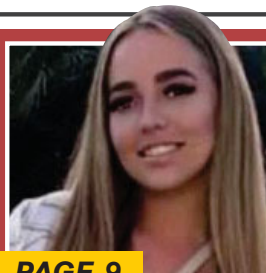


Bucks Free Press

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'KIND, CARING PAIGE' DIED FROM SUICIDE INQUEST TOLD

PAGE 9

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303 NEW FLATS PLAN APPROVED

ROW OVER TOWER BLOCK BUILD



PAGE 7

Rape probe shock

Police cordon off alleyway in town centre



RESIDENTS and shoppers in High Wycombe are in shock after a rape investigation was launched in the town centre.

Police were called in the early hours of Tuesday, February 11 after

By James Richings

a report of a rape.

A section of the alleyway on Bull Lane was cordoned off with officers remaining at the scene throughout

the day. Police later confirmed they were investigating after receiving reports from 2.39am that morning. No arrests have been made so far.

Full story: Page 5

CUTS TO DISABLED SERVICES SLAMMED: P6

Wills & Probate solicitors in Aylesbury

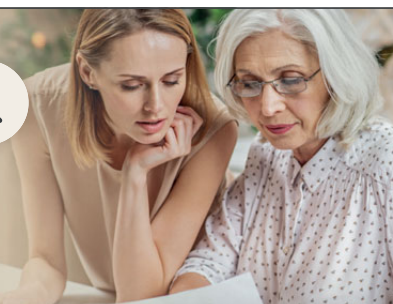


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Hundred auction's £1 billion windfall



Lord's Hundred

THE England and Wales Cricket Board has claimed the near £1billion windfall from its Hundred auction represents "a seminal moment" that will protect the sport "for generations to come".

Investors from around the world have poured lavish sums into the game in return for stakes in eight city-based teams which have existed for just four seasons.

An exclusivity period is now taking place, during which terms will be finalised, with the ECB confident that a tranche of deals worth £520million in new investment will soon be signed off.

In total that values the sides at more than £975m, a figure that would once have been inconceivable in domestic cricket.

The proceeds will be fed straight back into the country's cricket network, with £50m set aside for recreational level and the rest split between the 18 first-class counties and the owners of Lord's, Marylebone Cricket Club. Counties who do not have a Hundred team will receive a larger slice, while the hosts were gifted a 51 per cent share in their teams.

Reflecting on the potential impact of the investment, ECB chair Richard Thompson said: "In the past few days, we've reached a seminal moment for cricket in England and Wales," he said. "Four years after The Hundred was launched, we've now entered final discussions with eight strategic partners, each ready to invest in the competition's eight teams and help us take the competition and English and Welsh cricket to a new level – for the benefit of the whole of our game."

Brendon McCullum, left, and Jos Buttler



McCullum allays injury concerns

BRENDON McCullum allayed concerns over a full-blown injury crisis for England as they travelled to Abu Dhabi yesterday to lick their wounds from a bleak white-ball tour of India.

England's 142-run thrashing in Ahmedabad was their seventh defeat in eight contests as they were clean swept 3-0 in the ODIs, which was compounded by Ben Duckett suffering a groin problem.

Duckett is set for a scan in the United Arab Emirates and his participation for the Champions Trophy is in serious doubt, with England starting their campaign against Australia in Lahore on Saturday week.

England have made one change of their 15-man squad with Tom Banton replacing Jacob Bethell but McCullum had better news on Jofra Archer, Brydon Carse, Jamie Overton and Jamie

Smith. Archer's cut on his bowling hand and toe and hamstring niggles to fellow pacemen Carse and Overton respectively meant they missed out at the Narendra Modi Stadium. McCullum says they should all be ready for the first game in Pakistan. He said: "I believe we've got a squad which, if we're able to put it all together, is as good or as competitive as anyone else."

Virgil van Dijk on derby 'frustration'

By PA Sport reporters

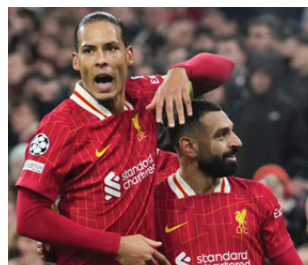
Press Association

LIVERPOOL captain Virgil van Dijk is keen to move on quickly from the obvious frustration of a tempestuous final Merseyside derby at Goodison Park.

In contrast to the calm, controlled procession the Premier League leaders have made in opening up a seven-point gap, the 2-2 draw ended with substitute Curtis Jones, head coach Arne Slot and assistant Sipke Hulshoff all shown red cards by referee Michael Oliver.

The Reds head coach, who has already served a one-match touchline ban for accumulating three yellow cards, must now await the match official's report to discover what, if any punishment, he will receive.

Van Dijk, who was given one of his more challenging evenings by goalscorer Beto, insists they have to put the disappointment and



Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk, left, celebrates with Mohamed Salah

controversy sparked by James Tarkowski's equaliser in the eighth minute of added time behind them.

"I think conceding a goal in the last seconds of a game, or even after added time of a game, is very difficult," he said. "That hurt and should hurt for each one of us but it is the reality.

"But you can dwell on it and stay angry about it or you can take it on

board, start the recovery and be ready for Wolves (on Sunday) because that will be a difficult test again and I think that's the best thing to do."

Oliver's handling of the game, even up to the last-gasp equaliser which Van Dijk felt should have been ruled out for a foul, angered Liverpool and Everton's approach definitely threw them off their game.

The Dutchman felt that contributed the scenes at the end when all discipline was lost.

"I told the ref he didn't have it under the control we wanted. Some fouls were easily given and some weren't and in the end these moments are decisive.

For Curt to get a red (for a tussle with Abdoulaye Doucoure, who was also sent off after celebrating in front of Liverpool fans) in that case is a normal thing... but when the ref gives the manager and assistant coach a red as well that's a bit strange."

Key coach Howley is dropped



ROB Howley will not be part of Wales' coaching team for Guinness Six Nations fixtures against Ireland, Scotland and England.

The Welsh Rugby Union said in a statement that Howley remains under contract with them but will not be involved for the rest of the tournament.

The announcement comes just two days after head coach Warren Gatland left his post by mutual agreement.

Cardiff boss Matt Sherratt will be in charge on an interim basis for the rest of the Six Nations campaign, which Wales began with defeats against France and Italy.

Howley, a coaching mainstay during Gatland's first reign in charge of Wales, returned to the staff as an assistant ahead of last year's Six Nations.

Confidence is regained



ENGLAND wing Ollie Sleightholme feels their last-gasp Six Nations victory over France has lit a fire under Steve Borthwick's side.

Elliot Daly's converted final-minute try on Saturday snatched a 26-25 win at the Allianz Stadium.

England are level on six points with Les Bleus and fourth of leaders Ireland heading into a rest week before hosting Scotland at Twickenham in their third encounter of the Championship on February 22.

"I think we have to have every confidence in ourselves after that win at the weekend," said Sleightholme.

FOOTBALL

Cookham Dean move up to fifth with win



BRITWELL extended their unbeaten East Berks League record to 12 games by defeating Old Windsor 2-1 last Saturday.

It was a rather scrappy affair at the Britwell Community Ground between the two sides expected to battle it out for the title come to the end of the season.

Jack Alder put them ahead when he got on the end of a superb cross from Tyler Munt.

Alex Jackson equalised six minutes into the second half, but Connor Shingleston blasted home a brilliant free-kick on 77 minutes to seal an important win.

Britwell move on to 34 points, 13 more than Old Windsor who have played three fewer games.

Sandhurst Royals are currently second in the Premier Division placings following a 4-1 win away at KS Gryf.

Langley Reserves moved up to fourth

place after beating AFC Reading 2-0 thanks to goals from Harley Dyer and Anis Ouandlous.

Cookham Dean are fifth following their 5-1 victory at Chalvey, their goals coming from Shane Donaldson, Josh Chaperon, Josh Bull, Mike Holmes and Owen Bagshaw.

Baylis United beat Pundit 5-2 thanks to goals by Aadam Ikram (2), Rahim Akhtar, Kamran Khan and Lazarus Akunekwe.

Old Windsor Reserves beat Bracknell Aces 2-0 in the second round of the EFL Cup with Ollie Ellis and Danny Pilcher, their man of the match, hitting the target.

This week's fixtures:

Premier Division: Frontline v KS Gryf, Langley Reserves v Old Windsor.

League Cup: AFC Reading v Britwell, Baylis United v Cookham Dean, Old Windsor v Taplow United.

FOOTBALL

Flackwell fall to turnaround loss away to Barton Rovers

FLACKWELL Heath slipped to only their fifth defeat of a highly impressive first season in the Southern League Division One Central, with a 2-1 defeat away to playoff chasing Barton Rovers.

A thick layer of freezing fog covered Barton Hills and the surrounding area, setting the scene for what in truth was a game of two halves.

With the enthusiastic chanting of a small group of Barton youngsters adding some atmosphere to the gloomy conditions, the first 45 was a competitive and aerial affair where Flackwell undoubtedly had the better of the chances.

The decisive moment came in the 39th minute, as a lunging tackle on Jack Shakespeare enabled Wiktor Makowski to put the Heathens in front at the break.

It was a lead that could, and perhaps should, have been more, with guilt-edged chances missed by Michael Harding and Jamie Ayres.

As the second half began, there was a palpable sense of hope among the fans that the Heathens

could finish the job and take the three points back down the M1.

It was not to be, as a determined Barton Rovers took control of the half, utilising the slope to their advantage as Flackwell had done in the first 45.

The confidence of Barton's play in the half was such that, in truth, the Heathens struggled to muster an attack of note for the first 15 minutes, and rarely threatened debutant Dylan Thompson in the Barton goal.

Frustratingly for Chris Ayres' men, both Barton goals came deep towards the end of the game, and both through set pieces.

The equaliser in the 79th minute saw Matt Moloney react quickest from a knock down to equalise, with 'the Rovers' seizing the initiative and producing their match winning moment three minutes late - a set piece to the far post saw Louis Bouwers outnumbered and Albie Hall heading in his debut goal for the club.

Tuesday's Berks and Bucks Senior Cup tie at Binfield was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch, rescheduled for February 25.



Flackwell Heath compete for the ball in the air. Picture: Glenn Alcock

Marlow impress despite defeat to Reading

MARLOW welcomed Reading 2s to Pound Lane. Reading are currently top of the league so the Reds knew that they were up for a challenge.

Reading showed their skill and pace early on with relentless passing between themselves to dominate possession. They came close in the 16th minute hitting the crossbar, minutes later Marlow keeper Alys Ramm made a double save to keep the score 0-0. Marlow eased into the game and started to gain possession for themselves. Co-

lette Fitzpatrick, Emily Thatcher and Sophie Appletree had notable performances defensively to deny Reading any success until the 33rd minute. A superb run from Reading's right midfield ended with a strike that Ramm could do nothing about and the visitors took the lead just before half time.

Marlow continued to fight in the second half and were rewarded with penalty corners that they could not capitalize on. Ramm remained strong in between the Marlow posts until the dy-

ing minutes of the game when Reading scored their second goal. Marlow were proud of their performance against a skilful team who are deservedly top of the league.

The 2nds moved to top of the league with an impressive 3-2 victory over previously unbeaten Wallingford. Jazzy Elsdon deflected in at a corner to give Marlow the perfect start and put their opponents on the back foot. A field goal from Tanya Lumley doubled the advantage going into the break. Wallingford

started the second half strong and converted a corner and then a slick move to draw level. For the remainder of the game player of the match Holly Lochead, Rosa Cook and Anna Needham kept their concentration in defence to limit opposition opportunities whilst the midfield and forwards pressed for a winner. Cheered on by vocal home support, the Reds won a corner that Lumley slapped across the goal, Xiao touched it into Lochead's path and her conversion claimed all three points.

DARTS

Latest results and scorers

Results from 6th Feb in the PRDDL (Sponsored By Terry's Badges)

Division 2 (Sponsored By Wessex Landscapes & Brickwork)

Bay 19 9-2 The Bell
James Hill 21 Dart Leg

Knockout Cup (Sponsored By Penn Farm Honeybees)

Bradmoor Farm B 5-6 Rivets
Karl Higgins 180
Harry Nash 148 Checkout
Paul Tubb 180

The Crown Royals 6-5 Thame Snooker Club
Jon Woodbridge 101 Checkout
Josh Hamstead 180

Knockout Plate Cup (Sponsored By Bradmoor Farm)

The Three Horseshoes 4-7
Wendover RBL
Aylesbury Vale FC 3-8 The Black Horse
Jordan Murphy 180
John Hance 16 & 21 Dart Legs

The Crown Royals & Rivets will take each other on in the final of the Knockout Cup on Thursday, March 6.

The Black Horse & Wendover RBL will take each other on in the Plate Cup Final on Thursday, March 6.

HOCKEY

Marlow men earn big win at Amersham and Chalfont

MARLOW men's 1st team were away to Amersham & Chalfont. It was a hard-fought game but Marlow came out with a win, 4-1.

It was a cagey first half with no score and then, A&C managed to score following a penalty corner. Within two minutes Marlow equalised through Alex Land and were back in the ascendency. From a series of penalty corners in succession, Sam North scored one and then, five minutes later, they scored a third by Chris Brown with a deft deflection and looked very comfortable after that. Marlow scored a fourth in the last few minutes when they broke forward and Josh Covus slotted a neat one-on-one with the keeper.

It was the right result. although the home team played a good game and worked very hard Marlow were worthy winners and stay top going into the half-term break.

The 2nd team were at home against another experienced and well-organised team in Eastcote 1sts, narrowly losing 2-1.

Sport

FOOTBALL

Rams are impressive to beat Hertford

Beaconsfield turned on the class as they produced a stunning display to beat Hertford 3-1 at Holloways Park, writes Arran White.

A fast start from the hosts saw them take the lead on the 10th minute, with Usman Lalustani showing pace down the wing to beat his man before playing the ball to Josh Marcon to coolly fire home from the edge of the box.

Beaconsfield were well on top, and it looked like only a matter of time before they scored again. Beaconsfield extended their lead with 17 minutes

on the clock, this time Marcon turned provider, playing in Manu Oke-William who powered past defenders and chipped the ball over the keeper.

There was a blow for Beaconsfield shortly after Lalustani, who had been excellent, was withdrawn due to injury and replaced by Avto Akhshashvili. Beaconsfield had chances for more goals, with a notable effort from Ben Tricker who chipped the keeper only to be denied by a fingertip save. As the half drew to a close there was a strong penalty claim when

Akhsashvili appeared to be tripped in the box, however the referee waved play on.

Jacques Kpomohouh made it 3-0 in the 55th minute with a header from an inch perfect cross put in by Marcon.

As the game reached the final few minutes Hertford grabbed a late consolation when Beaconsfield lost focus for a moment and Billy Mardell-Smith ran through to score and make it 3-1.

Beaconsfield travel to North Leigh tomorrow looking to continue their fine run of five unbeaten.



Beaconsfield celebrate their second goal. Credit: Ben Cousin

FOOTBALL

Win and defeat in busy week for Chesham United

Chesham United had another two games this week in their busy start to 2025 with Weymouth visiting The Meadow on Saturday and then a trip to Chippenham Town on Tuesday night.

First to Saturday's encounter at home. After last Tuesday's defeat Chesham got back to winning ways against the league's bottom club, winning 3-1. This was not a vintage Chesham performance, but they always had the edge even if the final margin was slightly flattering.

Chesham made a bright start but Weymouth had the first chance in the eighth minute, when Brooklyn Genesini got in on the right and chipped the ball over the advancing Dillon Addai but wide of the far post. It was Chesham that took the lead mid-way through the first half with a spectacular effort from Mitchell Weiss (photo), who shot into the far top corner of the net from wide on the left. However, the lead was to last only three minutes, as Genesini again broke clear down the right and shot just inside the far post. As half-time approached Goodship missed a good chance firing wide from Euan Pollock's headed pass, but right on the interval Chesham retook the lead. Zak Joseph's 30-yard free kick flew straight in beating Buse at his near post.

Into the second half then and Chesham rarely looked like adding to their lead. Weymouth had one more chance courtesy of Malachi Linton but it was Chesham that wrapped up the win in the last minute of normal time when Mitchell Weiss dispossessed Jordan Thompson in the area, Buse came out to block but Alex Lafleur lifted the loose ball over the keeper and into the net. 3-1 on the day and another valuable three points.

To Tuesday night then and what

By Andy Westlake

turned into a challenging night on the road in Chippenham with no recognised centre forward available due to illness, losing 2-0. Chesham went down to a tame defeat in a game that had an end-of-season feel to it. After going behind early on, Chesham were outplayed in the first half, but came back strongly after the interval only for Chippenham to score a second against the run of play which killed the game as a contest.

Tom Mehew got the home team off and running with a goal 4 minutes into the tie and despite lots of endeavour from Chesham the home team took a 1-0 lead into the changing rooms. Harry Parsons netted once more after a ball from Joe Andrews for Chippenham in the second half (on 72') taking the tie away from Chesham in a game that ended 2-0 on the night. Reflecting on the performance James Duncan, Chesham's Manager said "I've got to give a lot of credit to Chippenham - fair play to their management and coaching staff in a game we struggled to get to grips with".

Despite the loss the National League South league table didn't change significantly as only three teams above Chesham managed to win their games on a night where the teams in the bottom half had much better fortunes.

Next up Chesham United welcome Enfield Town to The Meadow on Saturday (3pm) looking to build on their 12th place in National League South. Chesham United FC Women welcome Newport Pagnell Town Women in the semi-final of the Berks & Bucks Senior Women's Cup on Sunday (2pm).



Man of the match Mitchell Weiss with the opening goal. Photo Neale Blackburn

FOOTBALL

Jacks come from behind at Chalfont

Windsor managed to salvage a point in a 2-2 draw at Chalfont St Peter with an exquisite second half goal from Noah Henry.

Credit must go to the Chalfont St Peter ground staff for getting the game on at all, when all others in the division had fallen foul of the weather. Despite their best endeavours however, the surface which played remarkably well in the first 15 minutes, inevitably deteriorated over the course of the game. The pitch was a leveller is an old cliché, but on the night proved to be uncannily accurate. In the end both sides were reduced to slugging it out like two heavyweight boxers past their prime, as the muddy surface took its toll.

But it didn't start out that way, Windsor's first goal in the 9th minute was a triumph of slick passing on the wet surface as Avta Akhsashvili pacy low cross from the right, was neatly dispatched at the far post by debutant Zabi Vakili from 6 yards.

A great start, but as we all know, the start's not the finish. Chalfont huffed and puffed, look good in parts, but never really threatened. That was until Windsor conceded a corner in the 17th minute. Old habits die hard and conceding from corners is Windsor's oldest habit. Sure enough, up popped Dan Wilson to float a clever header past Marson Childs in the Windsor goal to make it 1-1.

Windsor continued to look the most likely to score, but didn't, Chalfont looked unlikely to score but did. With 10 minutes to go before the break, in their only attack of note, Harrison Datta passed the ball into the bottom right-hand corner of the net, from the edge of the penalty area, when there really looked like little danger.

The second half was more a triumph of physical endeavour over skill, punctuated with frequent stoppages for injuries on both sides. As the half wore on, it looked more and more unlikely that Windsor would create a clearcut opening to level the score in the increasingly difficult conditions. That was until Noah Henry, picked up the ball on the right wing, cut inside before curling an unstoppable shot into the top left-hand corner of the net from 30 yards. No one was expecting that, least of all the bemused Matt Messer in the Chalfont goal.

Thereafter both Managers could argue that they should have won it, as goal bound efforts hit the post at both ends. Chalfont certainly fumbled the best of chances when a third goal looked more likely with just five minutes to go, but on the balance of play a draw was just about a fair result.

Windsor host Colliers Wood Utd at Holloways Park this Friday evening in another six-pointer, kick-off 7.45 pm.

Wycombe out of FA Cup following penalty shootout

WYCOMBE Wanderers' FA Cup run is over for another year as they were defeated by Preston North End on penalties, following a 0-0 draw at Deepdale.

In Mike Dodds' first game in charge since replacing Matt Bloomfield, he included six of the club's 14 January signings in the matchday squad.

This included goalkeeper Will Norris who joined on Deadline Day five days earlier, and winger Alex Lowry who was signed from Rangers.

Sonny Bradley, who had his three-game ban revoked following his red card away at Cambridge seven days prior also started at Deepdale.

On the bench were the Danish duo of Anders Hagel-skjær and Magnus Westergaard along with new boy and EFL favourite, Adam Reach.

The opening half of the fourth round affair in the FA Cup at Deepdale was a tepid affair, as both sides allowed the game to be played in the midfield.

For the hosts, Ali McCann and Milutin Osmajic forced Norris into two good saves, whilst for Wanderers, a Fred Onyedimna header brushed against the post.

Beryly Lubala also went close but saw his attempts go wide of the mark.

The second period saw the Chairboys be a lot brighter as they started to take the cup tie to Preston, as Freddie Woodman was on hand to keep hold of a stinging Lubala attempt.

Garath McCleary fired wide and a Gideon Kodua



Wycombe have not progressed into the fifth round since 2001 - the year they reached the semi-finals. Image: Zac

free-kick also caused mayhem in the North End box.

Then, in the final few seconds of normal time, both teams could have won it.

First, Dan Udoh went close before a Sam Greenwood cross missed everyone in the Wanderers box as it hit the post and bounced out.

Goalless at full-time. The opening 15 minutes of

extra time were similar to the first half because they involved a midfield battle.

Greenwood again was the closet for PNE as his shot was once again saved by Norris.

For Wycombe, Kodua fired over.

A quiet final 15 minutes saw the tie go to penalties and it was luck of the draw.

Sadly for Wycombe, Udoh and Reach both had their spot kicks saved by Woodman as North End entered the fifth round for the first time in 10 days.

Josh Scowen and Lubala scored their kicks for Wanderers.

Up next for Wycombe is an away trip to Crawley Town on February 8.

Penalty shootout line up:
PNE 1-0 WW (Greenwood)
PNE 1-1 WW (Lubala)
PNE 2-1 WW (Osmajic)
PNE 2-1 WW (Udoh - saved)
PNE 3-1 WW (Frokjaer)
PNE 3-1 WW (Reach - saved)
PNE 3-1 WW (McCann - over)
PNE 3-2 WW (Scowen)
PNE 4-2 WW (Evans)

FOOTBALL

Dodds: 'We'll be happy with performance'

WYCOMBE Wanderers head coach Mike Dodds has reflected on his side's FA Cup exit to Preston North End.

The Chairboys took the Championship side to a penalty shootout at Deepdale following a goalless draw on Saturday, but after Dan Udoh and Adam Reach missed their spot kicks, Wanderers had a mountain to climb.

They eventually lost the tie 4-2.

However, there were many positives to take despite being eliminated, as Alex Lowry and Will Norris both shone on their debuts.

Speaking after the tie, he said: "Large parts of it I liked and I thought we were excellent in the out-of-possession stuff as we limited Preston to very little.

"The in-possession stuff could improve but that's a wider piece, so that won't happen in the next two, three, four, five weeks.

"Overall, this is the opposition that we want to play every week, so if we're about to

perform like that consistently, it will give us a very strong opportunity for us to do well in upcoming [league] games.

"The defence was my focus for the last couple of days, as the quality we have at the top of the pitch looks after itself.

"The lads are disappointed [to go out], but when the dust settles and we reflect, we'll be happy with the performance overall across the 120 minutes."

Despite being appointed on February 2, the 38-year-old began coaching the Wycombe players only two days before the visit to Deepdale at the weekend.

His first league game in charge will be away at Crawley Town on February 15.

He continued: "Today [February 8], wasn't about me as it was about the group.

"It was an opportunity for me to stand on the side of the pitch and see the players in a real-life game experience.

"It's about the club progressing."



Mike Dodds took charge of his first game against Preston

EXCLUSIVE McCarthy speaks on coaching

FORMER Wycombe Wanderers' right-back Jason McCarthy has spoken about his new role at Brighton & Hove Albion following his retirement from the game.

The 29-year-old, who enjoyed four separate spells with the Chairboys between 2015 and 2024, hung up his boots in December after an injury-hit 18 months.

He had only played 18 matches between the start of the 2023/24 season and his final appearance at the back end of last year.

However, during his spell on the sidelines, McCarthy used that time to focus on his coaching career after he began earning his badges in 2022.

He is now part of the under-21s coaching staff with the Premier League club, and his 'loving' his time on the South Coast.

Speaking exclusively to the Free Press, he said: "I am a big admirer of the club so when I learnt about the availability of the role and what I would be doing, it piqued my interest.

"I got to meet the people with who I would be working with and it all came together.

"I started my coaching badges three years ago when I was 26, and there was a lightbulb moment when I started to think about the game more deeply.

"I realised quite quickly I was more used to coaching than playing."

McCarthy suffered the first long-term injury of his career in the summer of 2023 which allowed him to expand his knowledge on the coaching side of the game.

He was in frequent discussions with mentors that 'positively impacted' his career, and believes his new chapter with the Seagulls was an 'opportunity too good to turn down'.

The ex-Southampton, Barnsley, Millwall and Walsall man also hopes to use his time at Adams Park as part of his coaching philosophy.

The 29-year-old added: "When I had my injuries, I had a lot of time to think and I was very active.

"I visited a lot of managers, did a lot of study visits and watched a lot of live football. "The latter was something I have always done anyway, but I was doing it through a different lens.

"During that time, I spoke to a few coaches who had positively influenced me during my playing career. I spent some time with them, and I was on the grass coaching.

"So, when the right opportunity came up, I wanted to take it."

SPORT



New man Adam Reach 'will be up to speed soon'



Adam Reach made his Wycombe debut against Preston

WYCOMBE Wanderers head coach Mike Dodds has admitted he'll 'have to take his time' with new signing Adam Reach.

The 32-year-old joined the Chairboys as a free agent following his departure from West Bromwich Albion in June last year.

He made his debut for the Adams Park side in the 0-0 draw away at Preston North End, coming on as a second

half substitute.

Reach played the 26 minutes of normal plus an additional 30 during time, but missed Wanderers' third penalty to the shootout.

It was the former Sheffield Wednesday man's first competitive appearance in any capacity since featuring in the Baggies' play-off semi-final second leg loss against Southampton in May.

Preston went on to the tie 4-2,

and will now play Burnley in the fifth round.

For Wycombe, their remaining matches this season will be in the league.

Speaking at full-time, Dodds, who took charge of his first Wanderers game on the same day, said: "Adam was a calming influence as he is an experienced player."

"He's played at the level above and in the two or three brief conversations with him,

he seems to be a good character and person which is huge for the team.

"And from the bits I've seen in training, he has got the quality for the league above."

"We just need to take our time with him, as he hasn't played since last year/

"I am sure that he will get up to speed very soon."

Up next for the Chairboys is an away trip to Crawley Town on February 15.

Dodds' no nonsense message for players

WYCOMBE Wanderers head coach Mike Dodds has revealed that if anyone is content with not being selected 'do not deserve to play'.

The 38-year-old, who joined the club at the start of this month following Matt Bloomfield's exit for Luton Town, will take charge of his first league match of the Chairboys against Crawley Town this weekend.

His inaugural game at the helm was in last week's 0-0 draw at Preston North End in the FA Cup, which Wanderers lost 4-2 on penalties.

At the time of writing, Wycombe have got 38 registered players to choose from between now and the end of the season, as they prepare for their final 17 league fixtures of the this season's campaign.

It is also worth noting that the Adams Park team signed 14 new faces in January, whilst also letting several notable names depart the club such as Matt Butcher, Ryan Tafazolli and David Wheeler.

Speaking on the large squad, Dodds said: "It is the most impossible job to keep everyone happy and to be frank, if we have players that are happy not playing for Wycombe Wanderers, then they don't deserve to play."

"If I am honest, the reality is that I am not going to keep them happy, but I will be authentic and tell them the reasons why."

"They might not like that because they want to play, but they can go home knowing that I looked them in the eye and had that honest conversation."

"That's how I have always been in terms of leading."

"Whether it's young players or the experienced pros, you need to

James Richings

james.richings@newsquest.co.uk

look them in the eye and be honest.

"They don't need to like or agree with that reason, but at least they know why."

"We will have to rotate the squad as we have 17 big games, and the reality is that we have got a lot of very good players in our squad so there will be many hard decisions to be made."

"But in a way, that is why I love this job."

The Chairboys travel down to Crawley for their first visit to Broadfields Stadium in eight seasons, but they have faced the Red Devils twice already this campaign, both at Adams Park.

The first encounter took place in October which ended in a 1-0 win for Wanderers as Fred Onyedimma scored the winner, before the two met a game again a month later, this time in the EFL Trophy.

Wycombe would also win that match by a 2-1 scoreline, as they progressed into the knockout stages of the competition.

Overall, the two teams have played each other eight times, with Wanderers winning on five occasions, Crawley twice and there being one draw.

At the time of writing, Wycombe sit second, whilst the West Sussex team are 22nd in the table, three points off safety.

He added: "There are no givens in this league, which includes Crawley who are fighting for their lives, everyone is fighting for points."

"I am fully aware of that as are the players, but they will be reminded of that."



Mike Dodds' first league game in charge of Wycombe will be against Crawley Town this weekend

Ex-Wycombe goalkeeper lands job as manager

EX-WYCOMBE Wanderers goalkeeper David Stockdale has been named the new manager of Non League Farsley Celtic.

The 39-year-old, who enjoyed three separate stints at Adams Park between 2018 and 2022, was appointed on February 12, becoming the club's fourth new boss at the season.

This comes after previous manager Neil Redfearn left his role after 20 days, taking charge of just four games.

On his new job at the Yorkshire club, Stockdale, who played 73 times for Wycombe, said: "I've been to The Citadel to watch Farsley before, I have friends who have played for Farsley in the past and I'm a local lad - I was born in Armley and I live in Farnley."

"I'm a local lad and I want to help. I've been coming here for a long time."

"I've spoken to the directors and I was impressed with what they are aiming to do with the club."

It has been an eventful year for the club as they have been forced to play their home games at Buxton FC, which is 64 miles away from their Citadel home.

This came after their home pitch was deemed playable by the National League North officials.

They also started with Clayton Donaldson as manager before he was fired and replaced by Director of Football, Pav Singh.

Singh lasted four months before stepping back from the role, with Redfearn being appointed, before then he left within three weeks.

This has seen senior players and staff leave the club, with supporters boycotting matches.

Stockdale added: "Plans are in place for moving forward and I'm looking forward to helping the club get back to its former self."

"It was great to meet some of the fantastic people connected to the club."

"Hearing from the women's team, deaf team and the youth set up about what they have been doing during some unsettled times at the club was inspirational."