

STAR CORNER...
MAIDSTONE UTD STRIKER

Ade Olorunda



Jay's way is crucial to ensuring the Stones roll

MUCH has been made of the importance of the 3G pitch at the Gallagher Stadium for our success this season but I consider the gaffer to be the single most important factor.

Managers often have unorthodox methods to get the best out of their players and Jay Saunders is no different.

Before each of our final few matches of the season, he picked a player at random to do a team talk in the dressing room.

It was great as what each individual said was completely natural and it made some of the quieter lads speak up and some of the experienced players, such as myself, turn into leaders.

I can safely say it was an idea which inspired everyone, influenced the team's performance and ultimately helped us achieve our goal.

We were all disappointed to miss out on the league especially after leading until so late on in the season and Dulwich Hamlet winning the title on the final day was hard to take.

But our 3-0 victory over Faversham in the play-off final epitomised the way we've played for most of the season - a real team effort.

The manager played

a big role in lifting our spirits and helping us keep focus, and to celebrate promotion in our first season back in the town - and in our new stadium - made it all the more special.

People have asked how I think we will fare next season but for me, you only have to look at some of our results against higher league opposition.

In the FA Trophy we beat Whitehawk, a team in our position last year, before running Halifax very close in the next round. That showed we can compete at that level.

On a personal level, I have been delighted to get on the score sheet in recent weeks and have an impact on our results.

I was hampered with injury at the start of the season but the manager kept faith with me and I managed to net some crucial goals.

We have a lot of talented forwards at this club, with the likes of Paul Booth and Stuart King on 20+ goals, and although I want to play, you've always got to put the team first.

I have every faith in Jay, however. He knows what's right for both individuals and the team and the lads and I will respect the decisions he has to make in the coming months.