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WIDNES FOOTBALL CLUB MATCH DAY PROGRAMME SEASON 2020-21

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Preliminary Round
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Widnes Football Club Information



Home Ground: HALTON STADIUM,
LOWERHOUSE LANE, WIDNES, WA8 7DZ

Year Formed: 2003

Record Attendance: 462 v Charnock
Richard (NWCFL Division 1)
- 22nd April 2016

Previous Leagues:

West Cheshire League

North West Counties League

Honours:

The Reusch First Division Winners 2016/17

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Division Runner Up 2017/18

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Champions Cup Winners 2017/18

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League Rule 2.13 Ownership:

In accordance with the Football Association Rule 2.13 Publication of ownership in relation to Step

1 to Step 6 Clubs within the Football pyramid,

we hereby confirm that the Legal Status of

WIDNES FOOTBALL CLUB LIMITED identified

by Company Number 08960635, takes the

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Shareholder David Day holds a significant interest

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From the Manager 

Afternoon all. Firstly, I would like to welcome all the staff, players and supporters from Longridge Town too the Halton Stadium for today's FA Cup Preliminary Round tie. I hope you all enjoy the game and have a safe journey back home.

Today will see us finally play our first competitive match in nearly 6 months. It's been a long wait and it's felt like a lot longer in what has been a very strange year thus far.

Pre-season has gone on longer than ever before and it's been completely different to any other pre-season I've ever been involved in during my career.

Certainly in terms of planning due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the restrictions that brought with it.

One thing I will say is the lads have been an absolute credit to themselves throughout this whole process.

Pre-season is hard at the best of times but even more so this year. It's been 4 or more weeks longer than normal and the team have had to adjust to all different types of changes to training and match routines.

I'm sure the lad's will be itching to get on the pitch today after waiting so long for this day to come.

Today is also the first time we are allowed to have fans back into our home Stadium.

Obviously you will notice some changes to how things work in the stadium but I can assure you that the club has been working hard behind the scenes to take the necessary steps to make the ground as COVID secure as possible ready for today and future home games.

I hope all is well with all our supporters and I'll look forward to seeing you all today.

I'm sure it's been a frustrating time without watching your team but hopefully we can put in a good performance for you today and progress to the next round.

It will certainly be nice to see some familiar face's in the stands again today.

During the summer we have recruited Jack Hatton, Tom Moore, Jordan Southworth, Conor Hughes, Mikey Conlon, Ryan Gibson and Daley Woods.

We wanted too add to the side that we finished strong with last year before the season was cut short and by doing so we feel these players will help us push on even more.

I hope your all excited to be back at the Halton Stadium today and looking forward to a seeing a very entertaining game.

Cheers
Ackers





Longridge Town Football Club History

LONGRIDGE TOWN football club was formed in 1996 when the two main clubs in the town, Longridge United and Longridge St. Wilfred's amalgamated to give a single club with the ultimate aim of bringing a higher standard of football to the town.

Although Longridge Town football club has only been in existence since 1996, the two clubs from which it was formed have histories which can be traced back to the 19th century when two clubs Longridge St. Wilfred's and Longridge St. Lawrence were first formed.

Both of these clubs were based on sectarian grounds and played in their respective religious leagues. This situation existed until 1929 when Longridge St. Lawrence became a non-sectarian club and changed its name to Longridge United.

In 1996 Longridge United and Longridge St. Wilfred's amalgamated to give a single club which is still the situation today. The club initially played in the Preston & District League, winning the Third Division title in 2003-4, en route to their rise to the Premier Division.

Following a third placed finish in 2007-08, the club's application to join the West Lancashire Second Division was successful. In only their second season in the league, the club were promoted to the First Division at the end of the 2009-10 season, as runners-up to BAC/EE Springfields.

And in 2011-12 the club enjoyed their most successful season so far when they won the First Division title from Crooklands Casuals and scored 91 goals in the process to be crowned champions.



In 2016/2017 season Longridge became West Lancs League Premier Division Champions. Since then the club finished third in 2017/2018 which was enough to secure promotion to the North West Counties League Division One North.

In the club's first season in Division One North they became Champions at the first attempt scoring 144 goals and achieving the highest average gate in the division of 177. A truly successful season and now looking to consolidate the club's position in the Premier League for 2019/2020.





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From the Skipper - Michael Burke



Good Afternoon Everyone. Firstly, I hope everyone one is healthy in light of the situation we have found ourselves in with the Covid-19 outbreak.

Please respect the surroundings you're in today, adhere to both Widnes FC official and the DCBL stadium officials guidelines to ensure you remain safe whilst watching today's game.

Welcome to our opponents Longridge Town for this afternoon's preliminary round FA Cup tie, a team that will be no pushovers having finished strongly and in a decent league position in the North West Counties Premier Division last season.

What can I say....after last season was cut short because of the pandemic ITS GOOD TO BE BACK!!

All the hard work has been done over another gruelling pre-season schedule and now it's time for business.

All the work we've put into pre-season sets us up to go into the next 9 months with some optimism of what we can go onto to achieve this season, now it's up to us as a group to perform as fiercely, competitively and as consistently as we can across that period to ensure we make this season a successful one.

It's great to see everyone back watching competitive football again. Whilst you're here today...don't be quiet, don't be shy, make some noise and get behind the boys today.

Stay safe

Burkey





Cheadle Heath Nomads 0-3 Widnes Match Action



Photos by FJA Photography

Runcorn Town 5-5 Widnes Match Report



Widnes came from behind twice to draw 5-5 with neighbours Runcorn Town in their latest pre-season friendly on Tuesday night.

The two sides played out a 10-goal thriller which saw Runcorn lead 3-1 and 5-3 before the visiting Whites twice levelled to rescue a draw.

It was Steve Akrigg and Kev Towey's side's fourth outing in an unprecedented pre-season fixture list following the 2019-20 campaign being curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic in March.

Widnes have already won convincingly at both Cheadle Heath Nomads and Pilkington either side of a defeat at Rylands as the new Northern Premier League season draws ever closer.

They did however make a slow start at Runcorn in atrocious conditions at the Viridor Community Stadium.

Storm Francis made it a particularly wet August evening and Town made the better of the early exchanges with former Bayern Munich man Dale Jennings forcing a solid save out of Cameron Terry in the Widnes goal.

Former Widnes man Lewis Buckley, who is amongst Runcorn's summer recruits, then tried his luck from distance but his shot failed to trouble keeper Terry.

Widnes then threatened themselves, but an Aidan Roxburgh challenge prevented Jamie Rainford from getting a shot away after a good move from the visitors.

Town took the lead on the half-hour mark when Buckley opened the scoring, but Widnes soon pegged their hosts back through Mike Burke who headed home from a corner to equalise two minutes later.

But Runcorn soon restored their advantage when Buckley added his second, rounding Terry to finish into an empty net.

Paul McManus' side scored again to go in at

half-time with a 3-1 advantage when wide-man Jennings made a great run to finish neatly into the bottom corner.



With words from co-bosses Akrigg and Towey still ringing in their ears, Widnes started the second-half strongly and pulled a goal back after 49 minutes with summer signing Jordan Southworth lashing in a shot from the edge of the box.

The Whites were much the better side early in the second half and they equalised shortly after the hour-mark.

Runcorn could only half-clear a corner and Widnes duly punished their neighbours with off-season addition Jack Hatton curling a delicious shot into the top corner with Town custodian Adam Reid well-beaten.

Having worked hard to get on level terms, Widnes will be bitterly disappointed to have conceded a fourth Runcorn goal less than two minutes after parity was restored.

Buckley completed his hat-trick, nodding home from a Kieran Holsgrove corner as the goals continued to flow in earnest.

It was five 14 minutes from time as Liam Ward headed in a Kevin Exell cross as Runcorn restored their two-goal advantage and surely thought that they were well on their way to an impressive triumph.

But the Whites had other ideas, and co-boss Towey – frequently a goalscorer against Town in both Widnes and former club Runcorn Linnets colours – came off the bench to drive home a well-hit strike to halve the deficit and set up a tense finish.

And Widnes would earn themselves a draw when Mikey Conlon – signed from Newcastle Town in July – netted a fifth to close out an entertaining Halton Derby.

By Callum Chadwick



Widnes FC were formed in February 2003 as The Dragons AFC, later to be known as Widnes Dragons. The Club developed a fantastic reputation locally for their contribution towards the development of grassroots football in Halton and for providing opportunities to play football for over 200 players from the age of six to open age.

The Club put in a great amount of effort and worked tirelessly to run the club according to the best practices laid down by the FA, to that end the club achieved the FA Charter Standard award in December 2003, being recognised as the first club to achieve this award in Halton. In 2008, the Club later went on to be awarded the FA Charter Standard Development award for the continuous development of grassroots football.

In March 2012 Widnes Dragons started a consultation process with Widnes Vikings RLFC to become part of the Vikings Sports brand, a partnership that would enhance the clubs community status. A First Team was established with the short-term goal of being granted entry into the North West Counties Football League as Widnes Vikings FC.

Later that year during the Club's annual AGM, the Club's members agreed to become part of the Widnes Vikings Group and agreed on a 12-month transitional period up to the end of the 2012-13 season. The club were proud to achieve the FA Charter Standard Community Club award in July 2012.

Steve Hill was appointed First Team manager in September 2012 and steered the Club to a 4th placed finish in its inaugural and so far, only season in the West Cheshire League Third Division. During this season, the Club also

submitted its application to join the North West Counties Football League for the 2013/14 season.



Prior to the season, Widnes' application was successful, and the Club began life in the North West Counties Football League Third Division with a 3-1 home defeat to Cheadle Town before winning their first game in the NWCFL with an emphatic 5-1 away win over Northwich Flixton Villa.

Hill eventually guided his side to a 14th placed finish in their inaugural season in the First Division with 36 points from 36 games.

Off the pitch, the Club would be re-named as Widnes Football Club after ending their partnership with Widnes Vikings. The junior setup would also breakaway from the Club, re-forming as a separate entity under The Dragons guise.

The 2014/15 season saw the Club make significant progress in cup competitions. Widnes reached the last 16 of the League Cup before falling to eventual League Champions Glossop North End and reached the quarter-final of the Liverpool Senior Cup, beating Prescot Cables before being knocked out in the last eight by eventual winners Skelmersdale United.

The season also oversaw the Club's first foray in the FA Vase. Widnes were knocked out in the Second Qualifying Round following a 2-0 defeat at AFC Emley.

Following the season's conclusion, winger Ben Tollitt became the first former Widnes player to play for a Football League club as he signed a one-year deal with 2008 FA Cup winners Portsmouth, after impressing on trial with Paul Cook's side during pre-season. Tollitt's performances earned the former Widnes man

a one-year extension after scoring once in 16 games in all competitions for the EFL League Two club.

Tollitt has since gone on to achieve two promotions with Tranmere Rovers, and is now on the books at Blackpool in League One.

The following season saw the Club again reach the quarter-final of the Liverpool Senior Cup, coming up against an Everton XI managed by David Unsworth. The young Toffees excelled in the game and beat Widnes 8-0 despite an admirable performance from the home side.

After a 13th placed finish, Chairman David Day and Manager Steve Hill stepped down from their roles, allowing a new Board of Directors and management team to be appointed to bring some much-needed new stimulus to the club.

Mr Day remained on the newly established Board of Directors, headed by incoming Chairman Ian Ross that bring the necessary expertise and drive to enable the Club to progress over the coming seasons.

Danny Meadowcroft and Brian Pritchard were appointed as joint managers heading into the 2016/17 season but later left the Club by mutual consent following an indifferent start to the season in September. Danny Salt was appointed interim manager, leading the side to a win and a draw in his two games in charge.

Former Burscough, Warrington Town and Runcorn Linnets manager Joey Dunn was appointed as new First Team Manager later that month.

Dunn's appointment led to a massive turnaround in results, with Widnes putting together a run of just two league defeats in their final 32 league games as the Whites surged to the North West Counties First Division title.

The title and promotion was secured with a game to spare after a 5-1 win at AFC Blackpool, with Widnes winning 14 straight games to finish at the top of the pile. The Whites also performed admirably in cup competitions that season, reaching the last eight of both the League Cup and Liverpool Senior Cup, and the semi-final of the First Division Cup before losing out to eventual winners City of Liverpool.

During the season, Kevin Towey became the Club's new record goalscorer following a brace at Skelmersdale United in November – a record that still stands to this day at 72 goals.

The summer of 2017 oversaw the Club's attempts to re-establish a junior setup with two youth teams at Under-7s and Under-9s. Lindsey Davies was appointed as Youth Development Officer, and the junior section has thrived ever since become a pillar of the local community.

The 2017-18 season started with Widnes' first-ever FA Cup game which ended in a heavy 5-0 defeat at home to Handsworth Parramore at the Halton Stadium.

Widnes would endure an inconsistent start to life in the North West Counties Premier Division (level 9 of the National League system) – the highest level in the Club's short history.

Ultimately, manager Dunn would depart in early October resigning from his position as manager. Senior players Kevin Towey and Steve Akrigg were installed as player/joint-managers and would go on to enjoy a massively successful first foray into management.

The duo began their stint with three successive 2-2 draws, with Widnes scoring late equalisers in each of those games to rescue a point. Their first win would come with an emphatic 5-1 win over Maine Road at the Halton Stadium as Sam Sheen netted twice.



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Inconsistency would continue to plague the Whites in the following weeks, emphasised by a 3-3 draw at Padiham late in October that went viral after Widnes conceded twice in the last two minutes in a bizarre stoppage time period that was reported by various National Media outlets including the Guardian, the BBC and a feature on Soccer AM, while Champions League and World Cup winning goalkeeper Iker Casillas would tweet about the game on his Twitter account.

This would eventually have a positive effect on the side as Widnes never really looked back. A 3-0 home defeat to Charnock Richard in November would be the last time Widnes would taste defeat in the league until March as the Whites won 23 of their 25 remaining games to seal a second successive promotion to the Northern Premier League, beating out local rivals Runcorn Town on the final day.

In truth, Widnes' form from November onwards was remarkable, only tasting defeat twice against Marine (Liverpool Senior Cup semi-final) and Barnoldswick Town – a run that included a 5-1 home win over Southport in the Liverpool Senior Cup, and league double over neighbours Runcorn Linnets.

The form would continue in the League Cup, as Widnes would end the season with a trophy after beating Burscough in the final at Fleetwood Town's Highbury Stadium, with the Whites coming from behind to win with goals from Ben Hodkinson and a late Sheen winner.

The summer of 2018 saw Widnes' preparation for a first-ever season in the Northern Premier League Division One West (level 8 of the National League system) disrupted by pitch problems at the Halton Stadium, which had failed its FIFA artificial pitch test. With the surface due to be relaid after the conclusion of the Rugby League season, Widnes were forced to begin the season at Barnton's Townfield Lane.

Once again, the Club continued to make significant strides as one of Halton's best junior football clubs. The 2018-19 season saw the junior section expand to 14 teams across eight age groups, including two girls' teams at Under 12s and Under 14s.

Promotion to the Northern Premier League also allowed the Cub to enter a team into the NPL Football Academy, forming the Widnes FC 'Education and Football Academy' – an alternative to college, ideal for any 16/17 year-old who wants to gain a great education and develop as a footballer at the same time.

The Club's first season at Step 4 proved to be an inconsistent one, with co-bosses Akrigg and Towey ultimately guiding the side to a consolidatory 12th placed finish. Widnes would again advance to the Liverpool Senior Cup semi-final, losing to Prescot Cables on penalties.

Widnes did add another trophy to the cabinet though with a 3-0 win at Runcorn Linnets to lift the North West Counties Champions Cup.

It was a significant season for a number of players, with Kev Pollard, Mike Burke and Chris and George Lomax reaching a century of Widnes appearances, while Accrington Stanley loanee Niall Watson would become the Whites' youngest ever player and goalscorer in a 2-2 draw against Colwyn Bay in January aged 18 years and 211 days.

The 2019-20 season will once again see the Club's junior section expand to 19 teams, capping yet another milestone in the our burgeoning youth setup.

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So, where were we?

It's been six long months since the 2019/20 season came to an end which saw most Non-League clubs have their campaigns abandoned with roughly half a dozen weeks remaining.

Football is on its way back thick and fast now with the preliminary round of the FA Cup taking place today while some leagues are already several fixtures in.

Steps 3 and 4 get underway next weekend (19th) while the National League will begin on October 3.

There has never been a more challenging time for Non-League clubs and their volunteers, having to implement important Covid-19 regulations and adapt financially.

We've seen over pre-season how well clubs have managed the situation and it is crucial football, particularly Non-League, can continue to prove it is capable of staging matches safely.

At the time of writing, the National League is still waiting for the green light to admit fans – it is thought they will be allowed to in time for the season's start.

Below Steps 1 and 2, clubs can allow up to 30 per cent of ground grading capacity at the level.

For most teams, this isn't an issue but league chiefs at Steps 3 and 4 are pushing for the limit to be changed to 30 per cent of ground capacity to benefit the more well-supported clubs.

At this stage, the season getting underway, fingers crossed, won't be too much of an issue. Bigger problems, perhaps, lie in wait should we experience a second wave of the virus or local areas go into lockdown.

The way this year is going, it wouldn't be a surprise to see a disastrous spell of weather over the winter too!

Only time will tell as to whether Non-League will have to deal with those challenges but for now we should enjoy being back to what we enjoy most, even if the environment has changed somewhat.

Thank you to our loyal readers for supporting The Non-League Paper throughout the summer!

Even though football came to a halt, we continued to make sure the paper was still on newsstands every Sunday and Monday morning throughout the summer.

We interviewed the likes of Chris Wilder, Les Ferdinand, Stuart Pearce and Chris Waddle while doing our best to keep you updated on the latest news – as we have done for the last 20 years!

We're massively grateful to all the players, managers, clubs, leagues and everyone else for answering their phones to talk to us!

But, crucially, we wouldn't have been able to do it without the backing of our readers – thank you!

The Non-League Paper is on sale every Sunday and Monday featuring match action, fixtures, results and tables from Steps 1-7

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The Daniel Wilkinson Foundation is a charity set up in memory of Daniel Wilkinson who died in 2016 aged 24, while playing the game he loved, from an underlying heart condition called Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Cardiomyopathy (ARVC).



Dan played football from an early age and joined Hull City AFC when he was 10, earning a professional contract aged 18. Loughborough University followed where he completed a degree in Accounting and Financial Management while playing non-league football. He was an athlete who enjoyed the gym and took his health and nutrition very seriously. He lived life to the full and had so much ahead of him.

Other than feeling light-headed on a few occasions in the month before he died, he had no symptoms!

SUDDEN CARDIAC DEATH IN THE YOUNG (SCD)

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- Every week in the UK, 12 apparently fit and healthy young people (aged 35 and under) die from previously undiagnosed heart conditions.
- In Italy, where screening is mandatory for all young people engaged in organised sport, they have reduced the incidence of young sudden cardiac death by 89%.

OUR MISSION

The Daniel Wilkinson Foundation has been set up to raise awareness of SCD and to provide funding towards heart screening, defibrillators and CPR/defibrillator training primarily for grass-roots sporting teams.

Tragedies can be prevented through cardiac screening. It is vital that young people are identified and treated.

Find out more

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Today's Fixtures- a selection from the FA Cup



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The Squads



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	Played	Scored
Cameron Terry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jay Roberts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shaun Holden	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alex McQuade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mike Burke	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Callum Humphries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jack Hatton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tom Moore	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fisnik Hadjari	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kingsley Williams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jordan Southworth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Danny Ventre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
James Steele	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ryan Jennings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jaime Rainford	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conor Hughes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mikey Conlon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daley Woods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kevin Towey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ryan Gibson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Longridge Town

	Played	Scored
Lee Dovey (GK)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daniel Gray	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ryan Schofield	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Troy Carsley	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brandon Lee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daniel Wilkinson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alex Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scott Harries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sam Harding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joe Melling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Harvey Macadam	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paul Turner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jack Anderton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tom Ince	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jacob Ridings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conor Linighan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brad Wicks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ben Fletcher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Owen Watkinson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jon Jo Morris	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Match Officials

Referee: Alex James

Assistant 1: Justin Walton **Assistant 2:** Neil Matthews