

# Fifc History.



The banner features a central team photo of Folkestone Invicta F.C. players in their yellow and black striped kits, posed in two rows on a green field. Above the photo, the text '2019/2020 SEASON' is displayed in white on a black background, flanked by two club crests. To the right, 'FOLKESTONE INVICTA F.C.' is written in large, bold, orange letters on a black background. To the left of the team photo is a smaller version of the club crest, and to the right is a black and white soccer ball. Below the team photo, the text 'A History of Folkestone Invicta FC.' is written in large, bold, orange letters on a black background. At the bottom of the banner, the website address 'folkestoneinvictafc.co.uk' is written in white on a black background.

Folkestone Invicta Football Club, which was formed in 1936 and played in the East Kent Amateur League, took over use of the Cheriton Road ground in early 1991 after the demise of the old Folkestone club who had enjoyed a long history in the Southern League.

Under manager Gary Staniforth, Invicta joined the Winstonlead Kent League and completed the Division Two league and cup double during the 1991-92 season, also winning the Kent Intermediate Shield that season.

Invicta achieved senior status and joined Division One of the Winstonlead Kent League, making steady progress in its first two seasons at this level under club stalwart Staniforth. The nearest the club came to another trophy during these two seasons was when they lost the 1994 Plaaya Kent Senior Trophy Final 3-1 against Alma Swanley at Gravesend & Northfleet's Stonebridge Road.

Former Folkestone, Dover Athletic, Hythe Town, Crawley Town and Sittingbourne player Tim Hulme then took over as player-manager for the 1994-95 season. Invicta at one point chased the Kent League treble that season, but ended up empty handed. The club were runners up for a second successive season in the Plaaya Kent Senior Trophy after losing a penalty shoot out in the final against Deal Town at Dover's Crabble ground following a 2-2 draw after extra time.

Invicta entered the F. A. Cup for the first time during the 1994-95 season, beating Hailsham Town and then Southern League Premier Division side Sittingbourne before going out 2-1 at home to a Worthing side which included former Tottenham striker Mark Falco.

Hopes were high for the 1995-96 season as Invicta strengthened their squad, but things turned sour during the second half of the season as Hulme left the club, with his assistant Micky Dix taking over for the remainder of the season.

Former Canterbury City boss Darren Hare was recruited for the 1996-97 season, but after a poor start he was soon replaced by one-time Folkestone Town manager Denis Hunt, assisted by veteran player Bobby Wilson.

It was during this season that a club record 2,332 saw the club play hosts to West Ham United in a benefit game following freak floods in the town. Harry Redknapp brought down a strong West Ham side that won 6-0 and included Portuguese World Cup star Paolo Futre, Julian Dicks, a young Frank Lampard and Stan Lazaridis.

It was the arrival of manager Neil Cugley from Ashford Town during the summer of 1997 which was to provide the catalyst for the return of Southern League football to the town.

Cugley made an immediate impact as promotion was achieved by finishing runners up to Herne Bay in 1997-98 when the club also finished runners up in the Plaaya Kent Senior Trophy for the third time after losing 1-0 in the final to Greenwich Borough at Ashford Town's Homelands ground.

But under manager Cugley the club were to be permanent fixtures in the top three of their respective division for three successive seasons.

The club continued to make good progress in 1998-99 as Southern League football returned to Folkestone. Invicta finished third in the Dr. Martens League Southern Division behind champions Havant & Waterlooville and runners up Margate, with the promotion race going to the final day of the season. Invicta also reached the final of the 1999 Kent Senior Cup where they lost 1-0 at home to then Conference club Welling United. The club also made its mark in the F.A. Umbro Trophy by beating Conference club Hayes to reach the Third Round before going out 8-4 in an incredible tie away to three-times winners Woking.

The 1999-2000 season saw the club achieve more progress with promotion to the Dr. Martens League Premier Division as runners up to Fisher Athletic (London) in the Eastern Division. Again there was final day heartbreak for Invicta as the championship went right to the wire with Fisher winning away to Newport (Isle of Wight) to make Invicta's final day win at Wisbech in vein. Invicta went down 1-0 at home to holders and eventual winners Kingstonian in the F.A. Umbro Trophy and again reached the Kent Senior Cup Final, but went down again, this time 3-0 to Gravesend & Northfleet, their fifth successive defeat in a cup final as a senior side. It was a good season all round for the club as the reserves won the Kent Intermediate Cup and the youth team won their section of the MUSH Kent Youth League and reached the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of the Times Sponsored F. A. Youth Cup before bowing out 6-0 against a strong Millwall side at the New Den

The 2000-01 season saw the club compete in the Dr Martens League Premier Division for the first time and Invicta achieved their objective of staying up. In the process they were the only side to win away to Nigel Clough's Burton Albion at Eton Park.

The 2001-02 season saw an improved Invicta side briefly top the Premier Division table for the first time in the club's history during the opening weeks of the season. The club reached the 4<sup>th</sup> Qualifying Round of the F. A. Cup but were beaten 5-1 in a replay away to Welling United after drawing the initial tie 1-1 with a lucrative trip to Reading as the prize. The season ended on a dramatic note as Invicta 3-3 home draw with Tamworth on the final day of the season denied the Lambs the championship – that game was watched by a crowd of 1,277, the highest ever home attendance for an Invicta league match.

That record was broken in August 2002 when the visit of neighbours Dover Athletic attracted a crowd of 1,446 to Cheriton Road. But the 2002-03 season was to prove a difficult season for Invicta as financial constraints took their toll. The club finished bottom of the table and was relegated back down to the Eastern Division.

The 2003-04 season was more successful for Invicta as the club finished fifth in the Eastern Division to win promotion via the re-structuring of the non-league game. Highlights of the season were a club record unbeaten 24-match league run and reaching the Third Round of the F. A. Trophy before bowing out at home to Nationwide Conference club Stevenage Borough.

The club switched from the Southern League to the Isthmian (Isthmian) Premier League for the 2004-05 season and finished in a mid table position. Striker James Dryden broke both the club's record senior appearance and goalscoring records during the season and a new home league record attendance of 2,278 saw Invicta win 1-0 at home to local rivals Dover Athletic over Christmas. A 2,390 crowd saw Invicta win the return 1-0 over the Easter weekend.

But the club was to suffer real tragedy on Tuesday April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005 when striker Paul Sykes collapsed on the pitch and died during a Kent Senior Cup semi final against one of his former clubs Margate. Invicta subsequently pulled out of the competition to allow Margate to play another of Paul's former clubs Dover Athletic in the final at Folkestone when the Kent footballing community came together to remember one of its most popular characters.

Folkestone Invicta went into the 2005-06 season in good spirits with a new sponsorship deal with local coach company Buzzlines. The club subsequently enjoyed its best ever run in the F. A. Cup, going down 2-1 away to Chester City in the First Round after leading 1-0 at half time thanks to an early Adam Flanagan goal which was shown on Match of the Day. The reserves also finished as champions of the Kentish Observer Football League Division Two and the club also enjoyed great success at youth level.

The 2006-07 season saw the club maintain its Isthmian Premier League status on the final day of the season with a 1-1 draw away to Carshalton. But the next season was to see the club relegated on the final day of the season with a 1-0 home defeat against Maidstone United in a winner-takes-all encounter.

2008-09 saw the club in the Isthmian League Division One South but a financial crisis put paid to early season hopes of promotion and the club put its faith in a predominantly young, local, up-and-coming side.

That faith came to fruition during a truly remarkable 2009-10 season that saw the club win promotion from the Isthmian League Division One South and reach the final of the Kent Senior Cup (losing 3-1 to Sittingbourne). Operating with a small squad, Invicta were denied the championship after being docked ten points for entering into a CVA agreement but were promoted via the play-offs.

Croydon Athletic clinched the championship with a 0-0 draw on a memorable night at Invicta after both towns had paid tribute to Rifleman Peter Aldridge of A Company 4 Rifles, who had died in an explosion in Afghanistan, aged just 19, becoming the 250<sup>th</sup> UK serviceman to die in the campaign. New Invicta chairman Lynn Woods' efforts in staging the commemoration were rewarded with a 2,134 crowd.

Invicta – who conceded just 23 goals in 42 league games – recovered from the disappointment of missing out on the championship by winning the play-offs. A thrilling semi final saw the club come back from 2-0 down at half time against Leatherhead to force a 2-2 draw after extra time and win 5-3 on penalties. Godalming Town were then beaten in the final as Invicta returned to the Isthmian Premier League. The club also won the Isthmian League Division One South Fair Play Award during 2009-10 and again in 2012-13.

But continuing financial constraints meant that the club found life back in the Isthmian Premier League difficult and it was relegated back down to Division One South in 2010-11.

For the 2011-12 and 2012-13 seasons the club reached the semi finals of the play offs, losing away to Dulwich Hamlet and Maidstone United respectively.

In 2013-14 the club finished as Isthmian League Division One South runners up and reached the play off final after being Hastings United 3-2 after extra time in the semi final but lost the final 3-1 on penalties at home to Leatherhead following a 1-1 draw after extra time. The club also had young striker Johan Ter Horst signed by Premiership club Hull City during May 2014.

Folkestone Invicta won both the Division One South's Fair Play and Respect awards in 2013-14, the third successive season that it had been awarded for its disciplinary record.

The club again finished as runners up in the Isthmian League Division One South during 2015-16 and the season was again to end in home play-off heartbreak as Invicta lost the final 3-0 against Merstham after beating Whyteleafe 2-1 after extra time in the semi final.

It was a different story in 2015-16 as Invicta won the Isthmian League Division One South championship by 24 points and manager Neil Cugley completed 1,000 matches as the club's manager.

During the summer of 2016 the club prepared for life back in the Isthmian League Premier Division and sold striker Harry Smith to League Division One club Millwall. The club achieved its objective of staying in the Premier Division which was confirmed with a 3-0 final day win away to Grays Athletic amid a party atmosphere at Aveley and also won the division's Respect award.

Invicta stepped up a gear last season scoring over 100 goals in the Bostik League Premier Division and reaching the Play Offs where they lost 4-0 in the semi final away to Hendon. It had been an exciting end to the season as the club lost on penalties in the Kent Reliance Senior Cup Final away to Maidstone United and finished their scheduled league programme with a 2-2 draw away to Billericay Town where a stoppage time Jamie O'Hara screamer denied them a league 'double' over the champions.

Despite winning its last five matches during April, Invicta narrowly missed out on the play offs on the final day of the 2018-19 season.

## **SENIOR HONOURS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Joined Kent League:** 1991-92.

**Achieved senior status:** 1992.

**Kent League Division One runners up:** 1997-98.

**Plaaya Kent Senior Trophy runners up:** 1993-94, 1994-95, 1997-98.

**Kent League Division Two champions:** 1991-92.

**Kentish Observer Football League Division Two champions:** 2005-06

**Kent League Division Two Cup winners:** 1991-92, 1995-96.

**Kent League Division One Cup runners up:** 2000-01.

**Kent Intermediate Shield Winners:** 1991-92.

**Kent Intermediate Cup Winners:** 1999-2000.

**Joined Southern League:** 1998.

**Dr. Martens League Eastern Division runners up:** 1999-2000.

**Kent Senior Cup runners up:** 1998-99, 1999-2000, 2003-04, 2009-10, 2017-18.

**Joined Isthmian League in 2004**

**Isthmian League Division One South Champions:** 2015-16.

**Isthmian League Division One South Play Off winners:** 2009-10.

**Isthmian League Division One South Play Off runners up:** 2013-14, 2014-15.

**Isthmian League Division One South runners up:** 2009-10, 2013-14, 2014-15.

**Best run in F.A. Trophy:** Third Round (1998-99, 2000-01, 2003-04).

**Best run in F.A. Cup:** First Round Proper (2005-06).

**Best run in F.A. Vase:** 4th Round (1997-98).

**Biggest senior win:** 13-0 v Faversham (May 1995).

**Biggest senior defeat:** 1-7 v Crockenhill (Winstonlead Kent League Division One February 1993), v Welling United (Kent Senior Cup, February 2009) and Bognor Regis Town (Isthmian League Premier Division March 2017).

**Highest home attendance:** 2,332 v West Ham United, Mayor's Flood Fund Benefit (November 1996).

**Record attendance at ground:** 7,881 Folkestone v Margate in Kent Senior Cup (1958).

**Most senior appearances:** Micheal Everitt (717).

**Most senior goals:** James Dryden (141).

**Most goals in one game:** Dave Arter (6 v Lordswood in February 1998).

[Club statistics FA Cup, up to 2016/17](#)

<b>FA Cup entries</b>	26
<b>FA Cup ties</b>	66
<b>Ties won</b>	38
<b>Ties lost</b>	28
<b>Goals scored</b>	141
<b>Goals conceded</b>	112
<b>Clean sheets</b>	16
<b>FA Cup Finals won</b>	0

<b>FA Cup Finals runners up</b>	0
<b>Furthest Progressed</b>	1st R Proper 05/06

#### Highs & Lows

<b>BIGGEST WIN</b>	<b>18/09/2004</b>
Raynes Park 0 - 6 Folkestone	
<b>HEAVIEST LOSS</b>	<b>18/03/2017</b>
Bognor R 7 - 1 Folkestone I	