

# Stroud Life SPORT

News from around the Five Valleys **this is** gloucestershire.co.uk

Send your sports reports to: Stroud Life, 14 Union Street, Stroud. Email: [stroudlife@glosmedia.co.uk](mailto:stroudlife@glosmedia.co.uk)



## Hoskins double puts Shortwood in control

**Marlow United 0  
Shortwood United 2**

SHORTWOOD made the long journey to Flackwell Heath on Saturday and came back with all three points thanks to two second-half goals from striker Andy Hoskins.

Wood have now scored more than 100 goals in all competitive matches this season.

They are six points behind leaders Hungerford in the Premier Division, but have two games in hand.

### Football

Wood tried too hard in the first half and got bogged down, but they adapted their style to a more direct approach in the second and reaped the reward.

Marlow offered stubborn resistance, but Martin Pearce was rarely troubled.

Wood had an early chance but Matt Collins elected to shoot from a narrow angle.

Wood went close to taking the lead when home goalkeeper Murray did

well to react to an Axton header.

Matt Green wasted a good opportunity by firing over.

Green was unlucky to see another shot just clear the bar and Bennyworth's fine run and cross was only just cleared.

Wood took the lead in the 50th minute after Webb's persistence forced a corner.

He took it short to Bennett and his pinpoint cross was headed home by the unmarked Hoskins from close range.

Marlow almost equalised when Brown was allowed to turn and fire a shot across goal. This was to be the closest they came, as the defence marshalled Marlow's attack well until the end.

Hoskins settled the game with his second goal on 81 minutes.

Murray miskicked a clearance and Hoskins did well to control the ball before firing back an unstoppable shot.

**TEAM:** Pearce, Allard, Bennett, Bennyworth, Mammola, Collins (Pugh 59), Matt Green, Axton (Steadman 84), Johnstone, Hoskins, Webb. Sub not used: Cornwall

## Aintree hope for Nacarat

### Racing

TOM GEORGE is targeting more big-race glory for stable star Nacarat – but has ruled out the Cheltenham Festival.

The Slad trainer's confidence in the grey was rewarded when he powered to victory in the Racing Post Chase at Kempton on Saturday.

He made virtually all the running under champion jockey Tony McCoy to evoke memories of the great Desert Orchid's success in the race in 1990.

George plans to give Nacarat a chance to boost his burgeoning reputation by running him at the John Smith's Grand National meeting at Aintree in April.

But after being pulled up on the two occasions he has run at Cheltenham, the eight-year-old will not be competing at the Festival next month because George says he does not like running downhill.

"Everything came right for him on the day – we've taken our time with him and he needs to be fresh," said George.

"I think we've handicapped ourselves out of races like Saturday's now, but that doesn't matter because we have found the key to him and now we'll find out if he can compete at the next level."

McCoy, who rode Nacarat to victory on his previous start at Doncaster, was impressed with the speed he showed through the race.

"He jumped and travelled and has a lot of pace," he said. "I was able to get into a good rhythm and he was never rushed with the pace of the race."

George said Nacarat would not run again before Aintree, where he will line up in either the totesport Bowl over three miles or the John Smith's Melling Chase over two-and-a-half miles.

# Ayres: I'm up for the Rovers survival fight

LEE AYRES is determined to play a pivotal role in Forest Green's scrap for Blue Square Premier survival.

With John Hardiker and Darren Jones both back in the first-team picture after long injury sabbaticals, central defender Ayres knows he faces a battle to hold onto his place during the closing weeks of the campaign.

It is a challenge the ex-Kidderminster Harriers and Burton Albion man is relishing, having overcome far more already in a stop-start career.

"I had a bad time at Burton, where I had an injury which wasn't diagnosed and cost me 18 months," said Ayres, a free signing from Redditch United in December.

"It was a pre-hernia problem which normally takes four weeks to recover from after an operation, so it set me back a lot.

"My arrival here coincided with a couple of injuries, which is not the way I would have wanted to get in the team, but hopefully I can stay there now.

"I had a great time at Redditch, where the management were brilliant, and I owe them a lot for getting the move back up."

Ayres was cup-tied for last Saturday's 4-0 FA Trophy hammering at Stevenage Borough, making for unpleasant viewing from the stands.

Rovers must now concentrate on pulling clear of relegation trouble, and the 26-year-old does not expect any

### Football

By Peter Orchard

long-term psychological damage from their Broadhall Way bruising.

"Stevenage away was the toughest draw we could have had as they are flying at the moment," he said.

"At home we would have fancied our chances against anyone, and had we got though I think we'd have gone all the way.

"But it's gone now and the league was always the most important competition. I think we've been the better side in most games since I've been here, so I'm sure we'll pick ourselves up."

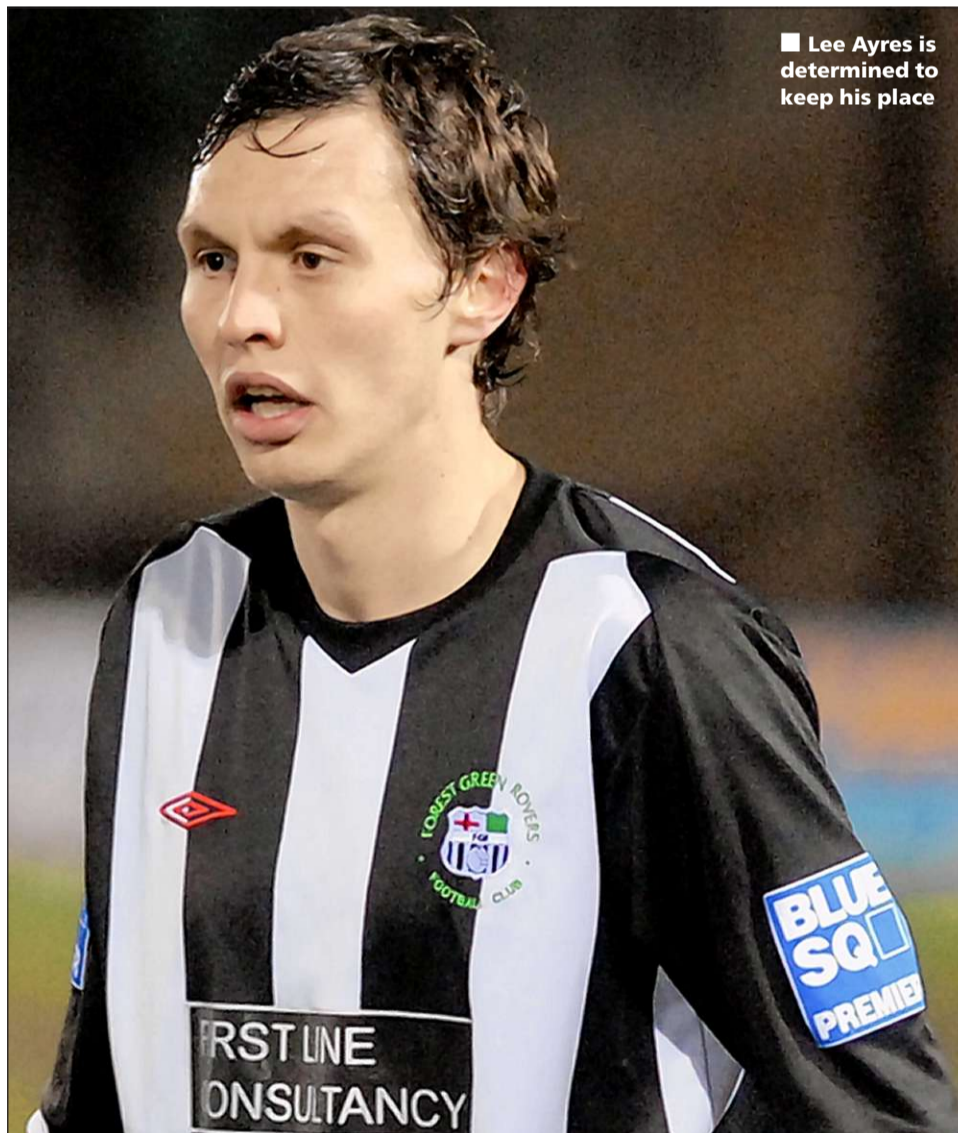
One man who will play no further part in the rescue mission is forward Les Aful.

The 25-year-old twisted his knee at the end of the 2-2 draw with Histon earlier this month, and a scan has shown a tear in his posterior cruciate ligament.

Rovers boss Jim Harvey said: "We'll have to send Les to the surgeon, which will rule him out for six to nine months.

"I really feel for him as he's a terrific lad and a pleasure to work with, plus it's a big blow for us."

● THIS Saturday's BSP clash with Grays Athletic at the New Lawn (3pm) is a Kids Go Free fixture, meaning up to two under-16s will be admitted free of charge when accompanied by an adult.



Lee Ayres is determined to keep his place



Published by Gloucestershire Media, 6-8 The Oxbode, Gloucester GL1 1RZ. Printed by Harmsworth Printing Ltd, Stoke. Registered as a Newspaper at the Post Office. All advertisements accepted on the terms and conditions published from time to time in The Citizen. For permission to copy cuttings, contact the NLA, 7 Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1NL, tel 01892 525273. e-mail [copy@nla.co.uk](mailto:copy@nla.co.uk) Price 20p where sold



**Quality...** Skip Loading Dumpers  
Track Dumpers Mini Diggers ...for unbeatable prices!  
All Small Tools, Plant Hire & Sales  
Open to Trade and Public - Accounts Welcome  
**NOW OPEN SATURDAY 9-12 MIDDAY**

Call in today  
**UNIQUE**  
Plant Hire  
Tel: 01453 822700  
Ryeford Industrial  
Estate, Stonehouse