MATCHDAY 3

Fixture: Tranmere Rovers vs Gillingham

Competition & Round: EFL League Two, Matchday 3

Date & Kick-off: Saturday 16 August 2025, 3:00pm BST

Venue: Prenton Park, Birkenhead (Capacity 16,567)

Referee & Assistants: Referee: Declan Bourne, Assistants: Adam Burgess, Adewunmi Soneye, 4th official: Matt Archibald

2. HEAD-TO-HEAD & FIXTURE BASICS

• Last 5 meetings: 25 Jan 2025 TR 1–1 GIL (Solomon 17', Turnbull OG), 14 Sep 2024 GIL 3–0 TR (Little 48', Clarke 83', 90', Coleman red 61'), 9 Mar 2024 GIL 1–1 TR (Hendry 4', Masterson 84'), 25 Nov 2023 TR 3–1 GIL (Apter 43', 60', Jennings 53', Mahoney 90+1'), 11 Mar 2023 GIL 2–0 TR (S. Williams 32', Masterson 83')

• Overall record (approx): Gillingham 19, Draws 15, Tranmere 12 (from ~46 meetings)

• Bogey ground note: Gillingham's last away win at Prenton Park was Dec 2013 (2–1)

• Pitch and weather: Well-kept surface, forecast mild and dry around 20°C with a light breeze

3. OPPOSITION

A) Predicted Starting XI

No	Name	Pos	Age	Nat	Foot	Key Fact
1	Luke McGee	GK	29	ENG	R	2/2 starts, 1 clean sheet
2	Cameron Norman	RB	29	ENG	R	Overlapping threat, long throws
5	Nathan Smith	CB	29	ENG	R	300+ EFL apps, ex Port Vale captain
4	Jordan Turnbull	CB	30	ENG	L	Ball playing, can fill LB, OG vs Gills in Jan
3	Patrick Brough	LB	29	ENG	L	1.91 m, aerial strength
6	Richard Smallwood	DM	34	ENG	R	Club captain, 400+ career games
42	Nohan Kenneh	DM	22	LBR	L	Liberia international, physical ball-winner
11	Omari Patrick	RW	29	ENG	R	Top scorer last season 11, scored last game
15	Charlie Whitaker	AM	21	ENG	R	Everton loanee, creative link
19	Taylan Harris	LW	19	ENG	R	Luton loanee, first senior goal vs Shrews
10	Josh Davison	ST	25	ENG	R	Target man, scored vs Shrews

B) Manager Profile

• Andy Crosby, 52, English

• Preferred 4-2-3-1, organised and high energy, emphasis on pressing and width

• Appointed May 2025, first permanent role after assistant stints, improved Rovers' form

• Record to date strong, about 1.46 points per match, first meeting vs Gills as manager

C) Form & League Position

• League: 4th, 4 points, GD +4 (after 2 matches)

• Last 5, all comps: W 4–0 Shrewsbury (H), D 1–1 Colchester (A), W 1–0 Marine (FR), W 4–1 Newport (A, end of 24/25), W 2–0 Crewe (H)

• Unbeaten run across competitive matches, have not conceded from open play in the league

D) Tactical Style & Weaknesses

• Formation: 4-2-3-1 with two holding mids (Smallwood, Kenneh)

• Strengths: wing play and overlaps, aggressive press, aerial power on set pieces

• Weaknesses: late lapses in concentration, young attackers can be streaky, limited central creativity if flanks are stifled, discipline watch (Kenneh booked already)

E) Key Players & Milestones

• **Omari Patrick** – direct winger, last season 11 league goals, already scored this season

• **Richard Smallwood** – captain and shield, 400+ career games, sets the tone

• **Kristian Dennis** – veteran finisher off the bench, scored in the 4–0 win, closing on 100 league goals

• **Nohan Kenneh** – 22-year-old Liberia international, breaks up play, athletic presence

F) Opposition Threat Summary

• Chances via quick transitions and wide overloads, crosses into Davison and late runners

• Set plays are a major weapon, target Smith and Turnbull, watch Smallwood's deliveries

• Press to trap opponents in their own third, mistakes lead to cutbacks for Patrick or Harris

4. GILLINGHAM

A) Manager Profile

• Gareth Ainsworth, English

• Direct, front-foot style in a 4-2-3-1 or 4-3-3, high work rate and transitions

B) Form & Position

• League: ~10th, 4 points, GD +1 (after 2 matches)

• Last 5, 90 minutes: D, W, W, D, W, unbeaten across 14 in 90 minutes spanning seasons

C) Key Players

• **Bradley Dack** – creative AM, 1 goal in first 2 league games, set-piece quality

• **Jonathan Williams** – experienced playmaker, links lines, keeps the ball moving

5. ANECDOTES & TRIVIA

• Connor Jennings, cancer survivor comeback hero, now a key squad figure for Rovers

• Prenton Park has been tough for Gills, last Gills league win there was Dec 2013

• Elliott Nevitt, ex-Rovers forward, now with Gills, potential subplot if he features