

The runners and the riders

Mark O'Haire casts his eyes over Blues' League Two rivals

ACCRINGTON STANLEY

Three titles in six seasons have propelled Stanley back into the League after a 43-year absence.

Accy romped the Conference last season in front of an average gate of just 1,500, but John Coleman's side will be happy to consolidate now.

Ins: Ian Dunbavin (Scarborough), Julian N'Da (Rouen), Sean Doherty (Port Vale), Andy Todd (Burton)
Outs: Mark Boyd (Southport), Stephen Jagielka (Droylsden), Danny Alcott

Title odds: 20/1

BARNET

Tipped for the drop and it's easy to see why when last season's top scorer was midfielder Nick Bailey with nine goals.

Former Blues transfer target Tresor Kandol arrived in January to ease the scoring problem but a 13-week jail term for driving offences didn't help.

Andy Hesselenthaler, who applied for the Wycombe manager's job, has stayed on as a player.

Ins: Magno Vieira, Jason Punccheon (MK Dons), Nicky Nicolau (Swindon), Lee Harrison (Peterborough), Joe Devera.

Outs: Stevlam Angus (Torquay), Damian Batt, Ben Bowditch (Cambridge City), Simon Clist, Luke Hickie, Dwane Lee, Lee Roache, Louie Soares, Ben Stevens

Title Odds: 50/1

BOSTON UNITED

Steve Evans used 35 players last season and fell five points shy of the play-offs. Several summer signings and former Aston Villa striker Julian Joachim will want to cause a surprise in the promotion race.

Ins: Mark Albrighton (Doncaster), Anthony Elding (Kettering), David Farrell (Peterborough), Francis Green (Lincoln), Andy Marriott (Torquay), Richard Ryan (Scunthorpe), Tim Ryan (Peterborough), Paul Tait (Rochdale)
Outs: Lawrie Duffield (Notts County), Austin McCann (Notts County), Steve Melton, Danny Thomas, Alan White (Notts County).

Title Odds: 20/1

BRISTOL ROVERS

Rovers' chances rest on the strike partnership of Junior Agogo and Richard Walker (36 league goals between them last season).

They only finished 12th but with four directors leaving, not everyone is singing from the same song sheet. A play-off charge is the least boss Lennie Lawrence expects.

Ins: Ollie Barnes (Bristol City), Ryan Green (Hereford), Sammy Igoe (Millwall), Steve Phillips (Bristol City), Andy Sandell (Bath City)

Outs: John Anderson, Jon Bas, Ryan Clarke, Christian Edwards, Jamie Forrester (Lincoln), Mark Preece, Matt Thorne, Ben Wiltshire

Title Odds: 14/1

BURY

Chris Casper has managed to keep most of last season's struggling squad together but Bury will again face a fight to stay up.

Andy Bishop, with 23 goals for York last season, is a key signing.

Ins: Richie Baker (Preston), Andy Bishop (York), Alan Fettes (Macclesfield), Marc Goodfellow (Grimsby)
Outs: Steve Burke, Craig Dootson, Neil Edwards, Russell Hitchen, John Newby, Allan Smart, Vassos Theophanous

Title Odds: 40/1

CHESTER CITY

Former Wanderers favourite Jermaine McSparran was one of 13 new players brought in by Mark Wright as Chester were the busiest off the field this summer.

Gelling might be a problem, but a late promotion push is a possibility.

Ins: Graham Allen (Rushden), Dean Bennett (Wrexham), Phil Bolland (Peterborough), Drew Broughton (Rushden), Glenn Cronin (Exeter), John Danby (Kidderminster), Jamie Hand (Watford), Simon Marples (Doncaster), Jermaine McSparran (Doncaster), Kevin Sandwith (Macclesfield), Jon Walters (Wrexham), Ashley Westwood (Northampton), Laurence Wilson (Everton)

Outs: Ryan Brookfield, Wayne Brown (Hereford), Tom Curtis (Notts County), Ben Davies (Shrewsbury), Luke Dimech, Craig Dove (Notts County), Stuart Drummond (Shrewsbury), Abdullah El-Kholi, Scott Harrison, Chris MacKenzie, Craig McNeven, Scott McNeven, Carl Regan, Marcus Richardson (Weymouth), Paul Tait (Boston), Justin Walker.

Title Odds: 20/1

DARLINGTON

With no strikers hitting double figures, the Quakers were last season's nearly men, but David Hodgson has brought in a good crop of attacking players who could well spark them onto bigger things.

Ins: Patrick Collins (Sheffield Wednesday), Barry Conlon (Barnsley), Michael Cummins (Port Vale),

Gaetano Giallanza, Martin Smith (Northampton), Craig James (Port Vale), David Stockdale (York)
Outs: Matt Appleby, Guy Bates, Matthew Clarke (Bradford), Jonjo Dickman, Joe Kendrick, David McGurk (York), Akpo Sodje (Port Vale), Ryan Valentine, Adrian Webster.

Title Odds: 14/1

GRIMSBY TOWN

Grimsby were beaten in last season's play-off final and lost boss Russell Slade to Yeovil soon after, Graham Rodger appointed his successor.

But Curtis Woodhouse retired after play-off heartache to become a boxer and any success the Mariners enjoy will be built on solid defence.

Ins: Philip Barnes (Sheffield United), Peter Beagrie (Scunthorpe), Gary Harkins (Blackburn), Isiah Rankin (Brentford)
Outs: Glen Downey, Marc Goodfellow (Bury), Rob Jones (Hibernian), Jean-Paul Kamudimba Kalala (Yeovil), John Lukic (released), Steve Mildenhall (Yeovil), Jermaine Palmer, Curtis Woodhouse (retired), Andy Parkinson.

Title Odds: 14/1

HARTLEPOOL UNITED

Relegated on the last day of the season, United have brought in Danny Wilson, who was also relegated with MK Dons.

However, with highly-rated forward Adam Boyd gone to Luton and no new arrivals, you wonder where the goals will come from.

Ins: None
Outs: Thomas Butler (Swansea), Adam Boyd (Luton), Darrell Clarke (Rochdale), Chris Llewellyn (Wrexham), Andy Appleby, Darren Craddock (York), Steven Istead, Hugh Robertson, Jack Wilkinson, Neil Wilkinson, James Winter

Title Odds: 12/1

HEREFORD UNITED

The Bulls could upset the formbook after regaining their Football League status, nine years after going out of the league.

Graham Turner has reshuffled his pack and brought in goalscorer Alan Connell. Wayne Brown will add stability to an unsteady backline and Hereford are play-off potential.

Ins: Wayne Brown (Chester), Alan Connell (Torquay), Tony James, Richard Rose (Gillingham), Gareth Sheldon (Kidderminster), Tim Sills (Oxford), Glynn Thompson (Shrewsbury), Jon Wallis (Gillingham)
Outs: Dan Carey-Bertram (Cambridge Utd), Stacy Coldicott, Ryan Green (Bristol Rovers), Guy Ipoua, Craig Mawson (Shrewsbury), Jamie Pitman (Forest Green Rovers), Craig Stanley (Morecambe), Adam Stanfield (Exeter)

Title Odds: 22/1

LINCOLN CITY

Despite changing manager, Lincoln know how to reach the play-offs having got there and lost on four consecutive occasions.

John Schofield has lost Simon Yeo to former boss Keith Alexander at Peterborough but Jamie Forrester has been brought in to chase the goals that could send them up.

Ins: Jamie Forrester (Bristol Rovers), Adie Moses (Crewe), Ryan Semple (Peterborough), Mark Stallard (Shrewsbury)

Outs: Derek Asamoah, Matt Bloomer (Cambridge), Chris Gordon, Francis Green (Boston), Gareth McAuley, Jamie McCombe (Bristol City, nominal), Marvin Robinson (Macclesfield), Steve Robinson, Jude Stirling and Simon Yeo (Peterborough).

Title Odds: 25/1

MK DONS

The Dons produced a real coup in hiring Martin Allen.

Allen's kept England U-21 forward Izale McLeod, but had friendlies cancelled against Sheffield Wednesday, QPR, Ipswich and Colchester as away fans opposed the games - hardly promising as they move to their new 30,000 seater stadium at Christmas.

Ins: Ademole Bankole (Brentford), Drissa Diallo (Sheffield Wednesday), John Hastings (Tooting), Jon-Paul McGovern (Sheffield Wednesday), Sean O'Hanlon (Swindon), Jamie Smith (Bristol City), Joe Tilden (Chelsea), Lloyd Dyer (Millwall)
Outs: Malvin Kamara (Cardiff), Nick McKoy (Cardiff), Shola Oyejede, Wade Small (Sheff Wed), Jason Punccheon (Barnet).

Title Odds: 8/1

MACCLESFIELD TOWN

Brian Horton has put his faith in youth for the coming season after losing some experienced players from last season.

The Silkmen were defeated by a Wayne Rooney goal in a pre-season against Manchester United, his first action since returning home from the World Cup.

Ins: Jonny Brain (Port Vale), Colin Heath (Chesterfield), Tommy Lee (Man Utd), Matt McNeil



Dream team: Hot tips Swindon Town pulled off a real coup by luring Dennis Wise and Gus Poyet

(Hyde), Alan Navarro, Carl Regan, Marvin Robinson (Lincoln).

Outs: Mark Bailey, Michael Briscoe, Tim Deasy, Alan Fettes (Bury), Paul Harsley (Port Vale), Neil Morgan, Kevin Sandwith (Chester), Kevin Townson (Northampton), Danny Whitaker (Port Vale), Clyde Wijnhard.

Title Odds: 33/1

MANSFIELD TOWN

Peter Shirliff signed former Mansfield forward Michael Boulding and his 17-year old brother Rory in the close season, and also beat off several other clubs to bring in highly-rated Matt Hamshaw.

The Stags were disappointed with their bottom half finish last season but after thrashing Sheffield Wednesday 4-0 in pre-season, confidence is high.

Richard Barker's goals will be key.
Ins: Carl Muggleton (Chesterfield), Matthew Hamshaw (Stockport), Johnny Mullins (Reading)
Outs: Rhys Day (Aldershot), Kyle Jacobs, Fraser McLachlan, Kevin Pressman (retired), Adam Rundle (Rochdale), Allan Russell, Jason Talbot (Port Vale), Gus Uhlenbeek.

Title Odds: 25/1

NOTTS COUNTY

New boss Steve Thompson has plenty of experience to call on; Howard Wilkinson, the last English manager to win England's top professional league way back in 1992, is a director at Meadow Lane and keen to help out.

The Magpies finished three points off the drop zone but Thompson's overhaul during the summer should see County achieve a mid-table finish this time around.

Ins: Tom Curtis (Chester), Saul Deeney (Burton), Lawrie Duffield (Boston), Dan Gleeson (Cambridge), Stephen Hunt (Colchester), Jason Lee (Northampton), Austin McCann (Boston), Junior Mendes (Huddersfield), Tcham N'Toya (Chesterfield), Andy Parkinson (Grimsby), Ian Ross (Sheffield Utd), Gary Silk (Portsmouth), Matt Somner (Aldershot), Alan Whittle (Boston)
Outs: Julian Baudet, Chibuzor Chikala, Emmett Friars, Stacy Long Shaun Marshall, Louis McMahon, Brian O'Callaghan, Chris Palmer (Wycombe), Steve Scoffham, Noe Sissoko, Robert Ullathorne, Andy White, Matt Williams.

Title Odds: 28/1

PETERBOROUGH UNITED

Keith Alexander knows exactly what is required at this level after guiding Lincoln to the play-offs four times.

Alexander has added quality to the ranks and should he get Posh playing his way, Peterborough could at least make the play-offs.

Losing defender Sean St Ledger to Preston was a big blow but Guy Branston is an able replacement.

Ins: Guy Branston (Oldham), Richard Butcher (Oldham), Justin Richards (Woking), Jude Stirling (Lincoln), Simon Yeo (Lincoln)
Outs: Andre Boucaud, David Farrell (Boston), Alan Haine, Lee Harrison, Peter Kennedy, Richard Logan (Weymouth), Tim Ryan (Boston), Ryan Semple (Lincoln), Sean St Ledger (Preston).

Title Odds: 12/1

ROCHDALE

Dale, a bottom-division side since 1974, have been in a mid-table bubble for the past 30 years.

Boss Steve Parkin was unable to attract his key targets during the

summer and without Scott Warner, Blair Sturrock and the retiring Gareth Griffiths, it points to another season of mediocrity.

Ins: Nathan Stanton (Scunthorpe), Darrell Clarke (Hartlepool), Adam Rundle (Mansfield)
Outs: Neil Brisco, Lee Cartwright, Tony Gallimore, Alan Goodall, Gareth Griffiths (Northwich), Tommy Jaszczun (Cambridge Utd), Ben Kitchen, Blair Sturrock, Scott Warner.

Title Odds: 40/1

SHREWSBURY

Shrewsbury will be looking to bow out of their last season at Gay Meadow on a high but mid-table beckons for Gary Peters' side.

New-signing Andy Cooke will be hoping to spark alongside Richard Lambert, who netted 22 of Shrewsbury's 55 goals last term.

Ins: Andy Cooke (Bradford), Ben Davies (Chester), Stewart Drummond (Chester), Ryan Esson (Aberdeen), Danny Hall (Oldham), Chris MacKenzie (Chester), Dale Williams (Yeovil)
Outs: Lance Cronin, Jay Denny, Richard Evans, Joe Hart (Man City), Mark Stallard (Lincoln), Glynn Thompson (Hereford), Stuart Whitehead (Kidderminster).

Title Odds: 14/1

STOCKPORT

Jim Gannon inherited an underperforming squad and wasted no time in bringing former County star Tony Dinning back to the club to replace Matthew Hamshaw.

Ins: Tony Dinning (Port Vale), Gareth Owen (Oldham), Michael Rose (Scunthorpe)
Outs: David Beharall, Danny Boshell, Ludovic Dje, Ross Greenwood, Matt Hamshaw (Mansfield), Jamie Kay, Harpal Singh, Zeke Tomlinson, Mickael Wolski.

Title Odds: 25/1

SWINDON

Swindon's new owners have pulled off the surprise of the summer by naming former Chelsea stars Dennis Wise and Gus Poyet as the County Ground's new management team.

Both are registered as players and are hoping Paul Ince will join them to push the Robins straight back into League One.

Ins: Peter Brezoven (FC Brno), Andy Monkhouse (Rotherham), Folawiyi Oribuje (Cambridge Utd), Phil Smith (Crawley), Jamie Vincent (Yeovil), Curtis Weston (Millwall), Adie Williams (Coventry), Gustavo Poyet.
Outs: Matt Bulman, Jamie Cureton (Colchester), Rhys Evans (Blackpool), Steve Jenkins, Kyle Lapham, Stefani Miglioranz, Nicky Nicolau (Barnet), Sean O'Hanlon (Milton Keynes Dons), Paul Smith, Kris Taylor.

Title Odds: 8/1

TORQUAY UNITED

Ian Atkins produced heroics to keep Torquay up last year but after losing several key players the Devon club could again be in trouble.

Former Plymouth favourite Micky Evans has been come the other way.

Ins: Lee Andrews (Carlisle), Mickey Evans (Plymouth), Lee Mansell (Oxford), Steven Reed (Yeovil), Lee Thorpe (Swansea), Jamie Ward (Aston Villa), Stevlam Angus (Barnet)
Outs: Les Afful, Tony Bedeau (Walsall), James Bittner, Liam Coleman, Alan Connell (Hereford), Richard Hancox, Jo Kufour (Brentford), Alex Lawless, Andy Marriott (Boston), Brian

McGlinchey (retired), Carl Priso, Paul Robinson, Morike Sako, James Sharp.

Title Odds: 40/1

WALSALL

Richard Money starts his first season in charge following Paul Merson's sacking.

Trinidad World Cup keeper Clayton Ince and fellow countryman Hector Sam have joined Steven Gerrard's cousin Anthony as Walsall hope to bounce straight back.

Ins: Tony Bedeau (Torquay), Martin Butler (Rotherham), Michael Dobson (Brentford), Clayton Ince (Coventry), Hector Sam (Port Vale)
Outs: Taiwo Atieno, Andrew Barrowman (Kilmarnock), Dean Coleman, Andy Oakes, Simon Osborn, Michael Standing, Daryl Taylor (Bournemouth).

Title Odds: 10/1

WREXHAM

The Welsh club should come out of administration next week, allowing boss Dennis Smith to sign full-time.

On the field they possess Trinidad's World Cup defender Dennis Lawrence in defence as well as Alex Ferguson's all action son Darren in the heart of the midfield.

If Lee McEvilly, Chris Llewellyn, Neil Roberts or old favourite Juan Ugarte find their scoring boots, a top half finish looks within reach.

Ins: Neil Roberts (Doncaster), Ryan Valentine (Darlington), Chris Llewellyn (Hartlepool), Steve Evans (TNS), Juan Ugarte (Crewe)
Outs: Jonathan Walters (Chester), Dean Bennett (Chester), Andy Holt (Northampton), Dave Bayliss (Lancaster City), Alex Smith, Jim Whitley.

Title Odds: 14/1

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