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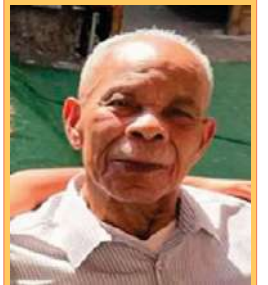
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Costumes and creativity return to Wycombe as crowds turn out for Desborough event

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Bucks battle ends 8-0

RISBOROUGH Rangers began their pre-season in terrific style as they hammered Buckinghamshire counterparts Holmer Green 8-0 on Saturday.

Taking place at the neutral venue of the Kingsbrook Academy in Aylesbury, the Reds were 5-0 goals up within 30 minutes and added two more to their tally before halftime.

They took their foot off the gas during the second period before getting their eighth midway through the contest.

It was the perfect start for the Horsenden-based team as they prepare for life in a new league.

The Reds will participate in the Combined Counties League Premier Division North after they decided to transfer out of the Spartan South Midlands League Premier Division following two years in the division.

Both leagues are at the same level (the ninth tier of English football), but instead of facing teams within the county or in the surrounding areas such as Aylesbury Vale Dynamos, Tring Athletic and Leverstock Green respectively, they will now take on sides in Buckinghamshire and Berkshire.

Chalfont St Peter, Burnham, Reading City, Holyport, and Flackwell Heath are in the division.

The season will start in August.

A good test for Flackwell

A SPIRITED Flackwell Heath side fell to a 3-0 home defeat against Maidenhead United in their second pre-season friendly of the summer.

After they defeated Basingstoke Town 1-0 over the weekend, they hosted the Magpies for a midweek clash under the lights in South Buckinghamshire.

There are currently four steps between the two sides with Flackwell occupying the fifth tier of the Non League pyramid and Maidenhead in the first, and the gulf was evident in how the Berkshire side took control of the contest.

Goals from one of their trialists, along with Shawn McCoulsky and Christian Johnson gave Maidenhead their routine win.

Maidenhead coach Ryan Peters, who once played for Brentford and AFC Wimbledon said: "The result is not what we're looking at.

"It's about getting minutes in and going away with no injuries, and we've done both of those things."

Local hero will return home



Christian was hands on during the camp in 2022 (David Howlett)

RUGBY star Christian Wade will return to his roots this summer following the success of his inaugural sports camp.

The Slough-born athlete, who grew up in High Wycombe, will once again lead the Next Gen You project in Buckinghamshire where he aims to help 12 to 16-year-olds in the area.

And despite being known for his rugby career, along with his stint in the NFL, the 32-year-old will be hosting several other sporting events over the three-day camp.

On why he wanted to lead the event, he told the Free Press: "I'm using my experiences from playing elite sports to help these young kids for what comes their way.

"One of the most important things for me was to make sure that I was present.

"There are some camps that are branded with the elite athlete's name, but they never actively ran it as a coach.

"They would turn up for photos and autographs.

"I never did them as a kid but as a young adult, even at that age, you're expecting them to teach you and they don't.

"It was very anti-climatic and I realised that it wouldn't be good for children.

"So I'll be there, and the camp is something for them to do in the summer.

"I want the kids to learn from my experiences and get to know me.

"It's not going to be your regular training camp.

"They'll be a lot going on."

By James Richings

Taking place at the Royal Grammar School in High Wycombe, the teenagers will be taught five core values.

They are to:

1. Always have respect
2. Keep everything tidy wherever you go
3. Have gratitude and be thankful for everything around you
4. Compete as you always need to be the best you can be
5. Have fun and do things that you want to enjoy

The current Racing 92 winger added: "I'll be coaching some of the sessions with other coaches too.

"Some of them I have worked with and the others are up and coming.

"We'll all mentor the children as we want them to enjoy the three days.

"Our motto is feel good, play good, game ready, and we'll be playing loads of sports.

"I was playing loads of sports as a kid such as basketball, football, table tennis, athletics, rugby and more.

"Playing multiple sports helps with the sport you want to go into.

"So even though I play rugby, we'll be doing other sports to help with stuff such as hand-eye coordination, how to work on your feet and more."

To sign your child up, go to www.nextgenyou.org.

It will take place between August 1 and August 3.



The match took place last week which saw Buckinghamshire beat Norfolk (Stock Photo/Pixabay)

Victory for Bucks over Norfolk

NEWLY-PROMOTED Bucks began their National Counties Championship campaign with a superb six-wicket victory over Norfolk in their Eastern Division 1 match at Tring Park on Tuesday.

Opener AJ Woodland sent Bucks on their way with a splendid 91 from 114 balls - his second half-century of the game - sharing a second-wicket stand of 79 with Chris Marrow (37).

Then Michael Payne, with an unbeaten 54 from 51 balls and a fluent 39 from Ross Richardson, who hit two sixes, sped Bucks to victory zeery with 4.3 overs to spare.

After winning the toss on the first day, Bucks seemed in control, when

they reduced Norfolk to 122-7.

Left-arm spinner Conner Haddow was the outstanding Bucks bowler with 5-107 from 28 overs

The home side replied with 251 all out in 71.5 overs.

Haddow returned his second five-wicket haul of the match 5-31 from 20.5 overs - for outstanding match-figures of 10-136.

Bucks's target of 244 seemed gettable on an excellent pitch and fast outfield - and so it proved as the expected rain held off

Bucks's second Championship game is against Staffordshire at West Bromwich Dartmouth, starting on Sunday June 23.

One of the very best

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield has described his assistant, Richard Thomas, as 'one of the best coaches he's ever worked with' as the duo prepare for pre-season.

The Chairboys take on Hanwell Town, Aldershot Town, Wealdstone and Cardiff City this month ahead of their opening fixture of the league campaign against Exeter City in August.

Since returning from their break, Thomas has been taking charge of the sessions whilst Bloomfield has been 'working on recruitment', and he believes that the blend between the two is 'working well'.

When asked about how he felt now their holidays are over, he told the Free Press: "I feel good and

energised.

"It was good to have a break so we could reassess and plan and I think we've used [that time] wisely.

"We're working a lot on the training ground and of course, there have been many phone calls for pre-season - it's been a busy time.

"But I couldn't have done it without Tommo.

"He's one of the best coaches I've worked with as he's unbelievable.

"He's done a lot of the planning for pre-season and has taken the lead with the sessions as he's background is coaching.

"I've done a lot of background work in terms of recruitment and planning so we work well together.

"It's great to see everyone back out on the grass."



Matt Bloomfield (left) and Richard Thomas (right) are currently preparing for the new season (Carol Mason)

Keogh on signing for Wanderers once more



He was a free agent (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Matt Bloomfield has insisted that new signing Richard Keogh is 'not here to make up the numbers'.

The centre back, who had a one-month spell with the Chairboys during the 2005/06 season, joined the club at the start of the month following his departure from Ipswich Town, where he played 16 games in all competitions.

He becomes the first official signing of the Bloomfield area, and despite being 36-years-old [the defender will turn 37 in August], the manager insists the ex-Derby captain 'is here to play'.

The manager told the Free Press: "He's proper Wycombe so he gets the club.

"He signed a week after the boys had been back, so we've got to ease him in.

"He's not here to make up the numbers as he's here to play and he's a real leader who has had a remarkable career."

On the season ahead, he added: "My aim is to always be better and improve."

"As a football club, that has to be our overall aim and of course, we've got our aims on the football pitch as well."

"However, I'm not one of those people that will shout it out from the rooftops as I think you need to be secure in what you're doing.

"We also need to get the right bodies in and prepare.

"Also, some of the other lads are still getting over injuries from last season so there have been a couple of delayed returns, so we're piecing it together."

The season will start on August 5 at home to Exeter City.

In other news, the club have confirmed two more pre-season fixtures.

They took on the Arsenal U21s in London Colney on Friday lunchtime (July 14), they same day they face Hanwell, and they'll also play Dagenham & Redbridge on July behind-closed-doors on July 18.

July 14: Arsenal U21s vs Wycombe Wanderers (behind-closed-doors)

July 14: Hanwell Town vs Wycombe Wanderers XI

July 18: Dagenham & Redbridge vs Wycombe Wanderers (behind-closed-doors)

July 22: Aldershot Town vs Wycombe Wanderers

July 25: Wealdstone vs Wycombe Wanderers (behind-closed-doors)

July 29: Wycombe Wanderers vs Cardiff City

Keogh reveals why he wanted to join

WYCOMBE Wanderers centre back Richard Keogh has revealed it was a 'no brainer' to re-join the club after having a chat with manager Matt Bloomfield.

The 36-year-old, who turns 37 in August, signed for the Chairboys after becoming a free agent following his departure from Ipswich Town in June.

His arrival at Adams Park comes nearly 18 years after he made his debut for the team under the stewardship of John Gorman.

And just like nearly two decades ago, he hopes to 'improve and learn' in Buckinghamshire.

He told the Free Press: "Matt [Bloomfield] played a massive role in me coming back as he's a great guy and that's really important.

"When you speak with someone, you want to have a good vibe and that's what I got and more importantly, he's a good manager, coach and person.

"That counts for a lot.

"Once we spoke, it was a no brainer."

On his previous spell during the autumn of 2005, where he joined the Chairboys on a one-month loan from Bristol City, he said: "It's great to be back and it's funny how football works.

"Was back here in 2005 so it shows how time in football goes so quickly, but I'm happy to be back.

"I've settled in well with the boys by putting in the hard

By James Richings

yards in and it doesn't matter how old I get, I love being out there and working hard.

"There's a good vibe around the place and it's exciting.

"I came here at the start of my career which was great for my development.

"John Gorman was manager and I came here to improve myself, not just as a footballer, but as a person too.

"That loan really helped me for when I returned to Bristol City so that's the beauty of the loan system."

Finally, on the season ahead, he added: "Of course, we're going through a transitional period, but the boss wants to put his own spin on things.

"The squad will evolve, we'll be competitive, and we'll be showing others what we can do.

"Even though I'm coming to the end of my career, I still want to learn and improve every day so I want to better myself."

The centre back is expected to make his unofficial Wanderers debut in a friendly match against Hanwell Town on July 14, which will be the first non-competitive match of the summer for the Chairboys.

They'll also take on Dagenham & Redbridge and Wealdstone behind-closed-doors, along with Aldershot Town and Cardiff City before starting the season against Exeter on August 5.



Richard Keogh played three times for Wycombe during the 2005/06 season (PA)

SPORT

0963-2336



Breckin is on loan from Man City at Wycombe (PA)

Bloomfield buzzing over Breckin as the teenager arrives in Bucks

WYCOMBE Wanderers have announced the signing of Manchester City midfielder Kian Breckin.

The 19-year-old joins the Adams Park side on a season-long loan from the current Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup holders, where he will wear the number eight shirt.

He comes the club's second

signing of the summer following Richard Keogh's arrival from Ipswich Town last week.

On signing Breckin, who is contracted with the Citizens until 2027, Wycombe boss Matt Bloomfield said: "Kian has been on our radar for a long time and we're thrilled that we've been able to bring him here."

"Scott Mitchell, our new Head of Recruitment, has done a bril-

liant job in getting the deal over the line after weeks and weeks of hard work.

"There were a lot of clubs in for him but we know that the environment we've got here - in terms of the way we are going to play and the culture of looking after and developing players on and off the pitch - makes this an attractive place for players to come.

"We're really grateful to City for making this move happen and entrusting us with one of their young talents, and look forward to seeing him blossom over the coming weeks and months."

Upon signing for Wanderers, Kian played 24 times for the Manchester City PL2 side during the 2022/23 season, where he scored 11 goals.

Luke Leahy is officially a Blue

IT'S amazing what can happen in the space of a few days.

At the start of the month, numerous Wycombe fans were panicking over the lack of signings with pre-season just around the corner.

Fast forward a week, the Chairboys have announced three new players and now, there is a wave of excitement hitting Adams Park.

Richard Keogh, a one-time Wanderers centre back with over 700 games under his belt joined on a free transfer from Ipswich Town, the exciting prospect of 19-year-old midfielder Kian Breckin has signed on loan from Manchester City, along with the ever-reliable Shrewsbury Town captain, Luke Leahy.

And what makes the latter signing even more impressive is that Wycombe attracted a player who had one year left of his contract with the Shropshire side, and managed to beat off interest from Hollywood-owned Wrexham for his signature.

It's also worth noting that Leahy was heavily linked with numerous other teams in League One before joining the Chairboys, who agreed to meet Shrewsbury's asking price after the 30-year-old had handed in a transfer request.

The Salops' director of football, Micky Moore, told the club's website: "We received numerous bids for Luke which were all turned down.

"Luke was informed about what was going on all the way through and we subsequently offered him a new and improved contract which he turned down.

"He made it quite clear that he would like a new challenge and to

Opinion By James Richings

move on to pastures new.

"But we also made it very clear to Wycombe that we would not sell unless they met our asking price.

"As a result, Luke put a transfer request in.

"Then on Tuesday, Wycombe came back and agreed to our asking price and the add-ons we wanted in the deal.

"We then granted permission for them to speak to Luke and complete the transfer."

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"Then on Tuesday, Wycombe came back and agreed to our asking price and the add-ons we wanted in the deal.

"We then granted permission for them to speak to Luke and complete the transfer."

Upon his arrival, Wycombe boss Matt Bloomfield said: "Luke has just had an outstanding season with Shrewsbury Town, and I'm delighted that he's agreed to come and join us.

"He's got a fantastic left foot, he can play in midfield or anywhere down the left, and he's got a really impressive goal return over the years."

This shows that the club are working tirelessly behind closed doors to recruit the correct players, so whilst there could be 'quiet days on social media' where no announcements are made, it's the talks in the boardroom that are getting the transfer clogs moving.

Finally, despite being a defensive player, Leahy will wear the number 10 for the club, which was last worn by Lewis Wing.



Luke Leahy (playing for Bristol Rovers) has signed for Wycombe (PA)



Harry Boyes (left) (PA)

Bloomfield gets his Boy(es)

WYCOMBE Wanderers have confirmed the signing of left-back Harry Boyes from Sheffield United.

The 21-year-old has joined the Chairboys on the season-long loan, and has been drafted in to replace the outgoing Jordan Obita who has moved to Hibernian.

He becomes the fourth new face at Adams Park this summer following the acquisitions of Richard Keogh, Kian Breckin and Luke Leahy.

Upon joining, manager Matt Bloomfield told the club's website:

"Harry's an excellent addition to our squad and I'm thrilled to bring him here on a season-long loan deal.

"He had a brilliant year in League 1 last season and gives us another option down the left, both defensively and going forward.

"He's got a real energy and determination about him which I love and he's going to fit right in here as part of a squad which is taking shape more and more each day.

"I'm really impressed by how hard everyone is working and these four new signings have added strength to what is already a fantastic squad of players.

"I'd like to thank Paul Heckingbottom and his staff at Sheffield United for enabling this move to happen and we're looking forward to having Harry with us for the months ahead."

He will wear the number 11 shirt which was last worn by Anis Mehmeti.