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*E Telmer Oct 2021 (4 weeks in print & online)

Bucks Free Press

Friday, December 9, 2022

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Charity run at Adams Park

TWO schoolboys from Burnley ran the length of the Adams Park pitch to raise money for the Children's Trust Oxfordshire.

Their visit to South Buckinghamshire is part of a challenge to run a kilometre at each of the 92 clubs across the Football and Premier League, to raise vital funds for numerous children's hospitals across the country.

It initially began after Hughie was first diagnosed with leukaemia in 2020, and Freddie wanted to raise money for the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital by running two kilometres a day until he reached the target of 100km.

His target of £1,000 was reached in little to no time and after Hughie became well enough to run, the two are now travelling up and down the country to continue their good work and currently, the two have managed to bring in just under £300,000 in donations.

Freddie said: "Hughie has leukaemia and I wanted to do a fundraiser where I would run two kilometres a day for 50 days and now, we are doing the challenge together."

"The new challenge that we are doing is that we're doing one kilometre around every EFL and Premier League stadium in the country."

"Hughie added: "We have been on this amazing journey and it has been a brilliant experience."

Game off due to Covid-19

A NON LEAGUE club from Buckinghamshire has had to postpone their upcoming league fixture due to its first-team squad contracting Covid-19.

Risborough Rangers, who play their games at the B.E.P Stadium in Horsenden, were penned in to take on top-of-the-table Stotfold in the Spartan South Midlands Football League Premier Division today [Saturday, December 3].

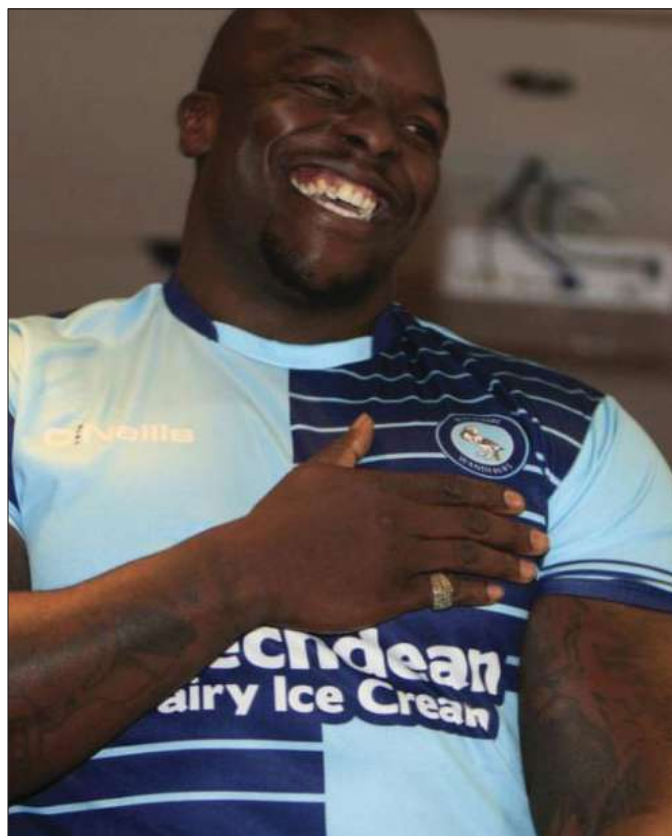
However, it was revealed on December 2 via Twitter that the Reds were unable to conduct the fixture due to 'multiple Covid cases.'

Their statement read: "We're sorry that we've had to postpone our @SpartanSMFL Premier Division match tomorrow against @stotfoldfc due to multiple COVID cases."

"Our apologies to our hosts and we look forward to seeing you later in the season."

Risborough are currently 11th in the league and have won five of their 11 games so far this campaign.

Looking back on life back in 2016



Adebayo Akinfenwa on the day he signed for Wycombe back in 2016 (Wycombe Wanderers)

WYCOMBE Wanderers legend Adebayo Akinfenwa has reflected on the time he was described as a 'gimmick signing' on the day he joined the club in 2016.

On July 10 that year, the striker was officially unveiled to a handful of supporters at Adams Park following his release from AFC Wimbledon, whom he had helped earn promotion to League One that summer.

The arrival at the then League Two club was primarily met with positive reaction, although some questioned the signing as a 'PR stunt'.

Six years later, Akinfenwa would leave Buckinghamshire with 60 goals in 250 appearances, two promotions, two consecutive Player of the Year awards, over 100 goal involvements along with being the Chairboys' leading scorer in the EFL era.

He exclusively told the Free Press: "One thing that I knew straight away was that I was not going to allow anyone to come into my life on a temporary basis leave a permanent status."

"I didn't prove anyone wrong, I proved myself right."

"I really believe that if you focus on yourself, you'll achieve."

"You shouldn't allow your past to dictate your future, but you can acknowledge your past."

"I remember signing for Wycombe and I can't remember who said it, but I remember

Exclusive By James Richings

someone saying it was a 'gimmick signing.'

"It didn't determine me or anything like that, I just remember hearing it."

"I put it in my pocket, and of course...100 goal involvements later, for me that is proving myself right."

"This is not me saying that I planned to play when I hit 40, not at all!"

"But I knew that there was life in me to continue to achieve."

Adebayo Akinfenwa's career:

2000-01: Watford
2001-02: FK Atlantas
2002-03: Barry Town
2003: Boston United
2003: Leyton Orient
2003-04: Rushen & Diamonds
2004: Doncaster Rovers
2004-05: Torquay United
2005-07: Swansea City
2007-08: Millwall
2008-10: Northampton Town
2010-11: Gillingham
2011-13: Northampton Town
2013-14: Gillingham
2014-16: AFC Wimbledon
2016-22: Wycombe Wanderers

In all, he played 794 competitive games during his 22 year career in which he scored 233 goals.

His achievements include winning two promotions with Wycombe, one with Wimbledon and the EFL Trophy with Swansea.



Simon McCallion won the competition and watch Wycombe vs Portsmouth via a large bed at Adams Park

Bedside view to witness a Wanderers win

ONE lucky family had the joy of watching Wycombe's victory over Portsmouth in a unique spot at Adams Park.

Simon McCallion along with his children witnessed the Chairboys' 2-0 win over the South Coast team via a huge bed between the Family Stand and Valley Terrace after they won a competition through the club's shirt sponsor, Dreams.

Speaking on their unorthodox viewing at Adams Park, Simon said: "We won a competition that was put on by Dreams, the club's shirt sponsor so we watched the

game from a bed which had rise and fall, a message section, and heated mattress and it was great."

"It's great for everyone involved as it helps get the name of Wycombe Wanderers out there for doing things."

Wanderers' next home match is against Ipswich Town on December 17.



Gareth Ainsworth has stated that his 'eyes have been opened' following the access-all-areas coverage between Wycombe and Portsmouth (PA)

Success on Sky Sports?

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth believes that more clubs across the Football League should 'give more access' to the viewing public and fans.

The Chairboys' 2-0 win over Portsmouth on December 4 was broadcasted live on Sky Sports, with the television company being allowed to interview coaches during the match.

Additionally, footage from both pre-match and half-time team talks were shown during the course of the game.

Speaking on the innovative scheme, which is the first of its kind to have ever

happened in a Football League or Premier League game, Ainsworth explained: "I think the time has come for football clubs to open up a little bit and give more access.

"My American owners have come in and have opened my eyes to how we stick to tradition a lot in this country, and sometimes, there are gains to be made if we change a couple of things.

"All the kids are on social media, have got screens, they love content and seeing things and I'm an extrovert myself so I don't mind it at all, as long as there is a line that they don't cross."

Alan Parry's Preview: Facing the Imps away



Sincil Bank (PA)

AFTER one of their best displays of the season against Portsmouth last week, Wycombe hit the road again on Saturday, December 10 for a trip to Lincoln City where Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth is a legendary figure.

The Chairboys manager was Player of the Season in each of his two seasons at Sincil Bank in the late 1990's and was voted fourth in Lincoln's top 100 players of all time.

He was signed by John Beck whose football philosophy Ainsworth cites as the biggest influence on his own managerial career having played under him for three different clubs.

Beck was an advocate of the route one, long ball game and although Ainsworth has favoured a similar approach for most of his time at Wycombe, last week's victory over Portsmouth proved he is willing to change to a more passing style when the occasion demands.

He made the big call to leave out last season's leading scorer Sam Vokes against Pompey, believing they would change their personnel and tactics in anticipation of an aerial bombardment, and it proved to be a masterstroke.

Ainsworth opted for the pace of Brandon Hanlan to unsettle the visitors defence and it will be interesting to see if he sticks with the same starting eleven against Lincoln.

The Imps are just two points behind Wycombe in the League One table and along with Portsmouth they are one of only two teams in the division with an unbeaten home record, although seven of their nine games ended in draws.

Wycombe fans of a certain vintage will never forget their visit to Lincoln in May 1999.

Remarkably, Wycombe were the only team in Division Two to beat Manchester City home and away that season, but they still faced the threat of relegation, as did Lincoln in a winner-takes-all clash.

The score was 0-0 with less than ten minutes to go when Paul Emblen headed Wanderers into the lead, and they held on in a nerve-racking finale to avoid the drop and send Lincoln down to Division 3.

Magic Mehmeti and McCleary star in win



Anis Mehmeti scored his eighth of the season as Wycombe secured only their third league win over Portsmouth (PA)

ANIS Mehmeti and Garath McCleary both got on the scoresheet as Wycombe defeated Portsmouth 2-0 at Adams Park.

Played in front of a bumper crowd along with the TV cameras, the match over the South Coast giants was part of Sky Sports' Innovative Game scheme, which gave viewers at home the chance to watch both pre-match and half-time team talks.

This also included in-game interviews which had never been done before in a professional league match in England.

Going into the game, Wanderers made two changes to the team that lost at Cheltenham 15 days ago as Nick Freeman and Sam Vokes were dropped to the bench, with Brandon Hanlan and Lewis Wing coming in to replace them.

The alterations seemed to work as Wanderers bossed possession, played the ball along the ground, and were in Pompey's face as soon as the first whistle was blown.

And after 14 minutes, the Chairboys took the lead through a familiar source.

Max Stryjek's free-kick was flicked on by David Wheeler just inside the opposition box, with the ball finding an unmarked Hanlan.

The forward then laid it off to Anis Mehmeti who fired his first-time strike beyond Josh Griffiths to give Wanderers the advantage.

It was his eighth of the season and his first since November 1.

The goal gave Wanderers confidence going forward as Gareth Ainsworth's side looked hungry to amend the defeat against Chel-

By James Richings

tenham the previous fortnight, as Portsmouth struggled to get the ball.

Danny Cowley's team were sluggish, tepid, and flaccid as they rarely went into the Wycombe half.

And their poor opening period display was nearly worsened just before the break, as Alfie Mawson nearly doubled the Chairboys' lead.

His brilliantly struck half-volley smashed the inside of the box before it was cleared away.

He hasn't scored a goal in any capacity since January 2018.

The second half saw Portsmouth have lots of the ball but it wasn't until the last 15 minutes that Stryjek was forced into action.

The Polish keeper denied substitute Reeco Hackett from long-range, while he also made his presence known in a goal-mouth scramble.

At the other end, Vokes and Wing went close to doubling Wycombe's lead, before McCleary wrapped up the win with two minutes left.

The Jamaican international brilliantly placed home his shot from a Mehmeti cut back, as Wycombe got the points.

This means that in each of the club's three league victories over Portsmouth, Wycombe have kept a clean sheet (1-0 in 2017, 1-0 in 2019, and 2-0 in 2022).

The victory also ended Portsmouth's five-game unbeaten run.

Up next is an away trip to Lincoln City on December 10.

Attendance: 6,306

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0963-2336



Mehmeti scored in Wycombe's 2-0 win over Portsmouth (PA)

Price tag is put on Mehmeti as positive performances continue

GARETH Ainsworth has given his price on what potential suitors must offer if they are interested in securing the services of Anis Mehmeti.

The young Albanian scored his eighth of the season and assisted Garath McCleary's goal in the Chairboys' 2-0 home win against Portsmouth on December 4, which was broadcasted live in front of the Sky cameras.

Mehmeti's performances this season have made him one of the most talked about players in League One, and despite signing a contract extension with the Adams Park side 12 months ago, Wanderers could be expected to hear bids from numerous teams if his positive displays continue.

Speaking on Mehmeti after the victory over Pompey, Ainsworth said: "He is an unbeliev-

able talent.

"We picked him up on trial a couple of years ago after being released from Norwich and Spurs, and we found him playing for Woodford Town in the Non League.

"His story is insane as he has learnt his trade by playing in those tight cages in London.

"He has worked his socks off and whenever he plays, it's as if

he has got his own ball.

"What he has is ridiculous and I know it's something that I cannot coach, but I can help him get into the positions in which he can receive the ball and hopefully do some magic.

"And if anyone wants to put £5m, £6m, or £7m in, then we might consider letting him go.

"But hopefully we can keep him in January."

Ainsworth on threat posed by former club

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth is expecting a difficult afternoon in Lincolnshire on Saturday as he takes the side up to former club Lincoln City.

Fresh off the back of a 2-0 win over play-off chasing Portsmouth on Sunday, just two points separates the Chairboys from the Imps, who sit 12th.

Looking to pick up a third win in four, Ainsworth is urging everyone to respect the threats posed by Mark Kennedy's outfit.

"They're very much under the radar but they've just ticked along nicely," Ainsworth started. "I've watched their last few games and wow, they're a decent side with plenty of legs on the pitch. Mark Kennedy is an ex-teammate of mine, playing at a high level in the Premier League and internationals. I expect nothing more than a well-drilled, flowing team of good footballers. Mark is really getting something together at Lincoln. I'll be happy to share a beer with him after the game, but hopefully we've got something from Sincil Bank because it's always a tough place to go.

"We are not taking this any lighter than the Portsmouth's or Ipswich's, because I think Lincoln are a good side. Consistency is key for me, and if we can back up what we did Sunday, bringing something back from Sincil Bank, that'll be great."

Beginning to turn around some tricky form on the road, winning three of the last four after winning just once in the first six, the former Lincoln City favourite believes it is down to the spirit among the group.

James Earnshaw

"We travel well, we always have. We seem to have this spirit on the bus and in the hotel where the boys walk in together and there are no cliques. There are no little groups sitting in the corner talking behind each other's backs, they're all really up for it and together. I was really proud when we got that.

"You look at dinner sometimes and they don't sit together as groups every week, they change it up. You'll see different people sat with different people, and some clubs I've been at you always get cliques where these three will only sit with these three. There's none of that at Wycombe, it's brilliant to see."

More than just an average game for Ainsworth, the 49-year-old is returning to a place he called 'home' for two years in the 1990s.

Winning Player of the Season in both campaigns, he still has very fond memories of his time at Sincil Bank.

"I absolutely loved it. I went up recently for a charity game and the place hasn't changed, the pitch is brilliant. The fans are awesome up there, there's nothing really around Lincoln so they've got a great catchment area.

"There are only two or three clubs where I feel like I am going home; QPR would be one and Lincoln City would definitely be one. I'll have to control myself to not walk in the home dressing room. It was such a brilliant time in my career, and the added bonus of having Mark Kennedy as manager."



'Under the radar' Ainsworth wary of threat posed by former side



Wanderers' Sam Vokes (PA)

Vokes on bench is explained

GARETH Ainsworth has explained why he decided to drop main striker Sam Vokes for their home match against Portsmouth on December 4.

The Chairboys won the fixture 2-0 with Anis Mehmeti and Garath McCleary getting the goals, but the shock exclusion was that Vokes was dropped to the bench.

He was replaced by Brandon Hanlan who only made his second league start of the campaign.

The move worked as Hanlan, along with Mehmeti and McCleary caused numerous issues for the Pompey backline before the former was replaced by the Welsh international with 11 minutes to go.

Explaining the change, Ainsworth said: "I decided that Pompey may go big against us as we still have this tag that we're big, physical and we need big players to play against us.

"I wanted to go for quick play and pace up front and it worked.

"It made us different, it put us up the pitch more and we were able to turn their back four who do not like to be turned."