

## TWO DARRENS' DUEL COULD BE CRUCIAL

Written by Mick Cork

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Invicta boss Neil Cugley hopes to add to his squad ahead of Saturday's visit to play-off chasers Faversham Town at Salter's Lane.

"We're talking to a couple of players who have fallen out with their clubs and who have experience of playing at our level.

"We got some very difficult games coming up – Dulwich, then Maidstone twice and Leatherhead twice and really do need to increase our numbers."

One player is described as a forward/midfielder and the other a holding midfielder/defender, both of whose ability to play in a number of positions would clearly be an asset.

Roland Edge (Achilles) could well miss out this weekend as he struggles to play two games a week at the moment while Liam Dickson (knee ligaments) is not expected to be fit for at least a fortnight.

But there is better news of New Year's Day matchwinner Darren Smith.

The midfielder, who is carrying a groin strain, has been in outstanding in recent weeks and

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cracked a superb late goal that sealed his side's very welcome 2-1 win over Whitstable.

And boss Cugley is one of many looking forward to seeing the tussle between 'Smudger' and his former midfield team-mate Darren Marsden, who left Cheriton Road immediately after a hard-earned 2-2 draw with the Lillywhites and joined the Salter's Lane outfit a couple of weeks later.

"They're both good players" said Neil, "and Smudger has benefitted from having a bit more room to play since Marso went.

"It should be a good little tussle between the pair of them.

"I spoke to Smudge yesterday (Wednesday) and I think he will be okay, especially as we don't have a midweek game next week."

Marsden also proved his side's matchwinner with a late goal in their 3-2 victory over Hythe on Tuesday. A skilful, but somewhat inconsistent player during his 10 months or so with Invicta, his arrival at Salter's Lane has coincided with Faversham's climb towards the top of the table.

Currently fifth in the table with three wins, three draw and three defeats in their nine home games, Faversham are on an impressive five game unbeaten run in which they have only dropped two points.

But Folkestone's form is also looking up – even if they've not always had the run of the green in the last five or six weeks.

"We were poor first half against Whitstable, but really deserved to win on our second half performance alone" said Neil. "And we definitely didn't deserve to lose at Hythe on Boxing Day."

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Folkestone's fixtures over the next six or seven week do look fairly difficult, but they have often produced their best results when the odds have seemed against them and team spirit has been good in recent weeks.

After the Faversham game, they face leaders Dulwich Hamlet at Cheriton Road on January 12 before away games at fourth-placed Leatherhead (Jan 15), Merstham (Jan 18) and second in the table Maidstone (Jan 22).

The home return games against Leatherhead and Maidstone are scheduled for February 9 and February 16 respectively.