

# A familiar face is awaiting Blackpool

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Blackpool will be reunited with former loanee Ryan Wintle when they take on Cardiff City in South Wales on Saturday.

The 24-year-old was due to spend the entirety of the season with Neil Critchley's side, but he was recalled at the start of January.

Since then, he's made seven appearances under Steve Morison and been in impressive form according to reports.

Wintle's summer departure was an odd one given he had only just signed on a free transfer from Crewe Alexandra.

However, the central midfielder found himself down the pecking order under former boss Mick McCarthy, who felt Wintle would be better served getting game time elsewhere.

That all changed when McCarthy was sacked and Morison took his place.

"He has been excellent. He's been excellent since the first day he came back," Morison told Wales Online.

"In training, you can definitely see a better player. I know we didn't get a chance to see him properly, because

he went quite early on and played really well for Blackpool – but that player was always there, we just never had the opportunity to see it.

"His performances in the games have been excellent. He does the defensive work really well, he is really calm. He has got that turn of speed when he needs it to get back and nullify some danger.

"He has been excellent and I'm really pleased. It's been a really positive bring-back from loan.

"He's a mature boy. I think he literally just gets up and gets through his day and ticks boxes. He gets on with his work and gets on with the lads.

"I'd like to think he was pleased to come back and he has come back and got game time that I knew he would get."

Wintle had admitted he was surprised to hear he was being loaned out, having only just joined Cardiff.

He added: "It came as a shock at the time, going out on loan, but it's football, it's a short career, so I thought maybe going out would benefit me in the long run.

"Thankfully, it's been a good start to the season for myself, (I've) gone out and got some valuable experience and I've come back more of an asset to this football club."

**18**  
Appearances made while with Pool



Ryan Wintle's season-long loan at Blackpool was cut short last month as he returned to parent club Cardiff City

## The Kings reign in emphatic success

A much changed Kingfisher A were too strong for Lightning B in division one of the Blackpool and District Badminton Association.

Lightning had a reasonable start, winning one ladies and three mens to give them hope of a much needed bonus point before Kingfisher took all the mixed to win 20-4.

Poulton visited Lightning A, where their ladies took all six games, although Lightning were unlucky not to win one as it ended 26-24 to Poulton.

Lightning's men won three games but, again, were on the wrong end of a 26-24 setting.

Poulton won the first two mixed sets to effectively win the match but Lightning took the next two and managed to win a game in the final set for a hard-fought point.

In division two, Kirkham Charter A won five games in both the ladies' and men's levels to lead Stanley B and, in the mixed, they dropped only one game to win 21-3.

Kirkham Charter B fought hard against third-placed team Project 12, losing 16-8.

The sides were level going into the mixed as Kirkham's ladies and Project's men won five but, in the mixed, Project won seven of the first eight games to lead 13-7.

In the penultimate set, the pairs were closely matched and it ended one game each to give Kirkham a much-needed and deserved bonus point.

Stanley A had a hard match against Hesketh Fleetwood C despite winning all the ladies, as HF won four men's to keep in touch.

The first two mixed sets went Stanley's way but the last four sets were evenly contested with all of them being split.

It meant Stanley are well clear in second but have a tough task to overtake the division leaders.

A potentially close fixture in the levels competition was marred by injuries, resulting in Hesketh Fleetwood B beating Lightning 15-1.

HF won the first four sets to lead 8-0, and though Lightning's only game came in the split fifth set, HF completed the one-sided match by winning the last six games.

Lids beat Bloomfield 11-5 in a match where they won three of the first six sets with three split to lead 9-3 before Bloomfield won both games in the penultimate set to earn a point.

Stanley lost 16-0 Hesketh Fleetwood A, who went second with two matches in hand on the leaders.

**BRIAN OAKES**

## Gearing up for North West Stages rally

By **Phil James**  
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As rallying returns to 'normal' after a stop-start two years because of the pandemic, Blackpool South Shore Motor Club members are getting in some practice ahead of next month's Legend Fires North West Stages.

Among the first in action this year was Chris Sharpe-Simkiss, who contested the recent Riponian Stages as co-driver to Ken Sturdy in his Ford Escort RS2000 Mk2.

Based at Thirsk and utilising stages in the North

Yorkshire Forests, the event was dominated by changing weather features.

A mixture of sunshine, rain, hail, sleet and snow all added to the challenge but that didn't stop the Escort crew from finishing second in class and 15th overall.

Sharpe-Simkiss will take up co-driving duties in another Escort when he contests the North West Stages as co-driver to Preston's Peter Jackson on the Myerscough College-based rally.

This weekend's Questmead Stages at Wigan's Three Sisters Race Circuit provides the opportunity for two South Shore drivers to test their



Ken Sturdy and Chris Sharpe-Simkiss

Picture: PRO-RALLY.CO.UK

cars ahead of next month's main event.

John Stone wheels out his VW Polo GTi R5 while Simon Bowen will be fine tuning his Ford Fiesta S2000T in readiness

for a return to tarmac rallying after contesting two forest events late last year.

Stone and Bowen then contest the following weekend's East Riding Stages, the

Beverly-based closed road event being an ideal warm-up for the North West Stages.

Having been cancelled in both 2020 and 2021 because of Covid-19 restrictions, this year's race – the region's only closed road rally – begins with a ceremonial start from Garstang High Street on Friday, March 18.

The action takes place the following day over 14 stages with those who complete the course returning to Garstang that evening for the traditional rally champagne finish.

Full details of where to watch will appear in the Gazette in the week leading up to the rally.