

IMPACT

The Unofficial Lincoln City
Matchday Programme
#21



£3

Lincoln City vs AFC Wimbledon
Friday 3rd April 2026
Sky Bet League One
LNER Stadium

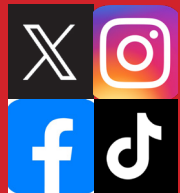


Lincoln City Football Club

Founded: 1884
Ground: LNER Stadium / Sincil Bank
Nickname: The Imps
Capacity: 10,669

Last Season's Finish: 11th

Social Media Handle:
@lincolncityimpact
www.lincolncityimpact.com



Editor's Note

Good afternoon and welcome to today's clash with AFC Wimbledon. This is our 21st edition of Impact this season, and potentially a celebratory one.

When I first started watching Lincoln City in 2012, I never believed that promotion to the Championship would ever be a realistic ambition. Back then, we were playing Hyde United, Alfreton Town & North Ferriby. Rock bottom awaited when we were knocked out of the FA Trophy by Carshalton Athletic 14 years ago.

I had to drag my dad to games during the six years of non-league football. However, times changed when Danny & Nicky Cowley took over in the summer of 2016. This once dormant city was reborn, winning the National League title and reaching the quarter-finals of the FA Cup. That proved the catalyst for the success that followed, winning the League Two title two seasons later.

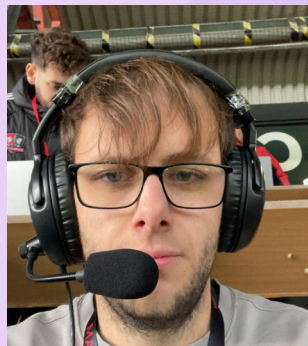
As was expected, League One proved a tougher nut to crack. The lockdown campaign in 2020/21 was extremely tough from a fans' perspective, but it was the best year in over half a century on the pitch. While we reached the play-off final, City fell at the final hurdle, losing to Blackpool in a strange atmosphere at Wembley.

After seasons of stabilising in the third tier, this season has been beyond all of our wildest dreams. Moments at Stockport County on Boxing Day & Cardiff City away stand out, leapfrogging the Bluebirds to take top spot in South Wales. We haven't looked back, blowing the competition out of the water.

We are now 90 minutes away from the Championship, a level of football I never in my wildest dreams expected to see the Imps play at.

Whatever happens today, promotions feels like a near certainty at this point. But wouldn't it be special to do it in front of a packed Sincil Bank?!

Up the Imps!
Kyle



CONTENTS

04

IMP IN FOCUS: ROB STREET

08

WHAT DO LINCOLN CITY NEED TO WIN PROMOTION?

10

AFC WIMBLEDON

13

MATCH REPORT: LINCOLN CITY 3-0 ROTHERHAM UNITED

15

ACADEMY CATCH-UP

18

ON THIS DAY

19

LEAGUE ONE LOWDOWN

21

WOMEN & ACADEMY UPDATE

IMP IN FOCUS

Rob Street reveals all about his spell at Doncaster Rovers, the impact of injuries and how loan moves furthered his career...



Picture: Steve Percival



Joy: Street celebrating in front of supporters

Lincoln City Football Club

Picture: Graham Burrell

Just 76 minutes before the season started, Rob Street's pathway completely changed.

Lincoln City had accepted a bid from an unnamed Championship club for Jovon Makama, which was later confirmed to be Norwich City. Street, who was expected to be on the fringes of the first-team this term, was suddenly handed his first League One start for the Imps since joining from Cheltenham Town 13 months earlier.

Makama had his breakout in form when he switched from striker to winger, but Street has gone the opposite way. Starting the season on the right of attack, a season-ending injury to James Collins allowed him to become the central forward. Seven of his eight league goals have come from that position.

Nevertheless, the 24-year-old has never been one to put up a fight when playing in a position that doesn't suit him.

"Coming back into the club at the start of the season, I wanted to get myself in the team and play a massive part. I'm delighted to do that.

"I've played across different positions this year. I've tried to be as effective as I can be for the team and try and have them big moments throughout the season."

It's not just at Sincil Bank where his form rapidly improved following a switch in position. After a difficult start to life in Lincolnshire, limited to just 51 minutes of third-tier action in the first half of the 24/25 campaign, Street joined Doncaster Rovers on loan. He played a handful of times out wide before becoming Donny's leading marksman.

Former Imp Hakeeb Adelakun had enjoyed a fruitful loan in South Yorkshire a year earlier, but Rovers narrowly missed out on promotion to League One. This time, their import from down the A1 made sure they avoided the heartbreak of the play-offs by achieving automatic promotion. By scoring 12 times in just 22 starts, he inspired Rovers to a run of one defeat in 15 matches on their way to the League Two title.

"To go to a big club like that, I was very fortunate. It was off the back of my injury, and I didn't take it for granted. At the time, the club showed a lot of faith to take me on

'We got the break with the penalty'

loan for the remainder of the season.

"I needed it because I hadn't got the football, with my injury, and I hadn't played consistently. It was really important at that stage of my career, where I wanted to go there and do well.

"To be fair, I couldn't have done any better for myself and the team. It was another very important moment in my career that almost laid the foundations to come back to Lincoln and hit the ground running in the summer."

Before scoring his first league goal of the campaign, Street had a memorable moment in the League Cup. Lincoln had seen off Harrogate Town and Burton Albion to land a glamour tie with Premier League Chelsea in the third round of the competition. In front of a packed crowd, something which has become the norm in recent weeks, Lincoln stunned the Club World Cup winners just before half-time.

"It was a game that we were all really looking forward to at the time. It was brilliant to test yourself against top Premier League players. We actually started that game really well in that first half.

"We put them under a lot of pressure. To go in 1-0 up at half-time, we were all absolutely buzzing. It was a tough second half with the quality they've got. But looking back at that game, it was really important to show what we're about."

Street began his career in the top-flight of English football with Crystal Palace. The Eagles released the Oxford-born striker at a young age, but he returned to Selhurst Park to sign his first professional deal. Loan spells at Torquay United, Newport County and Shrewsbury Town furthered his development and proved very beneficial.

"You lay the foundations for the rest of your career with the coaches you work under. And I was really lucky to work under some top coaches at [Crystal] Palace. It put me in a really good position for the next step, which is going on your loans, getting experience and

'We put them under a lot of pressure'



Celebrating: Street on a roll against Stevenage

Picture: Graham Burrell

playing your first games in the men's game.

"I'd probably say it's the most important stage of my career. It shows you the real-life world of football and what to expect. I absolutely loved the loans I went on. I went to some brilliant clubs and met some brilliant players, fans, and coaches."

After a difficult autumn, Lincoln began to show their class in the final month of 2025. Exiting the FA Cup and EFL Trophy proved

to be a blessing in disguise, giving the players some extra rest. While the record-breaking unbeaten run had just got going, their relentless form wasn't always evident.

However, a statement victory over Cardiff City saw

the Imps move up into second place at Christmas. And more success followed against fellow promotion contenders Stockport County on Boxing Day. With the scores level heading into stoppage time at Edgeley Park, Street was given the chance to secure the Imps' first away win in almost three months.

"Sometimes in those sorts of games, you think it might not be your day. But I think it's important to keep getting in the right areas and try to get on the end of something. Luckily, we got the break with the penalty in the end, and it was a big three points.

"I felt quite calm. I think in those situations, it's always good to try and have a calm head, pick your corner and commit to it. It takes a lot of pressure in those moments to act yourself and just put it in the bottom corner."

Big moments need big players. If there is a similar pressure penalty during the promotion run-in, Street has already proved he has the composure to step up.



Opener: A helping hand against Reading

Picture: Graham Burrell



Moment: A joyous Street after scoring against Cardiff City

Lincoln City Football Club

Picture: Graham Burrell



What Do Lincoln City Need To Win Promotion?

Lincoln City stand on the edge of history. The Imps could become the earliest side to win promotion from League One since the EFL was re-structured two decades ago. Promotion can be sealed as early as today, and here's exactly how it can be done...

If We Win

If the Imps are victorious against AFC Wimbledon, they will reach the second tier for the first time in more than 60 years if Bolton Wanderers and Stockport County drop points. Both sides face tough assignments against play-off chasing Plymouth Argyle and Wycombe Wanderers, respectively.

If We Draw

In this instance, City would need the above-mentioned duo to both lose. However, there is an added dimension to this equation, as Bradford City would be involved. They would have to fail to beat Northampton Town for Michael Skubala's side to start the celebrations by Friday teatime.

If We Lose

If the Imps are beaten for the first time in 23 matches, then the champagne will be on ice, regardless of results elsewhere. On Easter Monday, Lincoln travel to Reading, while Stockport face Bolton in what is sure to be an intriguing matchup.

LEAGUE ONE TABLE

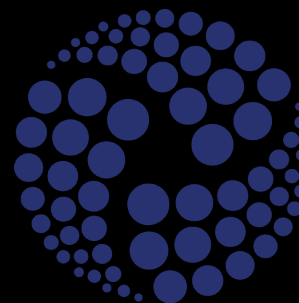
Matchday 40



POS	TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Lincoln City	39	25	9	5	74	34	40	84
2	Cardiff City	39	23	8	8	73	41	32	77
3	Bolton Wanderers	39	17	15	7	55	39	16	66
4	Bradford City	39	19	8	12	49	44	5	65
5	Stockport County	38	18	9	11	54	48	6	63

PROTECT THE PLAYERS STAY OFF THE PITCH

ANYONE WHO ENTERS THE PITCH WILL RECEIVE A CLUB BAN, AND COULD BE GIVEN A FOOTBALL BANNING ORDER. DON'T LET YOUR SIDE DOWN.



EFL





AFC WIMBLEDON

FORM GUIDE



Following last season's promotion from League Two, AFC Wimbledon have adapted incredibly well to third-tier football.

Tipped by many for immediate relegation, the Dons sit seven points clear of the drop zone, needing only a few more points to rubber-stamp survival.

A four-match unbeaten run a few short weeks ago had Johnnie Jackson's side knocking on the door of the League One play-off places.

However, three losses in four games have all-but ended those aspirations, though the Dons will be satisfied with a mid-table finish.

With the eighth-best away record in the division, Wimbledon will be confident of springing a surprise this afternoon.

After hosting Luton Town on Easter Monday, the south-west London outfit travel to relegation-threatened Burton Albion next weekend.

Back-to-back home fixtures against top six hopefuls Stockport County and Plymouth Argyle present tough tests for the Wombles.

Matches against Wigan Athletic and Huddersfield Town bring to an end the Dons 25/26 campaign.

Stats:

- Most Assists:** Steve Seddon | 8
- Most Appearances:** Steve Seddon & Alistair Smith | 39
- Most Yellow Cards:** Marcus Browne & Jack Reeves | 8



HEAD-TO-HEAD

- Games Played:** 7
- Lincoln City Wins:** 2
- Draws:** 2
- AFC Wimbledon Wins:** 2
- Last Meeting:** Saturday 9th August 2025
AFC Wimbledon 2-0 Lincoln City

TOP SCORER

MARCUS BROWNE

12

LNER

LONDON NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY



Match Report: Lincoln City 3-0 Rotherham United

13 days ago, Lincoln City eased to victory over relegation-threatened Rotherham United to cement our place at the top of the League One table. Simultaneously,

Bradford City and Bolton Wanderers both succumbed to teams towards the bottom end of the division, following draws for Cardiff City and Stockport County in the early kick-offs. That has allowed us to be in the position where promotion to the Championship is possible this afternoon.

After the Imps struggled in the early stages against Huddersfield Town earlier that week, we made no such mistake against another Yorkshire opponent. After setting up camp inside the Millers' half, Lincoln took an 18th-minute lead. Ryley Towler fed Reeco Hackett, firing home from a tight angle that was aided by the visiting goalkeeper Ted Cann on its way to goal.

That woke Rotherham up, who were aggrieved to not receive a penalty when Duncan Watmore hit the deck. But as Lee Clark's side looked for a route back into proceedings, the Imps put the game to bed. After his part in the first, Hackett



Lincoln City Football Club
Picture: Graham Burrell

22
Lincoln extended their club record unbeaten run to 22 games



Picture: Graham Burrell @Lincoln_CityFC

fed Ben House, who volleyed City two goals to the good.

Jack Moylan looked to get in on the act but couldn't find the target before Cann was further worked by the Imps' attack. The result was put beyond doubt before the opening 45 minutes were up. A Tom Hamer long throw caused issues inside the box, with Hackett twice firing towards goal, finding the net at the second time of asking.

There was little to report in the second 45 minutes, as City saw the game out with ease. It was virtually all one-way traffic towards the Stacey West

Stand, but there were no further goals. Instead, eyes were glued to the action at Vale Park and the Pirelli Stadium. Despite a late Bradford consolation, there was no stoppage time drama in Bolton's game. As a result, City moved 18 points clear of the chasing pack.

5w2
Since November, no team have scored more than City's 52 goals





Watching: Sam Tillen alongside his assistant, Isaac Rice

Academy Catch-Up

Sam Tillen dissects his time at Chelsea, injuries & helping players achieve their dreams...



On 8th January 2025, Lincoln City U18s came within a whisker of club history.

The young Imps had only ever reached the fourth round of the FA Youth Cup once in their history, during their golden generation in the 20/21 campaign. After easing past Lichfield City in round one, Lincoln overcame league rivals Bolton Wanderers and Wrexham to set up a tie with Plymouth Argyle.

An end-to-end game went the full distance, with the Imps exiting the competition in heartbreaking fashion on penalties. City's cohort proved their talent over a full season in an equally successful Youth Alliance campaign. Professional development phase lead coach Sam Tillen was keen to highlight the work of his predecessors in shaping the spine of his squad.

"It was the people who came before me who had managed to accrue a really good group of players. I was fortunate enough to do a little bit of work with some of the younger ones before that. And then we went into that [last] season, and we managed to build a bit of a framework

around the team and find a way of playing that suited us.

"I think it was a group that really worked hard for each other. There were some very good individuals and a very good team ethic in it. We had a lot of threat, pace and athleticism in the team and then some good characters within it. We were a hair's breadth away from going a little bit further."

Tillen's experience in the game started in perhaps the best environment for any young footballer. He was at Chelsea when Roman Abramovich took over the Blues, transforming them into the superpower they are today. The 40-year-old got a first-hand perspective on how Stamford Bridge changed overnight.

"My period there [at Chelsea] as a young professional coincided with Abramovich coming. So there was a stage where there was a bit of hope for the younger players. The last two years I was there, they put the money in and started signing some fantastic players that went on to win the league.

"So it made it a little bit more difficult. But looking back, retrospectively, it was just such a fantastic time to be there. I remember Euro 2004, when I was coming

'It was a real eye-opener'



Together: Tillen with his players at Lincoln United

Picture: Lincoln City

back from an injury. The lads that were in the reserves or the youth team would train with the players that didn't go away to the Euros.

"Frank Lampard was there, and you saw then what the level was. You can sometimes think, 'I could do that, I could play in there,' but then you actually play against them. It was a real eye-opener, and I don't think it was any surprise that the team then went on to have great success."

Being part of such a club at a time of transition has proved instrumental in Tillen's own managerial career. There was one man who stood out for his advancements in the English game. Arsène Wenger was the first example of a foreign manager to revolutionise the landscape of football in this country. However, it was his arch-nemesis who had the greatest impact on Tillen.

"José Mourinho came, and that was like a breath of fresh air. I remember turning up at the training ground, and everything was

out, ready, and set up. And this was 20 to 25 years ago. It was almost revolutionary, really, this seamless transition. He used to get children from the local area to come in and be ball boys.

"This is obviously commonplace now, but at that point, it was just to get the intensity of the training going. It was really good, and it was a real eye-opener to what the levels need to be, and to be around people who won the European Cup. Looking back, it was an unbelievable experience."

During the early stages of his playing career, Tillen missed almost a year and a half of football through various serious injuries. That ultimately proved to be the beginning of the end at Chelsea, though he stayed in West London with nearby Brentford. The Bees were a struggling League One side at that time, and while he initially nailed down a starting place, the full-back left the club in January 2008.

A move to Icelandic football proved fruitful and was a unique experience for an

English footballer at that time. However, injury issues resurfaced and consequently caused his early retirement from the game.

"I had a lot of injuries when I was 16 to 20. I was very fortunate from then on, and then I broke my leg when I was 28. Then I fractured my cheekbone and eye socket. And after that, I thought, 'Yeah, ok, that's me done.'

"That led me into coaching. I was already offered a position in the team that I was playing in. It didn't necessarily fast-track me, but it made it an easier decision to stop playing. I think I've enjoyed coaching more than I did playing. When you're playing, you're not really sure what you want to do when you stop.

"But I think when I broke my leg, that gave me the experience of coaching younger players. I really enjoyed that. From that experience, I thought that was something that I wanted to pursue. Thankfully, I've managed to do it for a few years now."

Those injuries ultimately allowed Tillen an early opportunity to get into coaching. As one door closed, another opened. Moving back to England earlier this decade, he held

a coaching role in the non-league system at Cottesmore. From that, he stepped into the EFL with the Imps in 2023. Playing has its own benefits, but allowing others to achieve their dreams is priceless.

"It's the most gratifying thing. That's what you're ultimately there to do and to see players develop. Working with people on a day-to-day basis and seeing them improve, develop tactically, whatever it might be. And then to see them representing their country or playing for a first team.

"It's what you do it for, and it gives me more satisfaction than doing anything personally in my career. It's knowing that you've maybe played a small part in that, because you're not the whole part.

"A lot of people have a lot of input. If you can help those players pursue a career in football, then that's what everybody in youth development wants to see. So when it does happen, it's extremely rewarding."

Championship football is on the horizon for the first team, and that can only be a positive for the U18s. The landscape of academy football in Lincoln might be about to have its most significant change in years.

'It's the most gratifying thing'



Pictures: Lincoln City



Focused: Tillen giving instructions to his players

The game that won promotion

In our latest *On This Day* fixture, we look at a day where football involving Lincoln City is something of a rarity. There has only been one such match since the 1980s, but it was a memorable evening under the Sincil Bank lights.

The BT Sport cameras were in town as Lincoln City looked to move clear at the top of the National League when they welcomed play-off hopefuls Dagenham & Redbridge to Sincil Bank.

After a mixed March, which had seen the Imps travel to Arsenal in the FA Cup but drop points in the league, they remained top of the division after edging past Bromley two days earlier.

The Imps were in the ascendancy from minute one, but struggled to break down a resilient Daggers side in the opening 45 minutes. However, City didn't have to wait long after the interval to make the all-important breakthrough.

The second half was just two minutes old when a scramble ensued inside the six-yard box. Eventually, the ball found Elliott Whitehouse on the line, after Luke Waterfall had struck the woodwork.

Midway through the second period, Lincoln doubled their lead. Nathan Arnold caused the chaos inside the box for the opener, and he added an assist to his evening's work from a corner. Matt Rhead was perfectly positioned to power home, celebrating in true Rhead style in front of the visiting Dagenham contingent.

That result was the second of seven successive victories, which eventually led to Lincoln winning the National League title less than three weeks later.

Monday 3rd April 2017
Lincoln City 2-0 Dag & Red
Whitehouse (47')
Rhead (68')



LEAGUE ONE LOWDOWN

Easter weekend is often make-or-break for a team's season. Even with it falling earlier than previous years, there is plenty up for grabs as the final run-in gathers pace...

Second-place Cardiff City aren't in action, with their scheduled fixture against Port Vale being pushed back due to the Valiants' progression in the FA Cup. Vale are flying the flag for League One against Chelsea tomorrow teatime. There's a big clash at the bottom on Thursday evening, as Wigan Athletic host in-form Leyton Orient.



Picture: Chelsea

Stamford Bridge: The venue of Port Vale's FA Cup quarter-final



Reverse: Stockport beat Bolton back in August

Picture: Stockport County

Similarly, there's a relegation six-pointer on Good Friday when Blackpool welcome Exeter City to Bloomfield Road. Huddersfield Town need a victory to keep their hopes of a play-off place alive, facing top-six rivals Reading. Stevenage are another side looking to extend their season,



travelling to South Yorkshire to face relegation-threatened Rotherham United. In the promotion race, Bolton Wanderers and Stockport County face tough assignments against play-off hopefuls Plymouth Argyle and Wycombe Wanderers, respectively. Bradford City are hoping to gatecrash the top two battle, welcoming lowly Northampton Town to Valley Parade. Burton Albion need points on the board to secure their League One place next year, hosting mid-table Barnsley. Finally, Mansfield Town and Doncaster Rovers face off in the early kick-off.

BRANSTON



**Dedicated to Excellence
in Fresh Produce**

**Branston Ltd, Mere Road,
Branston, Lincoln LN4 1NJ**

01522 794411

hello@branston.co.uk

Women & Academy Update

Lincoln Women have made two fresh appointments as they look to bounce back from relegation. Katie Rowson is their new technical director, with an extensive background in the women's game.

Various roles at Aberdeen, Everton, Chesterfield, and Doncaster Belles have led her back to Lincolnshire. Speaking to club media, Rowson is looking to bring success close to home.

"The potential that the city and Lincoln Women FC have is absolutely enormous. I think the potential to try and build a positive environment for the senior women of this club is huge.

There is also a new face in the hot seat, with Tom Padden taking charge of the first team. He has recently departed Gainsborough Trinity, where he held several roles, including Women's First Team Manager.

Padden has prior experience in the city, working with Lincoln City Foundation earlier in his career. He is looking forward to getting going next season.

"I think this is the gold standard in women's football in Lincolnshire," he said after being announced. "I'm ambitious, and I want to be the best club in the area."

Action:
Professional development phase lead coach Sam Tillen



Picture: Lincoln City



Picture: Lincoln Women's technical director Katie Rowson

Picture: Lincoln City

The young Imps had a successful end to March, winning three successive matches against Rotherham United, Bradford City and Carlisle United.

It's been tough going for the U18s this season, who were knocked out of the FA Youth Cup in the first round, and have been battling at the bottom end in the league. Injuries have played their part, while an early exit from the above-mentioned competition saw several youngsters head out on loan.

But their campaign has turned around in the last fortnight, starting with a narrow victory at Rotherham. An excellent defensive performance saw Lincoln defeat Bradford, which should be no surprise for a side with the seventh-best goals against tally in the division.

On Tuesday afternoon, Sam Tillen's side emerged on the right side of a six-goal thriller against Carlisle United. After a brief break over the Easter period, the young Imps return to action with four away fixtures in succession, starting with Burton Albion and Bradford.

Local trips to Chesterfield and Doncaster Rovers follow, before hosting local rivals Grimsby Town in their final match of the season at the end of April.



LINCOLN CITY

Head Coach: Michael Skubala

1. George Wickens (GK)
2. Tendayi Darikwa (C)
3. Adam Reach
5. Adam Jackson
6. Ryley Towler
7. Reeco Hackett
8. Tom Bayliss
9. James Collins
10. Jack Moylan
11. Oscar Thorn
12. Erik Ring
13. Zach Jeacock (GK)
14. Conor McGrandles
15. Sonny Bradley
16. Dom Jefferies
17. Rob Street
18. Ben House
19. Alfie Lloyd
20. Ryan Oné
21. Jamie Pardington (GK)
22. Tom Hamer
23. Josh Honohan
24. Ivan Varfolomeev
25. Deji Elerewe
28. Kamil Conteh
34. Freddie Draper



AFC WIMBLEDON

Manager: Johnnie Jackson

1. Nathan Bishop (GK)
2. Nathan Asimwe
3. Steve Seddon
4. Jake Reeves (C)
5. Sam Hutchinson
6. Ryan Johnson
7. James Tilley
8. Callum Maycock
9. Omar Bugiel
11. Marcus Browne
12. Alistair Smith
14. Matty Stevens
15. Patrick Bauer
16. Antwoine Hackford
17. Brodi Hughes
18. Delano McCoy-Splatt
19. Osman Foyo
20. Joe McDonnell (GK)
21. Myles Hippolyte
23. Leo Young
27. Ed Leach
28. Amaari Sealey
29. Aron Sasu
30. Junior Nkeng
31. Joe Lewis
33. Isaac Ogundere
37. Zack Nelson

Match Officials

Referee: Edward Duckworth

Assistants: Ashley Allen & Matthew Joyce

Fourth Official: Abigail Byrne