

RAF Football Association - E-Bulletin

SRT Regular on the way to Wembley



Cpl Lewis 'Brownny' Brownhill, RAF Benson is a longstanding member of the RAF Senior Representative side as well as representing the UK Armed Forces. He currently plays his club football for Thatcham Town FC who have progressed to the final of the FA Vase at Wembley.

To put this massive achievement in context, Thatcham Town FC volunteered to be relegated in 2014 from the Southern Football League to stabilise the football club. Now they are doing their best to get back to that level as soon as they can. This season Thatcham currently sit in second place with a few games in hand which if they win the games in hand it would take them top of the Hellenic League. Thatcham are on a fantastic run of 29 unbeaten in all competitions and this form has been the catalyst for the success they have had in the FA VASE.

The FA VASE run for Thatcham started in the First round proper with a home win against Horsham YMCA back in October, victories against Broadbridge Heath and Sevenoaks followed before the last 16 match against midland league high flyers Bromsgrove Sporting, where Thatcham went on to victory in front of just short of 1000 spectators. In the Quarter finals Thatcham were drawn away to Melksham who we're one of the competitions favourites. Thatcham again came out on top with a 1-0 win this time in front of 2207 non-league football fans.



The Semi-Finals, a two legged affair saw Thatcham drawn against North West counties title challengers 1874 Northwich. The first game was played at Thatcham's Waterside Park with the home team gaining a small 1-0 advantage, although the tie should have been put of sight with many missed chances throughout the game. The second leg with both teams 90 minutes away from Wembley was played at Northern premier league side



Witton Albion. This was a game of chances taken, Thatcham flew out of the blocks and within 20 minutes found themselves 2-0 up, 3-0 over both games. Just before half time Northwich grabbed a late penalty to spice up the tie although this was short lived as just after half time, Thatcham again took the chance for an early goal ending all hopes for Northwich, although they did score a consolation goal towards the last minutes of the game Thatcham held out and are will now play Stockton Town at Wembley on the 20th May.

Brownny gave his personal view on this fantastic achievement:

"I don't think it's quite sunk in yet, it's such a big achievement for the players, staff and the football club to get to Wembley. Every young footballer wants to play at Wembley at some point, however so many don't get the chance. I've seen my brother play there three times now, for Preston and twice for Barnsley, so I have seen how big of an occasion it is.

To think last year's FA non-league finals day had over 38000 spectators, it's a long way away from 150/200 on a normal Saturday, so it will be who deals with that added pressure. I am guessing it will sink in nearer the time when I start planning hotels etc, between now and then we have to go and win the league as the club needs to be back at step 4"



The final will be played on Sunday 20 May 2018 – Kick Off 1215.

More information is available on the FA website - <http://www.thefa.com/competitions/fa-vase>