HIT THE BAR!

The oldest, continuously in-print football fanzine



GOING UP?

April 2026 £1

FIXTURES 25/26

MARCH

28 – Braintree Town (A)

APRIL

3 – Gateshead (H)

6 – Morecambe (A)

11 – Sutton United (H)

18 – Truro City (A)

25 – Brackley Town (H)

PLAY OFF DATES

28 April - Eliminator A (5th v 6th)

29 April - Eliminator B – (4th v 7th) –

3 May— Semi-Final (2nd v Eliminator A Winner)

3 May—Semi-Final (3rd v Eliminator B Winner)

10 May— Promotion Final at Wembley Stadium

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EDITORS BLEAT



Welcome to HTB! 341

It's been clear for a few weeks now that the task is to finish 3rd in the table, thus guaranteeing a home semi-final. Alongside that there is a need to achieve that target with the team in the robust form that will be needed.

In HTB! 340 our form after 29 games indicated that we were on track for 93 points and scoring at 1.8 goals/game. Ten games on and the news is that we are on track for 92 points and (thanks to Boston) our goal scoring rate is now 1.9 g/g. The downside is that the team still don't look like the consistent, confident machine that we'd like to see, the shambles at Tamworth being a particularly loud wake up call. There has been a welcome return to form by Regan Linney following his bout of Bells Palsy, which is far from a trivial condition and the emergence of Hayden Atkinson has given Mark Hughes some new options in formation and play.

We've said it before, but the level of support at home and away remains amazing, with London Branch membership at near record levels and continued demand for opportunities for young fans to be the mascot at grounds we visit. Try to enjoy the next six matches!

John B

CUFC Form after 39 matches

Target Wins = 30/46 = 0.65 w/g. **Current wins = 24/39 = 0.62 w/game**

Target Goals = 90/46 = 1.95 g/game **Current goals = 75/39 = 1.9 g/game**

Points currently 78/39 = 2.00 points per game which, over 46 games gives a final total of 92 points

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR



Have you ever seen the classic Likely Lads comedy programme from the early 1970s when Terry and Bob spent all day avoiding the England score so they could watch the game later that night only to find out that it had been postponed?

Dazn show the entire match at 5.30pm and yesterday I avoided my phone, TV, radio so that I could watch the Boston game as if it was live. It was strange watching the game without chatting to friends either at a game or via whatsapp. **It made me realise how much of me supporting Carlisle so avidly is the sense of community so that even 3 minutes of madness where total lack of concentration costs us 2 goals is a little easier to take with friends**. I am confident that we will keep 3rd place in the play offs, but those lapses of concentration could cost us dear when playing Borehamwood, Southend and certainly Rochdale or York. I have been delighted to see **Hayden Atkinson i**n the team. It seems the ideal time to blood a youngster, and, despite a few mistakes, he has looked very comfortable at this level.

I want to give a huge thank you to Terry McCarthy for his role as matchday organiser and to Lucy and the ticket office team at Carlisle United. This year, to be blunt, has been a nightmare for Terry compared to the smooth process that he and Lucy had running while we were in the EFL. Sometimes, we buy tickets through Carlisle, sometimes we have to use the away club's online system, Halifax even insisted on cash at the gate on the night (why?). At least we have been assured that if we do get to Wembley, we will be able to use the TDS to look after our members by buying tickets through the club.

Terry, with the support of Mike Carruthers, has also been recommending the meeting places for games. At least, on a particularly bad day at Tamworth, we had the pleasure of spending a couple of hours in the Tamworth Tap which has just won the Camra pub of the year

for the 3rd time.

We were delighted to support the efforts of the Heritage group with a £500 donation which the Trust matched to enable them to continue the excellent work they have been doing preserving our club's history.

We then spent a further £400 to buy 50 tickets for the Southend Raise the Roof game. Simon Clarkson, on suggestion from Andy Hall, organised for Carlisle players Elliot Embleton and Josh Williams and ex-players George McVitie, Bobby Parker, and Peter McLachlan to visit the public open day of the Heritage Group at Cumbria University where members Dave Croxford and Paul Watson handed out the tickets to students and staff at the University.

The London Branch has always looked to support good causes, and I am hoping that you can all do this again. 5 nutty Carlisle fans that hadn't ridden a bike in years decided to ride 500 miles from Carlisle to Truro from the 11th to 18th April in aid of MND and Cancer Research. They would love a donation https://www.justgiving.com/team/truroorbust1 but if any Carlisle fans can provide a little support on the way whether it's a cheer, a massage or a meal, it would be really welcome. (Their route is: CUFC – Kendal (sat pm), Warrington (sun pm), Shrewsbury (Mon pm), Chepstow (Tue pm), Bridgwater (Wed pm), Bude (Thur ppm), Truro (Fri pm), Ride into Truro FC (Sat). Anyone that can help please email me chairman@carlislelondonbranch.org so that I can put you in touch with the organisers.

This year we will be returning to the Houses of Parliament for our AGM on Thursday 25th June at 6.30pm thanks to Carlisle MP Julie Minns and her researcher Maisie. Julie and Maisie have also offered to take 12 of our members on a tour of Westminster Palace at 5.30pm. Let me know by April 30th if you are intending to attend the AGM, would like to go on the tour and if you have been on the tour before. chairman@carlislelondonbranch.org

Up the blues, Dave Brown, Chairman





Elliot Embleton and Josh Williams and ex-players George McVitie and Bobby Parker, visiting the Heritage Group at Cumbria University



Dave Croxford and Paul Watson hand out Southend match tickets to students.

KEEP THE FAITH



Despite it being just over a month since the last edition of Hit the Bar came out there has been enough happening at Brunton Park to keep the fans appetite for discussion whetted.

The big talking point since our last edition was the dismissal of **Nigel Clibbens** as the club's Chief Executive. He'd been Chief Executive for 10 years having been appointed originally to take the flak away from the then owners and deal directly with the fans and the media reporting on the club. He also managed the staff of the club and was, presumably, responsible for their structure and organisation. He'd have responsibility for the finances of the club although this wouldn't extend to how much was spent and where. What he didn't appear to have any responsibility for was the playing side, including making decisions on the recruitment of players and coaching staff.

It was clear that the decision to sack Paul Simpson and replace him with new head coach Mike Williamson and Director of Sport Rob Clarkson was taken by the owners. These were the disastrous decisions that were mainly responsible for our loss of Football League status. It's surprising to me, therefore, that lots of fans' reaction to



the dismissal was "about time" or "good riddance". I guess losing League status was such a major catastrophe that some people thought that all heads should role. **In any event I think that Nigel Clibbens did a lot of work that enhanced outside opinions of Carlisle United and he did a lot to ensure that fans' views were heard and taken account of. Good luck to him in whatever he goes on to do.**

One thing that has remained consistent since the last edition of HtB is that we remain in third place in the National League, having increased our lead over Boreham Wood to 4 points. We can't afford any more slip ups like the one at Tamworth though if we are to keep that 3rd spot, and make our passage to the play off final a smooth one.

The Tamworth game was a bit of a one off; the only one in the league we have to play on a plastic pitch. That can't be put forward as an excuse because Tamworth's home record is about what you'd expect for a mid table team. On the other hand Carlisle had little opportunity to practice on an artificial surface in advance of the game, partly because of the game at Aldershot on the Tuesday before. **Virtually the whole team looked to be out of sorts and it was a woeful display, arguably the worst of the season.**

Once again there was the usual outcry after the defeat with a substantial proportion of the fanbase saying that even if we win promotion through the play offs Mark Hughes shouldn't continue to lead us into next season. Seriously? Promotion isn't enough for some people anymore!

Of our remaining fixtures our game away to Halifax looks tough but otherwise we should be coming away with points from the rest of them. Time to get fully behind the team and help them through this final part of the season. Hopefully there will be no more performances like that at Tamworth, and we can build on the 6-2 demolition of Boston to cruise into that home semi-final. What are the chances? It's Carlisle after all.

Keep the faith, Ken



INTERNED IN CARLISLE

Since October 2025, branch member Joseph Scott has been working as an intern with Carlisle United's Marketing and Media Department. A final-year undergraduate History student at University of Nottingham, twenty year-old Joseph aims for a career in sports journalism, with plans to start a Master's Degree in Sports Media and Journalism at St Marys University, Twickenham next autumn.

His first match was in March 2011, when long-time branch member and footballer, his father Dave Scott took him to the Valley to see the Blues recover from an early Bradley Wright-Philips goal to beat Charlton Athletic 3-1 (Marshall, Curran & Loy). This set the team up nicely ahead of the JPT final with Brentford a month later and set Joseph on a twin path as a Carlisle fan and football enthusiast. In recent months you might have spotted Joseph prowling the pitch perimeter on our away trips as one of his key duties is to capture video footage for the well- received 'Pitchside Blues' content on CUTV and other social media channels. With his family home in Maidstone and currently living in Nottingham, he's clocking up the rail miles to get to Brunton Park for most home matches and to many far-flung away grounds.

HUCKNALL TOWN

Arriving in Nottingham as a student he quickly looked for opportunities to gain experience in football media. February 2024 found him volunteering at Hucknall Town, a member of the United Counties League Premier Division



Joseph celebrates our FA Cup win at Reading with other members of the media team



A Happy Hucknall Town media team at Mansfield

keting and Media Officer, James Gates memorably conducted on the Lakeland fells above Aira Force during a walk with his Carlisle-based grandfather, **Joseph joined the team led by Tom Little in October 2025.**

North, which he describes as 'a lovely family club'.

He created match updates for their X feed on a matchdays, wrote match reports and conducted many interviews for their match programme. **He recalls his highlight of that time as May 2025, when Hucknall Town won the Nottinghamshire Senior Cup for the 7th time in their history** by beating Newark and Sherwood United F.C. in front of 1,025 spectators at Mansfield's Field Mill in a game that finished 5 v 5 in normal time, 6 v 6 after extra time with Town then winning 4 - 3 on penalties.

BRUNTON PARK CALLS

Although he'd planned to work with Hucknall for the 2025-26 season, in summer 2025 while Joseph was on holiday in Spain, Carlisle United advertised a marketing and media internship. Following a telephone interview with Mar-

Despite the travel challenges involved, **Joseph has attended nearly all the home matches since his Brunton Park debut – the home humbling by Rochdale in late September.** A 15:00 kick-off home match (remember those?) typically involves a train trip from Nottingham on Friday, staying with cousins in Carlisle and arriving at Brunton Park at 11:00 on Saturday, returning to the east midlands at half past midnight. Away matches in the south usually offer the comforts of a trip home to Maidstone for a few days.

He works with all members of the Marketing and Media team which includes videographer Adam Nixon, who has been with the team as an intern for four seasons and Marketing and Media Officer, Ben Pitkeathly. On matchdays the team operate from the media room in the West Stand alongside News and

Star's Jon Colman, the BBC Cumbria commentary team and visiting reporters.

His duties have included operating the Brunton Park scoreboard, writing match reports, conducting fan interviews around the ground and filming match action from the touchline. He's recently been tasked with compiling the CUTV match highlights package. At Carlisle he's been able to do a lot of video camera work and video editing, adding to the writing skills he developed at Hucknall. The Piatak message to the Media Team is to get the tools they need to do the best job they can and they have provided a range of high quality equipment.

AWAY WITH THE LADS

The Carlisle media team travel to away games on the coach with the players, so Joseph often meets them on the morning of the match, when he is given his camera and other equipment, but he has stayed overnight pre-match, most recently at Forest Green, meaning that he had his evening meal and the opportunity to socialise with the players. **The media facilities hospitality vary considerably across the National League, but Joseph has found all the clubs to have been helpful and friendly, with a special mention to the warm welcome from Harborough Town when we visited in the FA Trophy.**

SO WHAT NEXT?

His undergraduate dissertation is the immediate challenge, but his master's degree course should offer some new opportunities to expose himself to different aspects of sports media, with Joseph keen to further develop his writing skills. A notoriously hard industry to get into, Joseph is pragmatic about what route he takes at the end of the Masters course, but he is sure that the varied experiences at Hucknall and Carlisle have given him valuable experience and practical skills.



Having played for the Branch XI since he was 14, he's also keen to ensure that the Tembeys (Chris and Lucas) aren't the only father and son in the side and looks forward to his next opportunity to proudly wear the CUFC strip alongside father Dave.

Brunton Park Diary 2025/26



3rd Feb (Tue)

KIRKOSWALD (1) 2 CUFC XI (0) 1 – CUMBERLAND CUP QUARTER-FINAL

A spirited display by the youth team against their Westmorland League Second Division opponents was undone in the last knockings, the game heading to extra-time after Smith's fine run was ended with a trip, converting the penalty to bring the tie level.

CUFC XI: Worth, Hatton (Miller 55), Hodgson, Porter, McDonough (Wade 46), Tonge (Muldoon 66), Rafferty, Lowes, Towers (Wheatley 66), Bell, Smith.

18-year-old youth team forward **Seb Mason** joins the Blues' professional ranks and promptly goes out on loan to Murph's high-flying Queen of the South until the end of the season.

5th Feb (Thu)

19-year-old Hull City forward **Hugh Parker** pens an initial one-month loan with the Blues, the lure of working under Hughes being a draw over other clubs interested in his services. The Irish pocket battleship joined the Tigers last February from University College Dublin AFC and is having a fine season for their U21s, taking the captain's armband and scoring ten goals to add to five assists in 21 games. The forward, who has made the Championship side's first team bench recently, has also played at schoolboy level for the Republic of Ireland.

6th Feb (Fri)

Former Beech-era flapper **Magnus Norman** departs Isthmian Premier Division club St Albans City to join Southern Premier Division South side (checks map) Sholing. Yep, me neither.

7th Feb (Sat)

ROCHDALE (1) 1 CUFC (0) 0

A tale of missed chances and overdue changes, another bitter pill to swallow that nails United's season to the mast of a campaign finishing with a play-off lottery while the hosts and York battle for the title. Ajiboye's willing running caused them plenty of early problems and his and Embleton's redemption arc now looks close to completion. Plan A worked for a while, allowing Dale to fill their boots on a meal of meaningless

possession without threatening the United goal. When that was undone by a set piece, the Blues lacked a plan B to take the offensive and the game back to the hosts, Macadam's attempted chip over the keeper being the nearest thing to a half chance.

CUFC*: Breeze 5, Williams 5, Galvin 6, Feeney 6, Mugabi 6, Ellis 5, Gilliead 6, Macadam 6, Embleton 6, Ajiboye 6, Armstrong 6. Subs: Conn-Clarke 6

8th Feb (Sun)

Former utility man **Gary Liddle** steps up to take a first-team coaching role with the Simian Hangers.

10th Feb (Tue)

CUFC (1) 3 SCUNTHORPE UTD (1) 2

The gift of an early keeper howler set Embleton and United on their way to a vital three points in a tight contest. Armstrong was just millimetres away from an Embleton cross to settle the nerves further before Galvin had a head-in-hands moment that led to the equaliser just before the oranges. Back come the Blues, the revived Embleton crossing for Feeney's knock down and Ajiboye to finish on his way to a brace. A couple of shaky Hayden moments almost let Scunny back in, bailed out by a crucial Breeze save, before the Bromley Pele settled the contest with a jinking run and shot into the bottom corner.

CUFC*: Breeze 6, Williams 6, Galvin 6, Feeney 7, Hayden 5, Gilliead 7, Macadam 6, Embleton 8, **Ajiboye 8**, Wearne 6, Armstrong 7. Subs: Parker 6, Harper 6

13th Feb (Fri)

Wage vampire **Jordan Jones** hits the socials to reveal the hopefully successful surgery on his recurring thigh-knack should put him in with a chance of getting back to full beans again next season.

The dates for the end of season NL play-off lottery are announced:

Eliminator A (5th v 6th)

Tuesday 28 April

Eliminator B (4th v 7th)

Wednesday 29 April

Semi-Final (2nd v Eliminator A Winner)

Sunday 3 May

Semi-Final (3rd v Eliminator B Winner)

Sunday 3 May

Promotion Final at Wembley Stadium,

Sunday 10 May

If the Blues don't find the escape tunnel, they'll be doing it over again from Saturday 8 August 2026, the start of the 2026/27 Enterprise National League season.

14th Feb (Sat)

FOREST GREEN (0) 1 CUFC (3) 3



Who doesn't love a Valentine's Day massacre. A storming first 45 from the rampant Blues, arguably the best served up by them this season, set up a league double over the vegans. Savage's defenders must have thought they were up against Luke Armstrong and his twin at times, the striker never giving them a moment's rest and directly contributing to **Wearne's** opener. United smell blood and soon Embleton's whipped cross is helped on by Ajiboye for **Feeney** to power home with his bonce. Then we have the game's pièce de resistance, **Ajiboye beating half the Forest Green team** with a dazzling, magic-in-his-boots run that began (below) from just outside his box to drive in past a keeper who may as well not been there. A little bit of home spirit gave the hosts a foothold after the break, still, the Blues stood tall and were eventually comfortable winners.

CUFC*: Breeze 7, Williams 7, Galvin 7, Feeney 8, Mugabi 7, Gilliead 7, Macadam 7, Embleton 7, Wearne 8, **Ajiboye 9**, Armstrong 8. Subs: Thomas 7, Ellis 6









Wearne and then Feeney put Carlisle in control, before Ajiboye's wonderful run and shot.



Morecambe boss Jim Bentley reports that United have made a bid for their 23 -year-old attacking midfielder **Miguel Azeez**, that is being considered by the Shrimps' board. A former Arsenal youth player, Azeez had loans out with Pompey, UD Ibiza and Wigan Athletic, before permanent spells at Spanish side Atletico Baleares and Greek club PAS Giannina.

Ex-loanee **Dominic Sadi** joins FK Novi Pazar on a permanent move following a successful loan spell with the Serbian Super Liga side, signing a two-and-a-half -year deal.

16th Feb (Mon)

Highly rated Blues youth midfielder **Jonah Lowes** joins National League North play-off chasers Darlington for a month on a work experience deal.

Management changes at Wigan Athletic sees old boy **Nicky Adams** looking for his next coaching role, which is confirmed later in the week as National League North promotion-chasers Radcliffe.

17th Feb (Tue)

CUFC YTH (0) 2 WREXHAM YTH (0) 1

A superb second-half comeback sees the young Blues pick up three points, Hopper curling home a stunning strike into the top corner for the equaliser and then Rafferty's shot hitting a leek muncher for a late winner.

Former loan gloveman **Marcus Dewhurst** joins National League South Hampton & Richmond Borough on loan from Aldershot for the rest of the season.

19th Feb (Thu)

The verdict on right wingback **Josh Williams'** hamstring twang, sustained in the demolition of the vegans, is that it will keep him out of action for the next four to six weeks.

21st Feb (Sat)

STOCKPORT YTH (0) 1 CUFC YTH (1) 2

No details other than the club highlights. Atkinson won it near the touchline, danced into the box evading a couple of weak challenges and steered a daisy-cutter into the far corner using his outstep.

The Blues number 8 then won a 50/50 and broke from near this own box following a corner before passed to the advancing Rafferty on his right, who then laced it over the advancing keeper and into the far corner for a late winner.

CUFC (3) 3 YEOVIL TOWN (0) 0

Rinse and repeat for United, bringing home the points in a dominant opening

45 and barely breaking sweat for the remainder with bigger and tougher challenges ahead. An unmarked **Feeney** headed in a deep, Ellis cross early doors for the first, livewire Wearne was cut down in the box for **Armstrong** to lamp in the resulting penalty and the impressive **Galvin** stroked home his first Blues goal after good pressure in the box. Only the offside flag denied sub **CCC** a deserved fourth with **Parker** also disap-







pointed to see his 1:1 opportunity with the keeper going begging.

CUFC*: Breeze 6, **Ellis 8**, Galvin 7, Feeney 8, Mugabi 7, Gilliead 6, Macadam 6, Embleton 6, Wearne 7, Ajiboye 7, Armstrong 8 Subs: Thomas 6, Linney 6, Conn -Clarke 6, Wyke 6

24th Feb (Tue)

The Blues relay the latest injury blow to the unfortunate **Elliot Embleton**, the midfielder out for several weeks just as he was really hitting his stride.

Former starlet **Liam McCarron** has finally found a club as he signs for Boston United until the end of the season after his summer release from Northampton Town.

25th Feb (Wed)

HARTLEPOOL UTD 3 CUFC 1

A deserved beating handed out by a sharper and stronger side that just seemed to want it more - much more - against a lacklustre Blues side missing Embleton. Right winger Tyrese Sinclair had an absolute field day against the unfortunate Ellis, leaving both him and Mugabi in his wake to score. The usually reliable Gilliead then gave the ball away in the lead up to second and when Macadam was given a second yellow, the game was as good as over. The monkey hangers late sub added a third before Kelly did well to slot home a late consolation.

CUFC*: Breeze 4, Ellis 4, Galvin 5, **Feeney 6,** Mugabi 4, Gilliead 5, Macadam 4, Wearne 4, Conn-Clarke 4, Ajiboye 4, Armstrong 5. Subs: Linney 5, Kelly 6

27th Feb (Fri)

The latest **Azeez** rumour is that several CUFC bids have now been turned down by Morecambe for the midfielder.

28th Feb (Sat)

EASTLEIGH (0) 1 CUFC (0) 2

Not one to live too long in the memory, particularly the first half. At least United came out after the break with a purpose, scored two, could have had more, sat back in a 5-3-2, and almost paid the price in a frantic last few minutes; one scramble going in and the other almost delivering an undeserved second. **Hayden Atkinson** had a solid game at right-back in his promotion to first team action, showing faith in Sparky's decision with some sharp and strong defensive contributions. Two fine moves eventually shot down the Spitfires, Wearne's backheel allowing Armstrong and Linney to combine with the latter laying it on a plate for **Kelly** to slide it home. **Wearne** then ran on and finished with a flourish after picking up a lovely defence-splitting through ball from





Kelly and Wearne score the goals to beat Eastleigh, while Hayden Atkinson takes the plaudits



Gilliead.

CUFC*: Breeze 6, Atkinson 8, Galvin 6, Feeney 7, Thomas 7, Ellis 6, Gilliead 7, **Wearne 8**, Linney 7, Armstrong 6, Kelly 7. Subs: Mugabi 5, Parker 6

3rd Mar (Tue)

BLACKPOOL YTH (1) 2 CUFC YTH (0) 1 – YOUTH ALLIANCE CUP NORTHERN FINAL

Cup bogey team Blackpool popped United's party balloons again, a stunning 88th minute volley taking the Donkey Lashers to the national final. Despite missing Atkinson and Mason, Birch's Bairns gave a good account of themselves and deservedly equalised with ten minutes left through Towers after picking up a loose ball from Smith's challenge on the keeper. They then almost won it when Lambert's shot took a deflection just inches wide of the far post.

CUFC XI: Worth, Bell (Wade 77), Hodgson (Hatton 70), Porter, McDonough, Tonge (Muldoon 66), Rafferty (Smith 46), Lowes, Lambert, Rigby, Towers.

Swing Lowe sweet chariot, 44-year-old **Andy Lowe** comes in as United's new academy manager. Lowe had previously held the role at Hollywood FC before leaving the Welsh club last summer after just under two years in charge. Lowe worked as an academy coach at Darlington FC and Middlesbrough, as well as assistant coach with England Schools' under-18s, before becoming academy manager at first Spennymoor and then Hartlepool.

5th Mar (Thu)

Using the term as loosely as possible, ex-United defender **Mike Edwards** leaves his role as assistant manager at Torquay United as part project Warnock.

6th Mar (Fri)

Central defender prospect **Jack Porter** is the latest to go out on loan to earn his senior football stripes, linking up with promotion-chasing Mintcake Town until the end of the season.

Radcliffe allow **Hallam Hope**less to go out on loan to fellow National League North side Southport until the end of the season. Gallantly keeping a straight face, the Sandgrounders' PR team crow that Hope will bring "pace, power and finishing ability to the attacking line". Sonny Hilton and Arthur Gnahoua will be amongst his new teammates.

7th Mar (Sat)

CUFC YTH 4 WALSALL YTH 0

No coverage from the club, according to those there, the first goal was possibly by Tai Bell, the second an own goal and

number 11 got the 4th. It looked like a very young side with O'Donoghue as a makeshift forward and the keeper, possibly Sam Worth, made some excellent saves.

CUFC (2) 2 SOUTHEND UTD (0) 2

The Blues paid the price for an over cautious approach to the game and trying to defend a lead with the likes of the inconsistent Thomas in the back line, stung by the fellow play-off chasers and dropping two points in the process. It had been a dream start in front of a bumper crowd, the visitors playing silly buggers at the back, Wearne swooping in and being upended by the keeper and **Kelly** slotting home the resulting loose ball before the whistle blower could point to the spot. If the first was almost comical, the second was a thing of beauty, United moving the ball up the pitch with purpose and Ajiboye and Galvin combining to set up the advancing **Linney** to clinically finish. Ajiboye nearly made it three as the visitors wobbled but gradually moved back into passive mode as the second half progressed, a deflected Dallas shot and then a desperate Thomas own goal leaving United the team hanging on by the final whistle.

CUFC*: Breeze 6, Atkinson 7, Galvin 7, **Feeney 7**, Thomas 5, Gilliead 6, Macadam 5, Wearne 6, Ajiboye 6, Linney 7, Kelly 6. Sub: Mugabi 5

10th Mar (Tue)

ALDERSHOT (0) 0 CUFC (2) 2

The Shots may be regretting their premature postponement of January's original fixture, there was little sign of the rude form they were in at the time. Close range headed goals from defensive rock **Feeney** and **Macadam** sealed a comfortable win, both served up by pinpoint **Conn-Clarke** deliveries whipped in at pace.

CUFC*: Breeze 6, Atkinson 6, Galvin 6, **Feeney 8**, Mugabi 7, Gilliead 6, Macadam 7, Wearne 7, Conn-Clarke 7, Linney 7, Armstrong 7. Subs: Ellis 6, Ajiboye 6

12th Mar (Thu)

After ten years in the CEO hot seat, **Nigel Clibbens** is ushered out of the boardroom in a move that had apparently been on the cards for several weeks during which he had been away from the club. The Blues make no comment on how they intend to fill the power vacuum.

13th Mar (Fri)

The glacial flow of information around the potential 99-year lease at the Sheepmount remains, offering no more





Goals from Linney and Kelly and an eye-catching display by Ajiboye but a draw at home to Southend



than discussions on the training hub are progressing while suggesting the necessary investment into the site needs more thinking time before going ahead.

Ashley Nadesan's slow descent down the pyramid continues, moving to National League South side Worthing on loan from Sutton United until the end of the season after four goals in 30 games this campaign.

14th Mar (Sat)

BLACKPOOL YTH (2) 3 CUFC YTH (1) 2

Ruddy Blackpool again, this time downed in the 85th minute. Once more no CUFC reporting, the two United goals in the Lashers match report were given as: *"The visitors took the lead with their first opportunity of the game in the 12th minute. Their midfielder intercepted a pass just outside of the box on their left-hand side, and with Josh Renton out of position, he cut inside and curled the ball towards the far post; Renton got his hand to the ball but couldn't keep it out"* and *"Carlisle levelled the game back up on the hour-mark. They worked the ball to their man on the right, who picked the ball up on the inside and hit a low effort which went through George Elder's legs and into the far bottom corner".*

TAMWORTH (0) 2 CUFC (0) 1

While nice to see the players, fans and the management collectively pulling in the same direction, we just wish it wasn't being utterly hacked off on squandering an early second half lead in a fairly miserable performance. The first half was played at the pace of a pre-season friendly with the Blues visibly struggling to read the inconsistent roll and bounce of the Lambs' synthetic surface. Ajiboye's introduction at the break helped and for around 20 minutes we looked ok. Wearne's strike from the edge of the D found the back of the net in front of over 700 jubilant away fans helped by some poor keeping and then Ajiboye's fine run and cross was almost rewarded by Armstrong's desperate slide at the far post, which went just wide. Tamworth just went even longer than before knowing that opportunities would surely come and bingo, some poor defending resulted in two well-taken goals.

CUFC*: Breeze 6, Atkinson 5, Galvin 4, Feeney 5, Mugabi 4, Gilliead 4, Macadam 5, **Wearne 6**, Conn-Clarke 5, Linney 4, Armstrong 4. Sub: Ajiboye 5

16th Mar (Mon)

Jonah Lowes' increasingly impressive and productive loan at Darlo is extended until the end of the season including the play-offs, the young midfielder

breaking into the starting line-up and keeping his place.

17th Mar (Tue)

DUNDEE XI v CUFC XI – FRIENDLY (no scores given)

United play Steven Pressley's Dundee in a BCD bounce game to give several first XI fringe players on both sides a useful run out, the likes of Whelan, Wyke, Hayden and Davies being a priority.

20th Mar (Fri)

Northern Premier League East Division side Bishop Auckland takes on second-year youth team striker **Lewis Lambert** on a work experience deal until the end of the season. Lambert had played for Carlisle City earlier in the season – the youth team will be running on fumes at this rate.

Former Blue **Anton Dudik**, still only 21, joins Ukraine second-tier club FC Nyva Ternopil.

21st Mar (Sat)

CUFC YTH (0) 0 BOLTON W YTH (2) 5

With an increasing injury list and several players out on loan, the age and quality gap between the teams was too wide to overcome.

CUFC (1) 6 BOSTON UTD (2) 2

The Cheers Bar, the Celtics, Harvard University, the Tea Party, the Massachusetts State House, your boys took one helluva beating, your boys took one helluva beating. What do you mean, "the wrong Boston"??

A remarkable victory in many ways, United only a small piece of woodwork and a Galvin goal-line block away from fans probably trickling out at 3-1 down with just 30 minutes left, the first six-goal flogging handed out by the Blues since Sheridan and co dismantled Oldham 6-0 on Boxing Day 2018 and the Cumbrians finally for the first time this season, coming back to win after being behind. United started on the front foot and created several chances before the keeper spilled a recycled ball into the box and **Armstrong** was on the spot to poke in. Some slightly naïve defending from Atkinson and Galvin was punished by some good forward play by Boston to take a shock lead, showing just why they arrived as one of the top three or four form sides in the NL. After nearly making it 3-1, the wheels fell off their bandwagon in some style with Maguire producing the best save in the game from Ajiboye's header. Outfielder Maguire that is. One straight red and a converted **Linney** penalty later and the

charge was well and truly on. A re-born, back-to-his-best Linney hit the post, then crossed for an obliging Boston sub to slice into his own net. The **Ajiboye** show brought two lovely finishes with **Mugabi** adding the cherry on the top, heading home Linney's deep cross.

CUFC*: Breeze 6, Atkinson 7, Galvin 6, Feeney 6, Mugabi 6, Gilliead 6, Macadam 6, Wearne 7, Linney 8, **Ajiboye 9**, Armstrong 7. Subs: Thomas 6

22nd Mar (Sun)

City keeper and ex-Academy Blue **James Trafford** is the pride of Cumbria, picking up a League Cup Winners' medal after a confident and assured display in their 2-0 win at Wembley against the Gooners.

*Player ratings (star man in bold, min 10 minutes) used with kind permission from Jon Colman @News & Star - see link for subscription offers and details.

Mike Kilner



CUSG PREDICTION COMPETITION @ 19TH MARCH 2026

POS	NAME	PTS	POS	NAME	Pts
1	**Simon Clarkson B**	26	31	Martin Lundie	15
2	**Richard Coughlan**	25	32	Peter Koelle	15
3	**Chris Holmes A**	25	33	John Kukuc A	15
4	Dan Coughlan	24	34	Robert Calvert B	15
5	Pete Edwards	24	35	John Kukuc B	14
6	Ian Kellitt B	23	36	Jason Casey A	14
7	Bex Potts	22	37	Martin Thomas	14
8	Ken Hullock B	22	38	Chris Tembey	14
9	Simon Clarkson A	21	39	Blake Vamadevan	13
10	Mike Kilner A	20	40	Lee Cragg	13
11	Mike Kilner B	20	41	Alistair Blackett	13
12	Dave Spencer A	20	42	Andrew Fullalove	13
13	Bob Ham	20	43	Marley Vamadevan	12
14	Chris Holmes B	20	44	Lucas Tembey	12
15	Ken Hullock A	19	45	Neil Nixon A	11
16	Ian Kellitt A	18	46	Iain Davidson A	11
17	Rick Wilkes A	18	47	Martin Broad B	11
18	Neil Nixon B	18	48	Martin Coughlan	11
19	Iain Davidson B	18	49	Jason Casey LD	11
20	Dave Spencer B	17	50	Mark Scott	11
21	Danny Cornwell LD	17	51	Kev McGeorge	11
22	Sandro Scapin	16	52	Neill Collins	11
23	Mark Temple	16	53	Maceo Collins	10
24	Sarah Edwards	16	53	Rick Wilkes B	10
25	Dave Brown A	16	55	Robert Calvert A	10
26	Mike Temple	16	56	Lee Rawcliffe LD A	8
27	Lee Rawcliffe LD B	16	57	Bryan Hemingway B	5
28	Anna Jensen	16	58	Bryan Hemingway A	4
29	Martin Broad A	16	59	Dave Brown B	3
30	Stuart Westhead LD	15			

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