

Folkestone aiming for a cup treble after excellent away win

Written by Mick Cork

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Invicta supporters are eager to see if their team - buoyed by the club's biggest away win for several seasons – can kick-on with success in an almost unprecedented run of three cup ties in different competitions over the space of just seven days.

And with two of those games against Ryman Premier Division opposition, manager Neil Cugley says those ties will give everyone a better idea of just how good his side is.

It all starts on Wednesday evening when Horsham – second bottom of the higher division – visit The Buzzlines in the first round of the Isthmian (Ryman) League Cup, kick-off 7.45pm.

That is followed by the visit of an experienced Met Police side in the FA Trophy at Cheriton Road on Saturday.

The Met currently stand ninth in the Premier Division, and are never far away from the play-off places.

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Finally – depending on both teams being free from Trophy replays – Folkestone make the short trip to Faversham’s Salter’s Lane on Tuesday next for the delayed Kent Senior Cup first round tie.

Coincidentally, Horsham and Met Police drew 2-2 at Gorings Mead last weekend, while Folkestone romped to a 4-0 victory at Merstham.

In another link between Invicta’s three cup fixtures, Horsham are now managed by former Invicta reserve team number two and ex-Faversham boss Justin Luchford, who also has one-time Folkestone ‘scout’ Richard Langley as part of his management team.

The Hornets have won just once in the league this season and will undoubtedly be hoping for a little more joy in the cup.

Still buzzing from Saturday’s win at Merstham, boss Cugley didn’t feel his side were unduly flattered by the four goal winning margin.

“It was one of those perfect days when most of what we tried to do came off” said Neil.

The return to fitness of Richard Atkins allowed Cugley to switch to 4-3-3 with the young striker joining Ratty Everitt and Simon Austin up front.

“It was good to have Richard back. We started pretty well and he got a good goal to give us a first half lead” continued Cugley.

“But Jack (Delo) made one great save just after half-time when Merstham were threatening to get back in the game.

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“Then we scored twice in quick succession and the game was virtually won.”

Striker Everitt has now been credited with the third goal of the game with his manager saying: “It was a brilliant strike and he deserves the goal, even if it took a deflection on the way in.

“Ratty’s much fitter this season and it’s showing in the way he’s been playing. He had an excellent game.

“So too did Josh Burchell. He might have lost his place in the change of formation but had his best game for a long time. He’s got plenty of ability when he wants to show it.”

Burchell was pushed forward from full back to join skipper Micheal Everitt and Darren Smith in the midfield three.

With only a still relatively small squad to choose from, Cugley may not make too many changes for either of the first two cup ties.

And while the league and county cups are arguably fairly low priority, it will be good to keep their good form going, especially in the Trophy game against Met Police.

“They’re always a strong side” said Neil.

“We never got going in the FA Cup” - when Invicta lost 3-0 at home to Whitehawk.

“That was very disappointing and we’ll need to play a lot more positively to get anything out of this one” he added.

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With a decent amount of prize money on offer to the winners that will make welcome reading for chairman Lynn Woods and the rest of his board.

The Met still have former Folkestone defender Nick Humphrey on their books – one of few players still with the Ilmber Court club since Invicta last played them two or three years back.

Their much-changed but still very experienced line up now includes former Hampton & Richmond centre back Orlando Jeffery, well-travelled striker Carl Wilson-Dennis (ex-Kingstonian, Hayes & Yeading and Eastleigh) and fellow frontman Stratforde Palmer, also once with Hayes and Yeading.

Please watch website for news of whether next Tuesday's Kent Senior Cup game goes ahead.