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Owls at the top of the tree?

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth believes Sheffield Wednesday will be 'champions of League One', following the Chairboys' 1-0 defeat against the Owls.

Will Vaulks' screamer on 13 minutes was all that separated the two teams at Adams Park, as Wanderers lost at home for the first time since November.

It was also their first league defeat at home since October.

For Wednesday, Darren Moore's side are now unbeaten in 19 matches across all competitions, where they have kept 11 clean sheets in that time.

Ainsworth said: "They are an unbelievable team, they are an outstanding side, and they deserve to currently sit second.

"Sheffield Wednesday have come to town with strength and depth, and all that separated the two teams was a wonder strike from 30 yards.

"We put a lot of pressure on them in the second half, but we didn't get that final moment like they did.

"It just wasn't meant to be.

"Wednesday had a lot of respect for us, and we lost narrowly to the champions of League One this season.

"Anyone that finishes about Wednesday will win the league this year.

"I don't see anyone finishing above them, so for us, it was a great performance."

Striker goes out on loan

WYCOMBE Wanderers have confirmed that development team striker Ben Kaninda has joined Non League Hednesford Town.

The 19-year-old, who spent some time with Hanwell Town earlier this campaign, has penned a one-month loan deal with the Pitmen and will go straight into their squad to face Cambridgeshire-based team, St Ives today [January 14].

Kaninda began his career with West Bromwich Albion before joining Shrewsbury Town on a free transfer in 2020.

After being released by the Salops two years later, he had a successful trial with the Chairboys and signed a permanent contract with the club last summer.

His Wycombe debut came in the club's 0-0 draw against the Tottenham Hotspur U21s in the Papa John's Trophy in August.

He played the whole 90 minutes as the Chairboys defeated Spurs 4-3 on penalties.

Al-Hamadi signs for the Wombles



Ali Al-Hamadi (right) scored one competitive goal at Adams Park. This was in a 3-1 loss against Bristol City in the League Cup (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers have confirmed the departure of striker Ali Al-Hamadi who has joined AFC Wimbledon on a permanent contract.

The 20-year-old, who scored two goals in 14 competitive fixtures for the Chairboys, leaves the Adams Park side after just 14 months following his arrival as a free agent in November 2021.

His stint in Buckinghamshire also saw the Iraqi forward spend some time with Non League Bromley during the 2021/22 season, where he was part of the team that won the FA Trophy at Wembley Stadium.

Speaking on his exit, Al-Hamadi said: "Thanks for everything, Wycombe.

"Appreciate everyone at the club for what they have done for me.

"I've enjoyed every minute of being a part of this amazing group.

"Learnt invaluable lessons and made friends for life.

"Excited for the next chapter."

He becomes the Dons' third signing this month, following their acquisitions of Sam Pearson from Bristol City and Armani Little from Forest Green Rovers, respectively.

However, he is the club's first permanent transfer as they aim to return to League One following their relegation from the division last season.

Al-Hamadi's two goals for Wanderers were scored against Long Crendon in the Berks & Bucks Cup and against Bristol City in the League Cup.

His only league start was in the 1-0 defeat against Plymouth Argyle on December 29, where he was replaced

By James Richings

by Tjay De Barr in the 71st minute.

Speaking on his departure, manager Gareth Ainsworth added: "We will keep an invested interest in him as there is potential in Ali to go onto things.

"He just needs regular game time and that was difficult for me to give him at Wycombe, as we have got a great front four in Sam Vokes, Brandon Hanlan, Garath McCleary, and Anis Mehmeti.

"Ali has had his time in the team curtailed and it's only fair that he goes out and tries to get some games.

"I think his pace will be something Wimbledon will be happy to receive, and I hope he works on the aspects of his game that we spoke about.

"It's the journey of a young footballer sometimes as they have got to go and cut their teeth at certain places.

"He came up to me and thanked me for restarting his career, as he had hit a brick wall at Swansea, but he came here and really impressed.

"He has been a great acquisition for us and I hope he goes onto bigger and better things."

It is now likely Wycombe will search for a backup striker this window, as Al-Hamadi's exit means Sam Vokes, Brandon Hanlan, D'Mani Mellor, and Tjay De Barr are currently the only first-team forwards at Wanderers.

Additionally, Garath McCleary, Anis Mehmeti, and David Wheeler can also play up top, whilst Charles Hagan and Arnold Matshazi are part of the development side.



The match on January 14 saw Wycombe lose 1-0 at home to Sheffield Wednesday which was their 10th league defeat of the season

Club release statement after Wednesday loss

WYCOMBE Wanderers have appealed to fans after a Sheffield Wednesday player had an object thrown at him.

The South Yorkshire outfit won 1-0 at Adams Park on January 14, which was the Chairboys' first defeat at home since November 5.

During the loss, reports were made that tensions boiled over in the terrace end, as 'inappropriate comments' were being made, whilst a Wednesday player had missiles thrown at them whilst receiving treatment.

In a statement from the club, they said: "The club are

reviewing CCTV footage to identify the offender, who will be subject to a lengthy stadium ban.

"Witnesses are encouraged to come forward via email to the club's safety officer Steve Copp on stephen.copp@wwfc.com; anonymity and discretion is guaranteed.

"Wanderers are also disappointed to learn of inappropriate comments and chants from the terrace which have been reported to the stadium team and reminds supporters of the behavioural standards which are expected of all visitors to the stadium."



Gareth Ainsworth was not downhearted after his side lost 1-0 against Sheffield Wednesday on January 14 at Adams Park (PA)

Remaining optimistic

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth believes there were 'many positives' in his side's 1-0 defeat against Sheffield Wednesday on January 14.

Will Vaulks' stunner from 30-yards in the opening 15 minutes was all that separated the two teams, as the Chairboys lost at home in the league for the first time since October.

Wanderers remain just outside the play-off places, but Ainsworth isn't feeling too downhearted about the performance.

He said: "The difference between the two teams today was a wonder strike and all you can do is take it on the chin and

go again.

"We're gutted about the result but there were many positives.

"I need to give credit to the Wednesday defenders as they marshalled our attackers in Anis, Garath, Brandon, and Sam really well.

"They were solid and when you defend like that, you deserve a clean sheet.

"I'm proud of where we are as we have almost matched a team like Sheffield Wednesday, as it shows we are capable of reaching the top six and we intend to do that.

"We will be giving it our all from now until the end of the season."

Up next for Wycombe is Bristol Rovers away on January 21.

Alan Parry's Previews: Looking at the Pirates



The Memorial Stadium (PA)

WYCOMBE boss Gareth Ainsworth could have the easiest team talk of his managerial career when Wanderers travel to Bristol Rovers on Saturday, January 21.

He just needs to remind his players of the comments made by Rovers manager Joey Barton following their 2-1 defeat in the reverse fixture at Adams Park on Boxing Day.

Here are some of Barton's quotes after the game: 'Any (Wycombe fans) turning up to watch you've probably got a neck brace on, although they are probably well versed in the neck muscles because it is hump-it football.

"We're disappointed we haven't beaten Wycombe, but as I said to the lads in the dressing room 'Do they put fear into you? Absolutely not. I wouldn't swap for any of their players. I wouldn't swap for their style of football.'

On a Rovers player being cautioned for taking too long over a free kick: 'Why would we waste time against a team we're fitter than and we're a better footballing team than?'

If he (Ainsworth) had a better style of football he would have probably nicked a bigger, better job. I don't know whether it's the red snakeskin boots or leather jacket, or the amount of time the ball is in the air that has cost him a move.'

Barton is perfectly entitled to his opinion, but perhaps he should reflect on his own reputation before criticising others. This is a man whose list of serious misdemeanours on and off the field would fill this column.

However, he has put together a decent team at Rovers. They are only one point behind Wycombe in the League One table despite having one of the worst defensive records in the division (only the bottom two Burton Albion and Forest Green Rovers have conceded more goals).

Should Barton's 'superior' style of football result in victory, I am sure Ainsworth will give credit where it is due rather than finding reasons to criticise the opposition. He knows how to act after a defeat, not all managers do.

Wonder strike ends unbeaten home run



It wasn't Wycombe's afternoon as Sheff Wednesday defeated the Chairboys 1-0 at Adams Park thanks to a Will Vaulks screamer (PA)

WILL Vaulks' stunner succumbed Wycombe Wanderers to their first home league defeat since October, as Sheffield Wednesday beat the Chairboys 1-0 at Adams Park.

The hosts were quick out of the traps as former Wednesday midfielder Lewis forced Cameron Dawson into a low save just three minutes in, whilst Ryan Tafazolli fired the rebound across the face of goal.

Wanderers continued to press the promotion-pusher's backline as Tafazolli again went close, but his close-range header from a Jordan Obita corner went over the target minutes later.

But on 13 minutes, a moment of brilliance from Vaulks gave Darren Moore's side the lead.

After receiving the ball from Calum Paterson, the ex-Cardiff man unleashed a rocket from 25-yards that flew past Max Stryjek and into his top-left-hand corner.

The stunning strike was only his second goal for the club since joining from Cardiff City last summer.

Wednesday nearly doubled their advantage on the half-hour mark, as Paterson's close-range volley was brilliantly denied by Stryjek, whilst Vaulks hit his rebound over.

During the second period, the Chairboys struggled to create any clear-cut chances as the match was predominantly played in the middle of the park.

However, Brandon Hanlan's header forced Dawson into a stop

By James Richings

on 55 minutes.

Down the other end, Josh Windass' free-kick was smothered away by Stryjek.

Gareth Ainsworth threw the kitchen sink for the final 10 minutes as Sullay Kaikai, Sam Vokes, Nick Freeman and Jason McCarthy all came on to find the equaliser, but the afternoon belonged to the Owls, who took more than 2,000 fans to Buckinghamshire.

Up next for Wanderers is an away trip to Bristol Rovers on January 21.

They next play at Adams Park three days after their trip to the West Country, as they will host Thames Valley rivals and M40 neighbours, Oxford United.

Wycombe's next fixtures:

Jan 21: Bristol Rovers vs Wycombe Wanderers

Jan 24: Wycombe Wanderers vs Oxford United

Feb 4: Port Vale vs Wycombe Wanderers

Feb 11: Wycombe Wanderers vs Derby County

Feb 14: Accrington Stanley vs Wycombe Wanderers

Feb 18: Bolton Wanderers vs Wycombe Wanderers

Feb 25: Shrewsbury Town vs Wycombe Wanderers

Mar 4: Wycombe Wanderers vs Exeter City

Mar 7: Wycombe Wanderers vs Fleetwood Town

Mar 11: Burton Albion vs Wycombe Wanderers

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Wednesday's Will Vaulks (centre) was mobbed by

Sheff Wednesday players party with fans at High Wycombe Train Station

TWO of Sheffield Wednesday's players were seen celebrating with the club's fans at High Wycombe Train Station on January 14.

The Owls, who currently sit second in the League One table, defeated Wanderers 1-0 at Adams Park with Will Vaulks scoring a superb strike in the 13th

minute of the contest to settle the game.

The result was only Wycombe's fourth defeat at home in the league this season, while Darren Moore's side made it 19 games unbeaten in all competitions.

Following the victory, Vaulks was spotted at the town's train station where

several hundred Wednesday fans travelled down from Yorkshire to Adams Park, as 8,302 people attended the game.

The former Cardiff man seemed to enjoy the fun, and even got involved in singing his own chant.

Other Wednesday players serenaded at the station by the away supporters included centre back, Dominic Iorfa.

More than 2,500 Wednesday fans travelled down from Yorkshire to Adams Park, as 8,302 people attended the game.

It is currently Wycombe's highest-attended home match of the season so far.

The result also ended Wycombe's two-game winning run at home over the Owls.

Ainsworth 'is in awe' of Anderton

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth has revealed he is 'in awe' of Bristol Rovers after 40 members of staff shaved their heads in solidarity with the club's defender, Nick Anderton.

Anderton, 26, is currently undergoing chemotherapy after being diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer last summer.

Following the news, many people across Bristol and the rest of the country have raised funds to aid the stricken centre back, who helped the Pirates achieve promotion to League One last season.

Those at Rovers decided to go for the trim on January 16 in honour of Anderton's squad number.

Their show of support took place five days before Wanderers travel to Memorial Stadium to take on the Gas.

Speaking ahead of the match on January 21, Ainsworth said of the gesture: "I think it's a spectacular thing that Joey Barton and Bristol Rovers have done.

"I am massively in awe of what they have done - it's fantastic.

"For all the bad press people get, I think there is a lot of good press that gets missed out.

"Above all, I wish Nick Anderton all the best with his health and with his recovery.

"Hopefully one day, the horrible disease that is cancer can be eradicated permanently.

"For me, this gesture is big-

By James Richings

ger than the game on Saturday and it's really important that Nick has got all the support from his teammates."

The cancer that Anderton is battling is Osteosarcoma, a rare form of sarcoma that has required the defender to have an operation on his femur.

On shaving their heads, Bristol Rovers manager Joey Barton said: "There's going to be some odd stares when we get to play games, a commentator's nightmare - a team of skinheads.

"But it's a phenomenal cause and it's the least we can do."

Club captain, Paul Coutts, who came up with the idea, added: "I lived with him last year and he's an infectious character.

"Everyone wanted to be around him; he brought a smile to everyone's faces.

"The news came in the summer with his diagnosis after he'd done the first week of pre-season and in his words, he was on fire, and then gets the scan on his knee and the news unfolds.

"We're just trying to support him and do anything we can to raise awareness."

A Go Fund Me page has been created where nearly £40,000 has been raised, surpassing its initial £1,600 goal.

To donate, visit www.gofundme.com/f/nick-anderton-as-brfc-players-shave-heads.



Nick Anderton is undergoing chemotherapy (PA)



Gareth Ainsworth (PA)

Positives despite the defeat

GARETH Ainsworth believes that despite falling to a 1-0 defeat against Sheffield Wednesday, Wycombe 'more than matched' their opponents.

The game was settled in the 13th minute through an incredible Will Vaulks screamer at Adams Park, with the loss being Wanderers' fourth at home in the league this season.

The result was a rarity for the Chairboys, as it was only the fifth time since the start of last season that they had failed to score in a league match at home.

Speaking on the performance, Ainsworth said: "We have had narrow defeats against Plymouth and Sheffield Wednesday, so we are not getting torn apart.

"It shows just how far we have come as a club.

"I remember playing for Wycombe at Sheffield Wednesday when they were promoted and we were relegated from League One [in May 2012].

"We were a country mile away from that team, but now, we're very close and we more than matched them.

"It shows how solid we have been when we have played teams who can match us.

"I love where we are in terms of our style, how we are playing, and how we are going about our business and I firmly believe we can be driving towards that top six."

Out of the 10 matches between the two clubs, Wycombe have won two of those fixtures by 1-0 scorelines.