rd versus 2nd last season. Results in pre-season indicate that both will be there or thereabouts again. **Coton Green** were on a remarkable run of victories when everything stopped but they have seen manager Adam Wilkes depart. They start the season with a trip to **Alcester Town** where Matt Seeley has assembled a strong looking squad. **Bolehall Swifts** had a tough time of it last season and they welcome **Boldmere Sports** on the opening day. Swifts will have an enthusiastic young side and will be hoping for improvement. Sports have had a number of successful seasons and again, should be in the mix for promotion. **Earlswood Town** were mid-table last season after a poor start and they host another mid-table side in **Coventry Alvis**. Looking at the squads, there are goals aplenty for both which promises plenty. **Hampton** welcome **Feckenham** to The Boggery in what should be an entertaining start to the season. Hampton had mixed results last season but are always competitive. Feckenham have the added advantage of a new home this season with a move to Redditch United and it will be interesting to see what a difference this makes. **Lane Head** welcome **FC Stratford** to the Red Lion Ground. Lane Head had a season to forget defensively conceding 97 goals in 23 league games. Stratford would have been disappointed with 7th last season and they have strengthened significantly for a promotion push. **Redditch Borough** had a horrible start to the campaign last season but kept on going to life themselves off the foot of the table. They welcome **Barnt Green Spartak** to The Mettis for what should be a cracking opener. Borough have some exciting youngsters who will have improved with last years' experience. Spartak have some serious goalscoring potential in their side and could make an impression.

MONDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2020

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|-----------------|---|-----------------|------|
| Solihull United | v | Northfield Town | 7.30 |
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TUESDAY 8th SEPTEMBER 2020

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|-----------------|---|-----------------|--|
| Bolehall Swifts | v | Hampton | |
| Coton Green | v | Boldmere Sports | |
| FC Stratford | v | Alcester Town | |

WEDNESDAY 9th SEPTEMBER 2020

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|----------------|---|--------|------|
| Coventry Alvis | v | Knowle | 7.30 |
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Division 3

Sutton United held a two point lead when last season was curtailed, and they will be hoping to make it second time lucky when they host **AFC Solihull** in their opener. Solihull had a disappointing campaign but will be expected to bounce back and challenge again. **Inkberrow** were pushing Sutton close in March and they start their campaign at home to **FC Shush** who were 3rd at the time of lockdown. Both sides look to have maintained most last season's squads, so another challenge is eagerly anticipated. **Castle Vale Town** welcome **Birmingham Tigers** to Castle Vale Stadium. The home side struggled last season and will be hoping their squad of youngsters can continue to develop. Tigers had a good campaign and proved to be a difficult side to beat. **Central Ajax** welcome **Welland** to Ajax Park. Ajax were mid-table last year while Welland had an excellent first season in the MFL. **Continental Star** welcome **Enville Athletic** to The Hub. There were 127 goals in games featuring Star last season and it was the place to go for goals. Enville had a solid campaign and will be hoping for the same again. **Coventrians** welcome **Leamington Hibernian** to The Colliery Sports Ground in what will be a sad day for Hibs, being the first competitive game since the sad passing of Joy Barry. Nathan McGarrity scored just under half of Coventrians league goals last season and he has moved up the ladder to Step 6. Hibs were much improved last season and if they can continue that improvement, they should be pushing for the top half of the table. **Upton Town** entertain division new boys **Tamworth Academy**. Upton found wins hard to come by in their debut season. Academy were top of Division 4 at the curtailment having dropped just two points all season and they replace Shipston Excelsior who have switched to the Hellenic League. **WLV Football** welcome **Kenilworth Sporting**, formerly Coventry Plumbing, to Gorway Road. The Students were competitive on their league debut and it will be interesting to see whether the Covid-19 pandemic impacts their influx of new students. Sporting will be an unknown quantity with a new management team and a new squad.

Division 4 / reserves

RESERVE DIVISION / DIVISION 4

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|----------------------|---|---------------------|-----------------------|
| AFC Coventry Rangers | v | D S C United | at Coventry Sphinx FC |
| Boldmere Sports Res. | v | Gornal Colts Res. | |
| Coton Green Res. | v | Gresley Rovers Res. | |
| FC Stratford Res. | v | The Mikes | |
| Worcester City Res. | v | Uttoxeter Town Res. | |

Under 21 West

UNDER 21 DIVISION WEST

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|-----------------------------|---|----------------|-------|
| AFC Birmingham YDC | v | Allscott Heath | 10.30 |
| Cheltenham Town Development | v | Halesowen Town | 10.30 |
| Redditch United | v | Lane Head | 10.45 |
| Rushall Olympic | v | Bewdley Town | 10.30 |
| Stourport Swifts | v | Gornal Youth | 10.30 |

Under 21 East

UNDER 21 DIVISION EAST

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------------|-------|
| Barwell | v | AFC Rushden & Diamonds Elite | 10.30 |
| Heather St Johns | v | Basford United | 10.30 |
| Loughborough University | v | Bedworth United | 10.30 |

Under 21 Central

UNDER 21 DIVISION CENTRAL

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|------------------|---|-----------------------|-------|
| AFC Solihull | v | Boldmere St Michaels | 10.30 |
| Bartley Reds | v | Brocton | 10.30 |
| Castle Vale Town | v | Chasetown | 10.30 |
| FC Olympia | v | Romulus | 10.30 |
| Lichfield City | v | Stafford Rangers | 10.30 |
| Silhill | v | Sutton Coldfield Town | 10.30 |