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SPORT

New league for the Under 18s



The move is for the new season

WYCOMBE Wanderers Women Under 18s will play in the Junior Premier League Warriors Division for the 2022/23 season.

The move to a more structured and recognizable league is welcome news for the Chairgirls, as the u18s section of the Women's team has been regenerated through new coaching staff.

The additions of Christian Price as manager, along with his backroom staff in Andy Robinson, Rob Sage and newly appointed coach Sonny Moore, helped the team achieve a second place finish in the Thames Valley Counties u18s League.

The Chairgirls later went on to achieve Berks & Bucks Cup success by beating Moretonville 4-1 in the final.

Under 18s team manager Christian Price, said of the move: "We are very excited to be joining the JPL Warriors, having secured a fantastic stadium at Burnham FC for our home matches."

A move to the JPL Warriors will see at least 50 per cent of players get game time, and the for the team to showcase their skills at a professional stadium. Pre-season fixtures will be announced.

Smoking could be banned

FOOTBALL clubs in Buckinghamshire and Berkshire are being encouraged to sign up to an initiative that will ban smoking at youth matches.

The Smokefree Sidelines campaign, which has implemented in counties such as Lancashire, Norfolk, East Riding of Yorkshire, and neighbouring Oxfordshire, aim to make fixtures involving children and teenagers smoke free.

A statement from the Berks and Bucks FA website reads: "As the governing body of football in the region, we aim to introduce a culture of Smokefree Sidelines across Berks & Bucks, to encourage harm reduction to those exposed to smoking.

"Children and young people are at risk the more they are exposed to smoke and the acceptance of smoking in our society."

Stewart's farewell message to the fans

By James Richings

FORMER Wycombe Wanderers defender Anthony Stewart as thanked the club's fans for their support as he departs the club.

The 29-year-old, who played 292 games for the Chairboys, will leave the Adams Park outfit on June 30 when his contract expires to join Scottish Premiership side, Aberdeen in the north east of Scotland.

His departure will be his second from Wanderers, as he left the club in 2014 to join Crewe Alexandra, only to re-sign for the club in 2015.

Speaking to the club's media, Stewart said: "It wasn't an easy decision to make, but ultimately, I'll get to embrace the challenge of going up to Scotland and experiencing Aberdeen.

"The incentives are massive and playing European football is huge to me and the Scottish Premiership is a league that I have watched as I have got a few mates that play there, so I'll be embracing the challenge fully."

The centre-back also reminisced on his time with the club, as he achieved two promotions in 2018 and 2020, whilst also facing several Premier League teams in cup competitions.

In all, he scored 18 goals for the Chairboys which included one in the League One play-off final victory against Oxford United, which secured Wanderers' place as a Championship side.

He also scored against Watford in October 2020 in a 1-1 draw at Adams Park, which registered the club's first point in the second tier.

Stewart continued: "The memories stem back to surviving on the final day at Torquay to getting promoted to the Championship for the first time ever.

"There have been many gaps that have been bridged over the



Anthony Stewart played 292 games for Wycombe across two spells between 2012 and 2022. His move to Aberdeen officially started on July 1 as he leaves the Chairboys for the second time in his career (PA)

years and it's been a long journey.

"It's probably one of the main highlights of my career so far, I put a lot of effort and thought process going into that final and I gave everything.

"I felt like a man possessed that day."

Finally, the fan favourite wanted to thank not only his teammates,

but the fans for the support he has had in his 10 seasons as a Chair-boy.

He continued: "Dobbo picked me up when I was 15 and taught me everything that I know now.

"The togetherness at Wycombe is quite rare and to have the personalities and the characters within

the group on-and-off the pitch is

massive.

"It's like we're a family.

"The fans have been great from the first time they saw me to now and the only way I could say thank you are through my performances.

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart and good luck for next season."



Gareth Ainsworth is looking forward to the start of the season (PA)

Boss looks ahead to the start of the season

WYCOMBE manager Gareth Ainsworth is looking forward to the start of the new season which will begin in just over a month's time.

His players are due to return for pre-season next week as the new league campaign begins on July 30.

It'll be the first time in the EFL's history that the league season will begin in the seventh month of the calendar year, and this is due to this year's World Cup taking place across November and December in Qatar.

The opening weekend of the

campaign will see the Chairboys take on Burton Albion – their sixth consecutive league season in which they will begin at home.

In August, they will play six games across 21 days with four of those matches being on the road at Bolton Wanderers, Northampton Town (League Cup), Exeter City on a Tuesday night and Barnsley, respectively.

Wanderers will also host Shrewsbury Town and Charlton Athletic at Adams Park during the month.

Speaking to the club's media, Gareth Ainsworth said: "Once you get into June you start to count down the days and the days have gone very quickly.

"We're looking forward to next week in getting the squad together and it's been very quick, as this season seems to have come round incredibly fast.

"It's definitely a first with the season starting on July 30.

"We know who our first opponents are and we're looking forward to facing Burton at home."



Malachi Linton will now play his football at Huish Park following his release from Wycombe Wanderers this summer where he only played once (PA)

Linton is on the move

A trip down to the New Forest

FORMER Wycombe striker Malachi Linton has joined Non League Yeovil Town on a two-year deal.

The 21-year-old moves to the South West side on a free transfer following his release from the Chairboys this summer.

Joining the Adams Park club in 2020 from Lowestoft Town, he made one first team appearance for Wanderers which was in the Football League Trophy in August 2021.

The youngster played the full 90 minutes in a 3-1 home defeat against the Aston Villa Under 21s, where he played a part Wycombe's goal which was scored by Connor Parsons.

He also had two loan spells away from Wycombe which were at

Slough Town and King's Lynn Town respectively.

The latter spell at the Norfolk side saw him score eight goals in 21 matches for the Linnets during the 2021/22 campaign, as they were relegated to the National League South.

However, his season ended prematurely in April after he picked up a serious leg injury.

Speaking on his arrival at Yeovil, he told the club's website: "I'm excited.

"Yeovil is a big club with a good core of players and staff.

"I'm looking forward to coming in and adding to that.

"The manager has been a big pulling factor and we've had some good conversations.

WYCOMBE Wanderers have added another pre-season friendly to their list before the league campaign starts.

The Chairboys will take on a Bournemouth XI on Friday, July 22 at Brokenhurst FC's stadium, The Meadens Skoda Arena.

Kick-off will be at 7.45pm, and it will be on at the same time as a Chairboys XI consisting of trialists and development players take on Aylesbury United at the Meadow in Chesham.

This will mean that the club will have a total of eight friendly matches before they begin the season at home against Burton Albion.

Ticket details for the match in the New Forest will be released in due course. The Non League club confirmed the news at the end of June.

Could Mawson revive his career at Wycombe?



Alfie Mawson spent the 2014/15 season with Wycombe Wanderers where he won the club's Player of the Year award for his brilliant displays

By James Richings

RUMOURS are circulating that former Wycombe Wanderers defender Alfie Mawson could re-join the club this summer.

The 28-year-old, who played for the Chairboys in the 2014/15 season, will become a free agent on July 1 after his current club, Fulham, confirmed that they will not renew his contract.

He joined the Cottagers in 2018 for an eye-watering £20m from Swansea City.

This came off the back of Fulham's promotion to the Premier League after a four-year absence, which was the same year that the Swans were relegated from the top-flight.

However, his career stalled in West London it what has been a stop-start spell for the former fan favourite at Adams Park.

In total, he played just 52 minutes across four seasons for Fulham as they yo-yoed between the Championship and the Premier League.

And with him soon to be a free agent, will a move back to the Chairboys revive what was a soaring career?

Alfie Mawson's rise from the Non League to the Premier League in just two years

Born and raised in Hillingdon, Mawson started his career with Reading before he joined Brentford in 2010, signing a two-year scholarship.

During those two years he played just once for the Bees as he spent most of his time out on loan in the Non League

Three separate spells at Maidenhead United along with appearances for Luton Town and Welling United respectively, paved the way for him to develop as an EFL player, with Wycombe Wanderers, then of League Two, giving him that first opportunity.

It was the 2014/15 season, and it was a campaign that made his name.

One of the first names on Ainsworth's team sheet, his first-full season as an EFL player saw the centre back play 50 matches and scored seven goals, with those strikes coming in the final 15 games of the season.

However, that campaign ended in heartbreak as the club lost the League Two play-off final on penalties against Southend United.

The performances of Mawson for Wanderers made him noticeable across the football pyramid with many teams now trying to land his signature, with Barnsley of League One signing the highly-rated centre back.

Wycombe Wanderers on loan from Brentford

He would only spend a solitary season with the Oakwell side, winning the play-off final and the Football League Trophy.

Between August 2014 and August 2016, he played an incredible 112 games and scored 16 goals, making his stock very high.

This landed him a move to Swansea City of the Premier League for around £15 and after two years in South Wales, his £20m transfer to Fulham was confirmed.

Would a move back to Bucking-

hamshire work for Mawson?

With Anthony Stewart's departure from Wanderers to Aberdeen confirmed, the club are on the lookout to find the perfect replacement for a centre-back who was ever-reliable for Gareth Ainsworth.

A defender who can read the game well, head, tackle, lead, score goals, and understands League One football will be required to fill the void left by Stewart, and Mawson ticks all those boxes.

Even though the centre-back's career has stalled in recent seasons, there is no doubt that he has all the attributes to succeed at a League One club, and following his previous spell at the club, there is nothing to suggest he can't replicate that form which made him a fan favourite in South Buckinghamshire.

It is also to remember that in just one season with Wanderers, Mawson won the Supporters' and Players' Player of the Year, the Official Wycombe Wanderers Supporters' Association's Player, Young Player, the Away Travel Player of the Year awards and the Wycombe Wanderers Independent Supporters' Club Player of the Year award.

His contributions were not unnoticed and with Chris Forino also hoping to continue his development, the 28-year-old could act as a mentor for the young central defender.

Mawson would be hugely welcomed back by the fans who fell in love with his style of play, and his potential signing could be the perfect replacement following Stewart's exit.

SPORT



Gareth Ainsworth is staying at Wycombe



Gareth Ainsworth's new deal with Wycombe is now until 2025 after confirming the news live on Sky Sports News on June 30 (PA)

By James Richings

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth has signed a new deal with the club.

The 49-year-old, who has been in charge of the Chairboys since September 2012, confirmed on Sky Sports News that he has extended his contract with the Adams Park side until 2025.

His previous contract was due to expire in 2024.

Speaking on SSN (Sky Sports News) on June 30, he said: "I'm glad to announce that I have signed an extension to my contract."

"I have bought into the vision of Rob, Pete and Missy Couhig who are the owners of the club and

what they want to do.

"They backed me the whole time when there were clubs talking to me in the summer, but I am happy with where I am and I am pleased to have signed a year's extension which will take me up to 2025."

"I firmly believe that the plans in place can get this club to the Championship."

"We were close (in 2022) and were there a couple of years ago and happiness is important as well as chasing the shiny things."

His new contract extension will come as welcomed news to fans of the club, after he was linked with several Championship sides during the off-season, most notably Queens Park Rangers and Blackburn Rovers – two clubs that he is affiliated to.

Since taking over from Gary Waddock nearly a decade ago, Ainsworth has managed 513 games for Wycombe, winning 202 of them.

The boss also spoke about potential transfer targets which includes Alfie Mawson.

The 28-year-old is now a free agent and has been heavily linked with a move back to Adams Park, following his previous spell in the 2014/15 season.

The manager said: "Apparently he was training with us last week but we weren't in training last week!"

"So I think that will tell you about those rumours."

"I'm not saying that I haven't spoken to Alfie as we're friends, and we've been friends since he was here all those years ago and he was

phenomenal for us.

"He has had a tough time with knocks, but, a fit Alfie Mawson?"

"Wow, what a player he is."

"We're in contact and watch this space."

"I've done things early and I have done things late in the window but I am keeping my cards close to my chest."

On the season ahead, the 49-year-old added: "We've got to compete in this tough league because the backing we've had from the owners has been incredible."

"Hopefully we'll be lucky and have an injury-free season but there are some really good, some fantastic managers, and some terrific players so let us enjoy it."

Wycombe will start the new season at home to Burton Albion.



More matches for Wycombe (PA)

Friendlies added to pre-season fixture list

WYCOMBE Wanderers will play an additional three friendly matches as they gear up for the upcoming season.

All the pre-season matches are as follows:

Friday, July 8, 7.30pm: Bracknell

Town vs Wycombe Wanderers XI

Saturday, July 9, 12pm: Wycombe

Wanderers vs Fulham Under 23s

(behind closed doors)

Tuesday, July 12, 6pm: Wycombe

Wanderers vs Oxford City (behind

closed doors)

Saturday, July 16, 1pm: Watford vs

Wycombe Wanderers (behind closed

doors)

Friday, July 22, 7.30pm: Aylesbury

United vs Wycombe Wanderers XI

Friday, July 29, 7.30pm: Chesham

United vs Wycombe Wanderers XI

Tuesday, August 2, 7.45pm: Worthing

vs Wycombe Wanderers XI

The league season will begin on

Saturday, July 30 at home against

Burton Albion.

Youngster to join new club

FORMER Wycombe Wanderers defender Max Ram has signed a deal with the Scottish Championship side, Inverness Caledonian Thistle FC.

The 21-year-old has penned a two-year deal with the Caley Jags and will officially be their player on July 1, following the expiration of contract with the Chairboys.

Ram joined the Adams Park club in August 2021 where he played three games for the Chairboys, which were all in cup competitions.

He spent the second half on loan at Non League Hungerford Town where he played eight times.

He began his career with Leicester City.