



Anstey Nomads FC

The Extraordinary Story of an English Village Football Club

~The 2020's~

The 2020s have been a decade of thrilling ascent and near-misses for Anstey Nomads. The decade began amidst COVID-19 lockdowns, with Anstey showing early promise by leading their league in the curtailed 2020-21 season, with former Leicester City goalkeeper Conrad Logan joining the Nomads family.

Navigating the FA's significant non-league restructuring in 2021-22, Anstey laid the groundwork for their historic 2022-23 season. This saw them crowned UCL Premier Division North champions and embark on a memorable FA Cup run, culminating in a BBC-televised Fourth Qualifying Round tie against Chesterfield. The "village team" from Anstey capturing national attention became a local sporting highlight.

The Nomads remarkable upward trajectory continued into 2023-24 and 2024-25, where they consistently finished as runners-up and high-ranking teams in the Northern Premier League Midlands Division (Step 4). Despite successive play-off heartbreaks, their sustained performance and retention of the Leicestershire and Rutland Challenge Cup showcased their growing dominance in local football. Their "fortress" home ground became a symbol of local community prides.

2020-21

Anstey Nomads led the UCL Premier Division early in the 2020-21 season, topping the table with 25 points from their first 9 league games when the season was first interrupted by a national lockdown in November due to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis. In the same month, despite receiving offers from Football League clubs, former Leicester City goalkeeper Conrad Logan opted to join Anstey Nomads. He took on a dual role, serving as both a player and a coach for the club's junior team, while also guiding other coaches. By January 2021, Logan moved to non-league side Stamford, but he ultimately returned to Anstey Nomads just six months later, quickly becoming a firm favourite with Nomads fan and a target for opposition fans.

When the league restarted briefly, Nomads maintained their position at the top of the table by the end of December, holding a two-point lead over Loughborough University and Lutterworth Town, although these teams had played more games. However, the UCL season, along with all leagues at Step 5 and below, was ultimately terminated for the second consecutive season in March due to the worsening pandemic and the impracticality of completing the outstanding fixtures within the limited timeframe. Interestingly, despite leading the Premier Division, Anstey Nomads had no players featured in the top ten goalscorers for the league at the time the season was curtailed. While the league campaign was cut short, Anstey Nomads did participate in the FA Vase, reaching the Fifth Round.

The FA Vase continued through to a conclusion, albeit with lengthy delays. An unusual factor in this season's competition was that all the early rounds were played midweek, with no replays and ties decided on penalties if the scores were level. Anstey Nomads, one of the 30 UCL teams that entered the competition, successfully progressed to the Third Round with a 2-1 away victory over fellow UCL side Coventry Sphinx. Zayn Hakeem and Michael Reeve scored the goals for Anstey within a minute of each other in the first half. In the Fourth Round, Anstey Nomads faced another UCL team, Wellingborough Town, in a delayed tie played after the relaxation of government restrictions. Cosmos Matwasa, who had returned

to Anstey, scored twice before the hour mark. Although Wellingborough pulled a goal back, further strikes from Reeve and Chitriza secured a 4-2 victory for Anstey Nomads. However, Anstey Nomads' FA Vase journey ended in the Fifth Round after a hard-fought 0-0 draw away at Walsall Wood. The tie went to a penalty shootout, which Walsall Wood won 5-4 after their goalkeeper saved Harry Bestwick's sudden-death penalty.

2021-22

The FA-led restructuring of the English Non-League Pyramid for the 2021-22 season brought about new divisions and reshaped league structures, significantly affecting the United Counties League (UCL). As part of these changes, Anstey Nomads found themselves placed in the newly formed UCL Premier Division North, a Step 5 division. This division consisted of a mix of existing northern-based UCL teams, 8 newly allocated clubs, and Melton Town, who were promoted from Division One. The overall restructuring led to a substantial turnover of clubs within the UCL, with 31 new teams joining and 8 departing, altering the competitive environment of the league Anstey Nomads now competed in. The geographical focus of the UCL also shifted further north with these changes. Therefore, the 2021-22 season for Anstey Nomads involved navigating a new divisional landscape within the UCL, facing a host of new opponents and a generally more northerly-focused league. For the first time in over two years, all the UCL divisions were completed in time honoured tradition, with titles celebrated, promotion places sorted, and nerve jangling relegation slots decided. However, promotion and relegation was not as straight forward as it used to be with most of the effected clubs waiting nervously to see where they will be allocated a place in the pyramid next season by the FA. The two new top Divisions North and South kicked off in mid-week to accommodate the FA Cup commencing on the opening Saturday 7th August.

There was no KOC competition this season, this remained unplayed due to concentration on League fixtures at the FA's request to achieve promotion and relegation throughout the NLS.

Anstey Nomads were one of the record 39 UCL clubs that entered the Emirates FA Cup. They managed to overcome Sleaford Extra Preliminary Round (1-0) and another Lincolnshire side, Skegness Town (2-1), both at home in the next round. In the First Qualifying Round, also at Cropston Road, they were eliminated by Stone Old Alleynians (0-1) of the Midland League Premier Division (Step 5). This marked the first-ever encounter between Anstey Nomads and Stone Old Alleynians, a club established in 1962 by former pupils, teachers, and current students of Alleyne's Grammar School in Stone, Staffordshire.

Anstey Nomads embarked on the FA Vase journey along with 36 other UCL clubs in the First Round Qualifying. They progressed through some rounds, but their run was initially ended. However, in a notable turn of events, Anstey Nomads were reinstated into the competition after Walsall Wood were found to have fielded an ineligible player in their match. Anstey continued their FA Vase campaign into the Fifth Round, where they hosted Wythenshawe. The match ended in a 1-1 draw, leading to a penalty shootout. Unfortunately for Anstey, they narrowly lost the shootout 2-3, ending their participation in the competition. Their Fifth Round home tie attracted a crowd of 430 spectators.

Aylestone Park were Nomads second round opponents in the FA Vase. In a one-sided cup tie at Linwood Playing Field, Anstey won 5-1 with a brace from Reeve and Keaveny and one from Edwards-John. Nomads travelled to Oak Park to face Walsall Wood, the first time that the West Midlands club had reached the third round of the competition. After ending 1-1, Walsall won the cup tie 4-2 on penalties. However, in a notable turn of events, Anstey were reinstated into the competition after Walsall Wood were found to have fielded an ineligible player in their match. BBC Radio Norfolk provided live commentary of the fifth round match at Wroxham at Trafford Park. The Isthmian League North Division team took the lead, but Nomads stormed back to comfortably move into the Fifth Round, the furthest they had ever progressed in the tournament, thanks to goals from Bestwick, Corey (2) and Lee (2). Over 400 including a noisy contingent from Manchester witnessed a tense and close counter with Wythenshawe Town at Cropston Road in mid-February in the Fifth Round. The game ended 1-1 with the visitors winning the penalty shootout 3-2.

2022-23



The 2022-23 season marked a historic peak for Anstey Nomads, as they were crowned UCL Premier Division North champions and embarked on an epic FA Cup journey that culminated in a Fourth Qualifying Round defeat to Chesterfield, a match famously televised live by the BBC.

The two teams that narrowly missed out last season in the Premier Division North; Anstey Nomads and Loughborough Students confirmed their tags as preseason favourites with positive starts to the campaign. The Students progressing through the first half of the campaign undefeated and leading the table at the turn of the year with an eight-point advantage. Their only drop points were in four drawn games against Boston and Newark and their two fixtures against the tittle rivals Anstey. The fixture at the Callington's Community Complex came in the second game of the campaign and ended 1-1, O'Toole gave the visitors the lead in the 40th minute, but Anstey grabbed a share of the spoils through Armeni after 71 minutes. The return game at Loughborough followed a similar pattern, Bowman put the Students in front in the 9th minute, but Anstey grabbed a share of the points through a last gasp Hollis effort in the 89th minute. The game was watched by a crowd of 378 spectators. Anstey started the season with a surprise home 4-2 defeat by Heanor, where they found themselves 3-1 down at the break, but a 15-match undefeated run there after saw them finish the year in fourth place, fourteen points behind the leaders, but with 5 games in hand. Keeping pressure on the leaders were both Melton Town and Quorn who ended the year in second and third spots, eight points behind Loughborough. Both sides could not keep up the sustained consistency of the Students after suffering losses at vital times. Melton's opening fixture against Selston was watched by a crowd of 318 at the Melton Sports Village. At the bottom it looked to be a difficult season for Heather St Johns and Selston who were in danger of being cut adrift as at the halfway stage. The two clubs were six points from safety, having gained only one win apiece in the opening twenty fixtures. Loughborough Students tasted defeat at the 27 time of asking, as they suffered a 2-1 home defeat by Sherwood Colliery at the end of February. The Students made Deeping Rangers pay dearly for this set back, by hammering 11 goals past them with none in reply in their next game as they quickly got back in the stride. But a poor end of the season run in saw Loughborough drop points on a regular basis, picking up just 16 points from a possible 24, which saw them fall agonising short of the top two spots. Anstey on the other hand showed consistency and only tasted defeat once since the turn of the year, a 1-0 home defeat in the rearrange derby with Quorn their nearest challengers in front of 480 fans. However, the Nomads title aspirations were never really challenged as the chasing pack fell well short, as Anstey lead at the top was a clear

eleven points at the close and to seal of a superb season the club was presented with the double a week later thanks to their 3-0 win over Deeping in the UCL KO Cup. Runners up Quorn won their Step 4/5 Inter Step Play Off Final with Isthmian League Great Wakering Rovers. The Leicestershire made the long trip to Essex and the efforts were rewarded thanks to a stunning first half display which blew the hosts away. Quorn were four up at the break thanks to two sets of braces from Patrick Webb on (9 & 20 mins) and Thabang Dube on (29 & 40 mins). Jordan Clarke rounded of the scoring on 79 mins and capped a great result. Heather St John's put up a good end of season fight to stay in the topflight but fell two points short and join Selston who were well adrift in the drop zone. Champions Anstey Nomads had the most stable squad, with no less than seven players appearing in the top 10 of the North's Leading Appearance Chart, with Joel Wolfe topping the table on 56 appearances, with Conrad Logan with one less game. The other Nomads players that made 50 or more appearances were Jordan Annable (54), Lewis Gibbons (54), Sam Hollis (53), and Corey Armeni (50).. The Premier Division North Leading Goals Scoring table was topped by Kimberly Miners Welfare's James Shaw, who top the title by one goal from Patrick Webb of Quorn. Cory Armeni , the Nomads' leading scorer was in sixth place with 24 goals.

Anstey's epic FA Cup journey commenced in August with an Extra Preliminary Round tie against Radford. They secured a 1-1 home draw at Cropston Road, followed by a decisive 3-1 away victory in the replay, which showcased their strong early-season form. This was succeeded by impressive home wins in the FA Cup: a 5-2 triumph over Skegness Town in the Preliminary Round, and a 3-1 victory against Whitchurch Alport in the First Qualifying Round, further propelling them into the tournament. The Second Qualifying Round brought a hard-fought 1-1 draw against Ilkeston Town at Cropston Road, necessitating a replay. The return fixture was a thrilling goal-fest, concluding 3-3 away from home, with Anstey Nomads ultimately emerging victorious after a nail-biting 5-4 penalty shootout. With confidence soaring, the Nomads delivered one of their most dominant performances in the Third Qualifying Round, securing an emphatic 5-0 victory over Shefford Town & Campton at home.





Saturday October 15th, 2022, will forever be etched in the annals of Anstey Nomads, a ninth-tier side whose remarkable FA Cup journey culminated in a Fourth Qualifying Round clash against National League outfit Chesterfield. This was the first time ever a step 5 side has reached the 4 qualifying round! While the final score read a comfortable 3-0 victory for the visitors, the day itself was a testament to the enduring spirit and magic of the FA Cup, a moment where a 'village team' dared to dream on the national stage. The build-up to the fixture was steeped in classic FA Cup narrative. Anstey Nomads, competing four leagues below their professional counterparts, had become the quintessential underdog, their five previous cup victories a source of immense pride for the Leicestershire community. As the lowest-ranked team remaining in the competition, their story resonated far beyond the confines of their Cropston Road ground, attracting the attention of national broadcasters like the BBC, who set up makeshift gantry positions alongside a temporary marquee press area and broadcast the game live 'on the red button'. For Chesterfield, the encounter presented a stark contrast to their previous FA Cup outing – a daunting yet prestigious tie against then-European champions Chelsea at Stamford Bridge. Manager Paul Cook, acutely aware of the potential for a seismic upset, fielded a strong line-up, including the return of Armando Dobra from injury and debuts for new signings. The weight of expectation lay heavily on the Spireites; a defeat against a team describing themselves as a 'village team' would have been considered a historic embarrassment. The atmosphere at Cropston Road was electric. A sell-out crowd of 1,500 created a proper FA Cup feel. For Anstey manager Tony Blanchard, who remarkably juggled his footballing duties with his professions as a social worker and teacher – and even pulled pints in the club bar – the day was particularly poignant, falling within his 50th birthday week and preceding a planned holiday to Spain. On the pitch, Chesterfield's quality

ultimately prevailed. Dobra, making a welcome return, eased any early nerves for the visitors, heading in Jeff King's cross after just ten minutes. Anstey, however, showed resilience. Michael Reeve almost equalised, only to be denied by a brilliant reaction save from Ross Fitzsimons. The Nomads' former Mansfield Town goalkeeper, Conrad Logan, also showcased his abilities, tipping a King shot onto the post. Chesterfield continued to press, hitting the woodwork through Joe Quigley, before finally doubling their lead just before halftime. Akwasi Asante found space inside the area and slotted a low shot into the bottom corner. The second half saw Anstey battle valiantly. Fitzsimons was again called into action to deny Reeve. Despite their spirited efforts and a few late corners, the gulf in quality ultimately told. Substitute Kabongo Tshimanga sealed Chesterfield's victory in the 84th minute, turning in Liam Mandeville's cross. While the dream of a giant-killing remained unfulfilled, the day undeniably belonged to Anstey Nomads. They had hosted a professional club, showcased their fighting spirit, and created memories that would last a lifetime. As the lowest-ranked team in the competition, their journey captured the very essence of the FA Cup's enduring allure, a reminder that on any given day, the dreams of a village can momentarily stand toe-to-toe with the realities of the professional game. For Anstey Nomads, October 15th, 2022, was the day the village truly dreamed. Anstey's cup also resulted with an excellent injection of revenue, with £16,944 collected from the competition prize fund.

Corey Armeni finished the season as the club's leading goalscorer with 24 and no less than six players – Joe Wolfe, Conrad Loan, Jordan Annable, Lewis Gibbons, Samuel Hollis, and Corey Armeni – played 50 or more games.

2023-24

Anstey Nomads were promoted to the Northern Premier League Midlands Division along with Coventry Sphinx, Lye Town, Quorn, Rugby Town, and Walsall Wood. AFC Rushden & Diamonds also joined having been relegated from the Southern League Premier Division Central. The Northern Premier League Midlands Division 2023-2024 season concluded with Spalding United as champions, earning promotion to the Southern League Premier Central. Anstey Nomads remarkably finished as runners-up in the league, securing 88 points from 38 games. This earned them a spot in the promotion play-offs. Harborough Town, despite a 6-point deduction, secured third place. Their biggest league victories included two 6-0 wins: against Gresley Rovers on New Years Day 2024, and against Rugby Town in March. Their heaviest league defeat was 2-4 away to Sutton Coldfield Town in November, their second and final league defeat of the campaign. In the play-offs, Anstey Nomads defeated Quorn 3-1 in their semi-final. In the other semi-final, Harborough Town beat Hinckley LRFC 4-2 on penalties after a 1-1 draw. The final saw Harborough Town defeat Anstey Nomads 2-0, securing their promotion. Nyle Blake finished as leading goalscorer with 23 goals, followed by Luis Rose with 20, and Freddie Robinson with 17. Loughborough Dynamo resigned from the league at the season's end, which reprieved AFC Rushden & Diamonds from relegation. Gresley Rovers were relegated to the United Counties League. Cambridge City transferred to the Isthmian League North Division.

Beyond the league, Anstey Nomads enjoyed respectable cup runs. In the FA Cup, Anstey began with a goalless draw away to Boston Town in the Extra Preliminary Round, necessitating a replay. Back at home, they again drew 2-2 with Boston Town but ultimately triumphed 5-3 in a penalty shootout. In the First



Qualifying Round, they comfortably beat Hanley Town 3-0 at home. All three goals were scored in a blistering 6 minute spell midway through the first half. Scorers were Nyle Blake (21'), Luis Rose (23') and

Freddie Robinson (27'). However, their FA Cup campaign came to an end in the Second Qualifying Round, where they suffered a 2-0 defeat to National League North Hereford FC at Edgar Street. Nomads' FA Trophy journey saw them make it to the Third Qualifying Round. This debut FA Trophy campaign included a 2-0 home win against Corby Town with a brace from Luis Rose, and a penalty shootout victory over Loughborough after a 2-2 draw. Their Trophy hopes ended with a last-minute penalty against Southern League side Alvechurch. Additionally, they reached the semi-finals of

the Westerby Group Challenge Cup after a penalty shootout win against Coalville Town, after dismissing Shepshed Dynamo (3-2) and Nirvana (6-0). They clinched the coveted trophy after Loughborough Students 2-1 at Holmes park in early May.



Anstey secured their biggest home victory with a 6-0 scoreline against Rugby Town on March 5th, 2024, a feat replicated away against Gresley Rovers on January 1st, 2024. Their heaviest defeats were two 0-2 losses: at home to Harborough Town (May 4th, 2024) and away to Hereford (September 16th, 2023). The highest-scoring match was a 2-4 away defeat to Sutton Coldfield Town. Their highest overall attendance was 1,208 for an away FA Cup tie against Hereford, while their lowest away league attendance was 86 against Coventry Sphinx in the league.

2024-25

The league expanded from 20 to 22 teams for the 2024-25 season, leading to an increased number of league games. Quorn were crowned Northern Premier League Midland Division champions, securing promotion. They finished with an impressive 99 points from 40 matches, losing just once, at home against Lon Eaton (2-3), with a goal difference of +74. Corby Town finished in second place with 81 points, followed by Anstey Nomads in third with 80 points, with a record of 24 wins, 8 draws, and 8 losses. Anstey. These teams, along with Long Eaton United and Worcester City, were among those who qualified for the play-offs to contend for an additional promotion spot. For the second consecutive season Anstey suffered play-off heartbreak, losing to Worcester City in the semi-finals.

The Marks Electrical Arena became a fortress for much of the season. The home support witnessed a truly impressive run, with the Nomads going undefeated on their own patch for seven consecutive matches as the season drew to a close. The only teams to beat them at home were those that finished above them, namely Quorn and Corby. This consistent home form was a critical factor in their high league finish, providing a vital platform for their promotion push. Highlighting their attacking flair, the Nomads delivered several memorable performances. A resounding 4-0 home victory against Hinckley LRFC in April showcased their clinical finishing and control. Earlier that month, a commanding 3-0 away win against Rugby Town demonstrated their ability to perform on the road. December saw another dominant display against Rugby

Town, securing a comfortable 2-0 home win. Further emphatic victories included a 5-1 thrashing of AFC Rushden & Diamonds away from home in August and a dominant 5-0 home win against Boldmere St Michaels in February, sending clear messages to their rivals. While these scorelines captured the imagination, the Nomads also demonstrated their steely resolve in tighter affairs, securing hard-fought draws like the goalless stalemate at Quorn and a 1-1 encounter at Coventry Sphinx.

The impressive league finish earned Anstey Nomads a coveted spot in the promotion playoffs. The semi-final saw them host Worcester City FC at the Marks Electrical Arena on a highly anticipated Tuesday, April 29, 2025. The atmosphere was electric, with a significant home crowd roaring on their team. Despite their valiant efforts and the vociferous support, it was not to be their night. Worcester City proved to be a formidable opponent, and Anstey Nomads ultimately fell to a 0-2 defeat, bringing a disappointing end to their campaign. Jacob Fenon finished as the League's second highest goalscorer with 22, Corby's Fletcher Tull top the charts with 29.

However, the season was not without its triumph, retaining the Leicestershire and Rutland Challenge Cup. The holders defeated Leicester Nirvana 3-0 in a hard-fought semi-final at Hamilton Park to reach the Westerby Group Challenge Cup final for the second year running. Goals from Zayn Hakeem (2) and Jacob Fenton secured the holders' victory, capitalizing on key moments against a resilient Nirvana side. On May 8, 2025, Nomads faced Loughborough Students FC in the final and delivered a commanding performance to secure a resounding 4-1 victory. Goals from Drew Lowe, Zayn Hakeem, Jacob Fenton, and James Tague secured the dominant victory for the Nomads, with Joshua Strouts scoring a consolation goal for Loughborough Students.

Anstey Nomads reaching the Third Qualifying Round of the FA Cup. Their campaign began in the Preliminary Round with a dominant 5-0 away victory over Grimsby Borough on 17 August. The goals were scored by Leo Brown (2), Kyle Tomlin, Nyle Blake, and Jacob Fenton. They continued their impressive form in the First Qualifying Round, beating Alvechurch 3-1 at home, with Leo Brown, Kyle Tomlin, and James Tague finding the back of the net, followed by a narrow 1-0 away win against Mickleover F.C. in the next round with Leo Brown scoring the decisive goal. Their FA Cup journey concluded in the Third Qualifying Round, where they were defeated 2-1 away by Rushall Olympic F.C.; Anstey's goal came from Jordan Annable.



The club's FA Trophy run was short, but not sweet, concluding in the First Round, after succumbing to Basford United after a penalty shootout.

On a glorious, sun-drenched Sunday in May 2025, nearly 2,000 fans flocked to Anstey Nomads' ground for a captivating charity football event. The occasion, largely spearheaded by former Foxes goalkeeper Conrad Logan, featured Anstey Nomads facing off against a star-studded Leicester All Stars XI, including fan favourites like Paul Konchesky, Marc Albrighton, and Paul Gallagher. Despite going 3-0 down, the Leicester All Stars mounted a remarkable comeback, culminating in a 3-3 draw and a thrilling penalty shootout. Logan, ever the showman, pulled off three crucial saves, with Gallagher netting the decisive spot-kick to secure a memorable win for the All Stars.



MANAGE THE TEAM

LEICESTER CITY ALL STARS

AN ONLINE AUCTION TO BECOME THE LEICESTER CITY ALL STARS MANAGER

*YOUR CHANCE TO MANAGE WITH LEGEND SCOUT
STEVE WALSH WITH THE ALL STARS!*

HIGHEST BIDDER WINS!

TEAM TALK
X4 VIP TICKETS
BE IN THE DUGOUT
A SIGNED SHIRT BY ALL THE PLAYERS



SCAN THE QR CODE TO BID!





