



# Wycombe Wanderers Website

## Match Report

**Wanderers went down to a narrow 1-0 defeat to league leaders Birmingham City despite a valiant effort at St Andrew's on Saturday afternoon.**

Taylor Gardner-Hickman was the match-winner with a first-half volley past Will Norris, and the Chairboys' task was made tougher by Xavier Simons' red card on 45 minutes.

But the visitors regrouped to ensure they remained well in the contest in the second period, with Birmingham doing just enough to keep them at bay and increase their advantage at the League 1 summit.

The Chairboys return to action on Tuesday night against Burton Albion at Adams Park.

Wycombe made one change to the side that drew 0-0 with Wigan seven days earlier, reintroducing Fred Onyedinma to the starting line-up as Beryly Lubala moved to the bench, while Jack Grimmer returned to the squad amongst the substitutes following an injury absence.

After a fairly settled start, Wanderers were dealt a blow when Dan Harvie came off worst in a tangle of legs with Ethan Laird and sustained an injury which would end his game early, with Adam Reach replacing him at left-back.

Birmingham stepped up the tempo and carved out the first chance out of the game when Ethan Laird and Willum Willumsson combined well to tee up a shooting opportunity for Alfie May, but his low drive was excellently denied by Will Norris, before Tomoki Iwata volleyed over the bar from range when a corner was half-cleared.

A disallowed goal for offside served as a warning of City's growing threat and they broke the deadlock in surprising route one fashion, with Taylor Gardner-Hickman chesting down Ryan Allsop's long punt down the middle before volleying home past Will Norris.

Joe Low stretched out a long leg on the goalline to deny Iwata before Josh Scowen volleyed Wycombe's first chance over the bar following Cameron Humphreys' inviting free-kick into the box.

Then Fred Onyedinma had a great chance to hit the target after collecting Dan Udoh's lay-off, but his effort flashed just wide of Allsop's left-hand post.

Udoh was close to connecting with Jasper Pattenden's teasing cross from Low's pass as Wycombe looked to be building momentum, but they were dealt a blow when Xavier Simons was shown a straight red card for a late challenge on Ethan Laird in first-half stoppage time.

Norris denied Alfie May before the break but the Chairboys had it all to do in the second half to turn the tide with 10 men.

Sonny Bradley replaced Onyedinma at the break as Wycombe switched to a back three, and Birmingham controlled possession with their man advantage, without threatening Norris's goal.

In fact Wycombe had the best sight of goal when Bradley flicked on Humphrey's free-kick but Joe Low couldn't divert the ball past Allsop from close range.

Alex Cochrane fired wide from the edge of the box as Birmingham started to click into gear, before Jack Grimmer and Luke Leahy came on for Jasper Pattenden and Cameron Humphreys with a quarter of the game to play.

Grimmer's deep cross almost sailed in at the back post before Allsop diverted it behind for a corner, and then Richard Kone came into the attack as Garath McCleary made way.

Kone was involved in the build-up for a half-chance for Udoh, who couldn't convert Adam Reach's cross under pressure after Kone had done excellently to pick out Reach on the left wing, before Leahy's free-kick was inches away from being headed home by Bradley as the clock ticked towards 90.

Eight minutes of stoppage time were added on, and for the hosts it was all about clinging on to their lead as Wycombe applied the pressure, but they stood firm to stretch their lead at the top.