

Bucks Free Press

Friday, October 4, 2024

Covering Wycombe, South Bucks, Chilterns and Aylesbury since 1856

£1.60

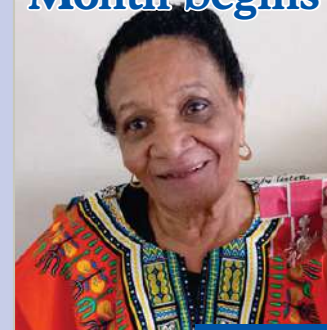
Pub sewage spill ignored for 16 months

Nightmare for couple and landlord



PAGE 21

Former nurse's hidden story as Black History Month begins



PAGE 3

Nurse, 28, died from sepsis after a 12-hour shift

Inquest told Zoe died in hospital she worked in



A 28-YEAR-OLD student nurse died of sepsis after being left waiting in A&E for almost 12 HOURS, just days after she finished a weekend of long shifts at NHS hospitals, an inquest heard.

Zoe Bell had been taking on extra shifts at hospitals in Bucks to help finance the last stage of

By Charlie Moloney

her studies, a coroner was told.

The dedicated student, who finished her last 12-hour shift on Sunday, December 18 2022, began to suffer with a sore throat and struggled to get words out.

Her boyfriend, Phillip Ayres, told an inquest into her death

that "it was not uncommon for her to be run down after a week-end of long shifts".

But she continued to deteriorate and was rushed to Stoke Mandeville Hospital, one of the hospitals where she worked, on December 23 2022.

Full story: Page 7

Library staff silenced over looming cuts



PAGE 12

WIN
£100
THEATRE
VOUCHER

PAGE 14

Wills & Probate solicitors in Wycombe | 

Amending your wishes as life changes.

Contact our Wills & Probate team today to arrange a free consultation.

kiddrapinet
SOLICITORS

01494 619973
kiddrapinet.co.uk



Sport

HOCKEY

Close-fought fixtures for Marlow sides

The Marlow Hockey Club men's 1sts had a frustrating day at Slough and had to show some grit and character to win 1-0 and come away with all three points, writes David Wiltshire.

Slough caused Marlow some problems in the first half but it never led to any threat on Marlow's goal. That said the visitors only had one clear-cut chance in the first period after Henry May was brilliantly creative to make space to shoot but then could not execute the finish. I

On 44 minutes, Dave Harding picked up the ball

just inside his own 25 and produced some outstanding give-and-go hockey which saw him score four passes later at the other end.

Marlow sit top of the table and host Oxford University next week at 11:45.

The 2nd team were at home with a team largely consisting of young players playing together for the first time and were up against a strong experienced side from Fareham, losing 5-0.

Marlow women's 1sts travelled to Southampton to play Trojans 1s in the

Conference West., losing 1-0.

Starting well and dominating possession in the first half, they linked well and earned numerous penalty corners but were unable to capitalise.

Trojans came back stronger in the second half and had the better chances while both teams were ill-disciplined resulting in cards for both teams.

Trojans earned a penalty stroke in the final quarter of the game which experienced captain Indianna Gomersall slotted past Alys Ramm.



Dave Harding proved Marlow's match-winner.

FOOTBALL

Chesham to replay for Yeovil Town Cup tie

By Andy Westlake

CHESHAM United failed to score for the first time this season as they ground out a hard-fought 0-0 draw at Bishops Cleeve in the third qualifying round of the FA Cup.

The home side had stunned Torquay in the previous round, but Chesham were well prepared on the day.

With both sides working hard defensively, it was a cagey affair that sets up a replay back in Chesham.

The home side's best effort of the game came in the third minute when defender Matt Bower burst forward and unleashed a long-range effort that beat Daniel Jinadu but came back off the bar.

Most of the game was a battle of two styles, with Bishops Cleeve adopting a more direct approach with Chesham sticking to their passing game.

Just before the half-hour mark Alex Lafleur broke away down the left and crossed to Joe Grant, whose shot on the turn flew just over.

At the other end, Isaac Pearce shot just over from outside the area but Chesham were starting to take the upper hand.

Michael Folivi and Nathan Minhas both had chances but there was nothing to separate the sides at the break.

Chesham dominated the opening stages of the second half, with Jack Connors cutting in from the right and shot just wide of the far post and then Avan Jones breaking forward and crossing but seeing the ball come back off the far post.

However, the home side came back into the game and Aaron Evans-Harriott shot over after a corner was cleared.



Chesham United hit the post in their FA Cup clash with Bishops Cleeve. Credit: Neale Blackburn

On 75 minutes, Daniel Jinadu was forced to dive to his right to push away a shot from Bryan Stalley, then Matt Liddiard headed over from Evans-Harriott's corner.

Chesham were still well in the game and Grant glanced a header wide from a Jack Connors corner.

Bishops Cleeve had the last moments of note, Evans-Harriott shoot-

ing on the turn over the bar.

After rain soaked The Meadow on Tuesday the match was postponed, with the home replay now scheduled for Tuesday, October 8 (7:45pm ko).

The winners get a home tie against former Championship side Yeovil Town FC.

*Chesham's women were on the

road in the FAWNL Plate competition on Sunday. AFC Wimbledon, playing a level above Chesham in the Southern Premier Division, were the better side on the day and progressed in the competition with a 4-0 victory.

Chesham's next game is away at QPR FC Women (at Hayes & Yeading FC) on Sunday 6th October.

FOOTBALL

Windsor are well beaten by Samurai Rovers

A much-changed Windsor side were convincingly beaten 3-0 by London Samurai Rovers on Friday at Holloways Park, Beaconsfield.

The Jacks, who won both of their previous matches 4-1, were without nine regulars due to either suspension or injury.

As a result, three debuts were given out and the hosts were unable to showcase their usual vigour.

The returning Greg Wright looked like he might add some calm reassurance in midfield, but needs matches to be at his best, Yonis Fara at left back looked really tasty at times, but Marcus Maxey had a tough start in the middle of defence - conceding the foul on the edge of the box that led to Samurai's first goal from Jacob Welna in the fourth minute, and missing a routine headed in the 42nd minute to allow Taku Jitsukawa to nip in for the visitors second goal.

Nathan Green replaced Marcus Maxey at the start of the second half, with both sides making the most of substitutions to change the mix.

To be fair to Windsor, you couldn't fault their endeavour, but endeavour doesn't equal outcomes and even though they enjoyed 60 plus percent of possession, they never really looked like scoring, despite creating numerous half chances.

Samurai on the other hand were clinical - they had three chances and scored three goals, with Taku Jitsukawa netting his second in the 78th minute. Windsor continued to press but their cause wasn't helped when Nathan Green was sin binned in the 82nd minute for dissent.

The referee played on for 95 minutes, but a three-goal deficit was just too much for 10-man Windsor to overcome in the limited time available.

Windsor return to action on Tuesday, October 8.

Rams well beaten at Holloways

Beaconsfield Town were well beaten, losing 3-0 away at Leighton Town, writes Arran White.

It was a slow start, with both teams sharing possession without creating any real chances within the opening 15 minutes. Leighton Town took the lead on 18 minutes, despite Beaconsfield's claims of handball in the build-up, with Louie Barrett slotting the ball home. There was little else to mention in the remainder of the first half. Leighton Town entered the break 1-0 up after seeing a half-hearted penalty appeal for the hosts waved away by the referee in 38th minute.

It was in the final 10 minutes of the game that Leighton Town would go on to extend their lead making it 2-0 in the 81st minute with a fine volley from Kyle Boyce before the same man made it 3-0 in the 89th minute.

Reaction to late win in the West Country for Wycombe

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield has reflected on his side's 2-1 win over Bristol Rovers at the Memorial Stadium.

The Chairboys fell behind from a well-taken goal from Scott Sinclair on 17 minutes, before a Dan Harvie stunner, which was his first for the club since his move from MK in the summer, and an injury-time header from Joe Low, secured the Adams Park team all three points.

The result means Wycombe move to seventh place in the table, whilst also recording the 12th consecutive fixture League One fixture they have scored in – a feat that has never been achieved before.

Speaking on the victory, Bloomfield said: "I wasn't happy at half time and the boys were not happy as they didn't reach the standards that they have set themselves.

"We weren't there in the first half, but, after the energy that went into the cup tie [against Aston Villa on Tuesday night], sometimes, it's hard to pick yourselves up on the Saturday and go again as silly as that sounds.

"There was a little bit of that in the first half so we weren't very happy.

"But it's very important to let people know that the boys have set themselves a standard and we must attain that in every game, and they responded so well in the second half.

"We want to play with that identity and the boys executed that well."

Following the victory, Wycombe are now the only team in England's top four divisions to score two goals a



Matt Bloomfield has won each of his last four games against Bristol Rovers since taking over in Feb 2023 (PA)

game in the league, following Manchester City's 1-1 draw against Newcastle United on the same day.

Wanderers are also just outside the play-offs, and are six points off top with a game in hand following their fixture with Mansfield Town being postponed.

Despite this, Bloomfield admitted he wants his players to have 'their feet on the ground'.

When asked if he looks at the table at this early stage of

the season, he said: "No - I'm now thinking about Barnsley on Tuesday night which is another tough game.

"Sorry to be a very boring football manager, but it's important for us to keep our feet on the floor.

"This league is very difficult and every game is on very fine margins and we just need to improve on ourselves every moment we can."

Finally, on the win, he concluded: "We would have had a penalty for a foul on Joe Low

if the ball hadn't gone in.

"To get a very late winner, from a set piece, in front of our supporters...when you're in football, you make a lot of sacrifices such as being away from your family.

"People don't care about that but these are sacrifices who face when you get into the industry.

"So to celebrate a moment like that in front of our supporters is so special and those are the moments you work hard for.

"Even though we've had some good results in recent seasons at Bristol, this is a tough place to come.

"The fans get behind their team in terms of volume, but I thought we took the noise out of them as we performed well.

"I still felt confident at half time despite an average first half display that we could get a result."

To read more about Wanderers, follow James Richings on X (@James_BFP)

CHAIRBOYS

Harvie hailed in league win

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager has praised the performance of left-back Dan Harvie following his showing in the win against Bristol Rovers.

The Scotsman scored the Chairboys' equaliser with 15 minutes to go with a stunning right-foot finish, which was his first for the club.

Wanderers then won the match thanks to a last minute strike from Joe Low.

It's the second season in a row that the former Bristol City man has scored at the Memorial Stadium in a 2-1 win for the Buckinghamshire-based team.

After the match at the Memorial, Wanderers boss Matt Bloomfield also had his say on Harvie's performance.

He said: "Dan is a very good player.

"We did a lot of work trying to bring Dan to the club, and when he was at MK Dons, he played a lot at wingback, but he can also play as a left-sided centre back.

"He has now got both sides to his game and to get him at the snip of a price we did was a bargain.

"My old teammate Russell Martin signed him at MK and I have always kept my eye on him – so when he became available in the summer, he was on that we had to go for."

FOOTBALL

Beaconsfield keep up run

Beaconsfield Town Women continued their unbeaten start, winning 9-2 away at Milton. A hat-trick from Nicole Brown, two for Dom Carrington, and one each for Katie Riddington, Sarah Davern, Lucy Casey and Mia Tomson sealed a fantastic win to keep them off the table.

Next match is away to Caversham United, Mapledurham Recreation Ground, 2pm KO.

The U18s also won, this time in the FA Youth Cup, 3-0 away to Bedfont Sports. Goals from Chukwuemeka, and Baptiste and a penalty from captain Liam Jenkins sealed the win. The draw for the next round will be held on Friday, October 4.

CONTACT US

Get in touch

IF there are any stories you would like covered, contact BFP sport at: JAMES.RICHINGS@NEWSQUEST.CO.UK OR james.earnshaw@newsquest.co.uk

FOOTBALL

Much-changed Holmer earn cup victory

A much-changed Holmer Green side beat Tadley Calleva 2-1 in round one of the Cherry Red Records Premier Challenge Cup, writes John Anderson.

From the victory at Brook House last midweek, seven of that starting XI were rested or on the bench.

Holmer matched their opponents from the kick off, but as the half wore on the visitors certainly looked the stronger. Being denied by the frame of the Holmer goal twice. The Greens' Jeffrey Fordjour had a half chance on 12 minutes, but was thwarted by the very experienced Calleva custodian. However, on 35 minutes Tadley were caught out by Tyler Sims on the stand side. Keeping the ball in play as a visiting defender tried to usher to ball out of touch, Sims cut in and squared the

ball perfectly between keeper and centre-half at the near post for Fordjour to tap in almost in the centre of the goalmouth.

Two minutes later Fordjour cleverly retrieved the ball wide of the goal, and deftly fashioned a cross to the far post where Harrison Holbrook was arriving quickly. It took two defenders a touch each, to prevent a second Holmer goal. This narrow escape saw Tadley up their game and they equalised on half-time. A neat one two on the edge of the Holmer penalty-area being well finished past the advancing Will Hamm in the Spurlands End Road goal.

Tadley again started the second half strongly, but their finishing let them down. They may have been expected to up their efforts, but

gradually their dominance was countered by Holmer.

On the hour, Hamm came to Holmer's rescue with a good parry and Kai Morgan was on hand to clear the ball, before it crossed the line or was forced in by a Tadley forward following up. The game now opened up, and it was two very late substitutions for the home side that decided the outcome. Just as the spectators started wondering if it might be extra-time or penalties to come, on 88 minutes Callum Gray replaced Lubbat. Almost instantly Gray had the chance to be the hero as Sims found him in a lot of space near the far post with a perfect and benign cross from the left. Unfortunately Gray, with almost his first touch, headed tamely over the crossbar. Sims was then

withdrawn, being replaced with Aaron Bryan. Another player very comfortable on the left. In the ninth minute of stoppage time Lancaster found Bryan in space on that left wing. James Saxby and Fordjour were in the middle of the target area. But so were four defenders and the goalkeeper. However, the presence of two attackers confused the defenders enough to allow Fordjour to make a goal-scoring move in front of his nearest defender.

After a feint towards the far post, he darted between the defenders and the 'keeper to stoop and head the perfect ball beyond the exposed goalie. A goal fit to win any game, and there was barely time to kick-off before a memorable win was confirmed.

Sport

SPORT: WANDERERS SECURE AWAY VICTORY

Harvie on Rovers win and overall display

WYCOMBE Wanderers left-back Dan Harvie admitted that his side were 'sloppy' during the opening 45 minutes in their recent win over Bristol Rovers.

The Scotsman, who joined the Chairboys from Buckinghamshire rivals Milton Keynes in the summer for an undisclosed fee, scored the equaliser with 15 minutes remaining, before Joe Low headed in a 96th minute winner for Wycombe.

Harvie's strike was on his weaker right foot, and was his goal for the club since

moving to Adams Park.

Speaking on the performance, he said: "It was a good performance overall, but I did think we started a bit slow and we weren't getting the balls in the right areas for people to do their thing.

"Maybe around 10 minutes before half-time is when we started playing good football and at half-time, we had a discussion as we knew we had to be more on the front foot in the second half.

"We knew we couldn't be as sloppy but we got better as the game went on."

On his goal, which flew into the top-left corner, he added: "I'm just glad it went in! It was a great pass from Az (Aaron Morley) as he saw me do the overlap, so it got me into position, and I'm just glad we won.

"It's always a great feeling to score in the final minute, home or away, it's just an incredible feeling."

When asked if he knew if his attempt was going in, he concluded: "At the start I did, but then I saw one of their centre backs backtrack on the line and I thought, 'please don't touch it!'"



Dan Harvie's goal against Rovers was his first for the club (PA)

ROVERS 1-2 WYCOMBE WANDERERS

Chairboys sink the Pirates with 96th minuter winner

JOE Low scored an injury-time winner as Wycombe Wanderers came back from behind to defeat Bristol Rovers 2-1 at the Memorial Stadium.

The Chairboys went into the contest unbeaten in their last four league games whilst the Gas had lost four of their previous five in the division.

However, it was the West Country outfit that looked more threatening.

It was a very quiet opening 15 minutes for both teams, but Ruel Sotiriou, Gatlin O'Donkor and Scott Sinclair worked well to create some promising moves for the home side.

And two minutes later, the latter scored to give the Pirates the lead.

A poor goal kick from Franco Ravizzoli led the ball to Sotiriou who played in Sinclair.

The former Chelsea, Manchester City and Celtic man found himself one-on-one with the keeper, before slotting it past him from eight yards.

It was his first strike of the season and his first in five months.

Wanderers offered very little in what was a very poor first half, but they did show signs of promise in the final stages of the opening 45, as Cameron Humphreys and Garath McCleary created several half chances.

The second period saw a different Wycombe come out as they began to bang on the Bristol door.

The introduction of Bez Lubala and Fred Onyedinma (his fourth Wanderers league debut), for David Wheeler and Richard Kone added some much-needed pace to the Wycombe front line.

Josh Griffiths in Rovers' goal was on hand to deny both subs

By James Richings

with their respective efforts, but he could do nothing about Wanderers' equaliser which was something straight out of the top draw.

A great ball by Aaron Morley found Dan Harvie just outside Rovers' box.

He drifted in, cut inside on his weaker right foot and bent in a terrific effort that flew past Griffiths and into the top-right corner.

It was a fantastic way to score your first goal for your new club.

Wanderers continued to look for a winner as Josh Scowen went close, whilst, at the other end, Jamie Lindsay's attempt went wide of the mark.

But the drama continued because, in the final minute of six added on at the end of the game, Harvie's corner was headed in by Low in front of the travelling away fans.

It was his first strike of the season, and it's the second campaign in a row that the ex-Bristol City man has got on the scoresheet against the Gas.

The result means Wycombe made it five unbeaten in the league, whilst Rovers made it six without a victory.

The win also means Wanderers are now unbeaten in their last eight against the Gas, winning on seven occasions.

Finally, Chairboys boss Matt Bloomfield has won each of his four matches versus the Pirates since taking over in February 2023.

Up next is Barnsley away on Tuesday night.

Attendance: 7,814 (631 away)



Joe Low scored Wycombe's winner in the last seconds as Wanderers defeated Rovers. Image: PA

SPORT: FOOTBALL

Low on his winner against former rivals

WYCOMBE Wanderers centre back Joe Low has jokingly said that if the Bristol Rovers fans 'didn't call me names', he would have refrained from scoring.

The ex-Bristol City man popped up and headed in the Chairboys' winner on Saturday afternoon, as Matt Bloomfield's side came back from behind to defeat the Gas 2-1 at the Memorial Stadium.

Scott Sinclair gave the Pirates a lead on 17 minutes in what was a very flat first-half showing for Wanderers, before a Dan Harvie screamer in and Low's latched-ditched strike in the final 15 minutes secured Wycombe all three points.

It's the 12th consecutive league game the Chairboys have scored in – their longest run since being in the EFL, and the victory has lifted Wanderers into the play-off places.

Speaking on the win on September 28, Low, who also scored against Rovers last season, said: "Once again, I'm here and they [the Bristol Rovers fans], gave me a bit of stick, so it was nice to get the winner in the 96th minute, as that feels a little bit better [than last season]."

His goal in the dying embers can in a frantic goal mouth scramble, as some thought the strike hadn't been given.

It has always been revealed that if Wanderers hadn't scored, they would have been given a penalty after Low was pulled back as he went for his last-minute header.

It was his first goal of the season, as Wycombe made it eight unbeaten against the Gas in all competitions, winning on eight occasions.

He continued: "My adrenaline was going quite fast to remember [the incident that led up to the goal], but I was told [by the referee] after it had gone, we would have been given a penalty if we didn't score.

"There were so many bodies, but I managed to find my way through and get on the end of it."

It was a tale of two halves in the West Country as Wycombe started flat, but improved in the latter stages of the opening 45.

The introduction of Bez Lubala and Fred Onyedinma at the start of the second period injected much-needed pace for the Chairboys, as they began to take control of the contest.

On Bloomfield's message at half-time, Low said: "He was probably a bit disappointed in how we started and we all knew it.

"We didn't start the way that we wanted to, and it was up to us to go out and prove that we can do it."

Finally, on the fans and on his winner, he concluded: "Our fans were brilliant and maybe if they [the Rovers supporters] didn't call me names I might not [have scored against them again]."

The 22-year-old spent 14 years at Bristol City, but only played one first-team game for the Robins.

SPORT: FOOTBALL

Wanderers team up with security company



They are now community partners with Wycombe Image: NA

FIRE and security systems expert, Falcon Fire and Security has signed to become a Community Partner with Wycombe Wanderers.

The deal, with sports rights specialist, Eleven Sports Media, will support the Falcon brand going forward, allowing the family-run company to engage with a wider customer base and raise its profile in the local community.

Falcon will be given access to a range of marketing prospects across multiple fan engagement platforms.

The fire and security professional will benefit from its branding being displayed throughout Adam Park, including the high-impact, Pitch-Facing LED and across Eleven's award-winning platforms, StadiumTV and StatTV.

The company will also have the chance

to expand its digital reach as Falcon's branding will feature on Eleven's online StatZone content, appearing on the official Wycombe Wanderers social media channels, via platforms including Facebook and X.

Tom Crowne, Director of Falcon Fire and Security, said: "Our Community Partnership with Wycombe Wanderers is a natural extension of our commitment to quality, service, and community."

"With customers and team members connected to the local area, including some overlooking Adams Park, the partnership felt like a natural fit."

"We're excited to cheer on Wycombe Wanderers and look forward to seeing the positive impact this partnership will have for both our business and the community we serve."

WANDERERS

Reaction to draw in Yorkshire

WYCOMBE manager Matt Bloomfield believes his side have had 'a nice start to the season' following the 2-2 draw at Barnsley.

The Chairboys lead twice at Oakwell on Tuesday night thanks to strikes from Bez Lubala and Richard Kone, only to concede their advantage on two occasions.

The result means Wanderers sit just outside the play-off places, after eight games played, in which they have scored twice in every league match so far this campaign.

They have also gone a club record 13 league games in which they have scored in.

The last time Wanderers drew a blank was in the 0-0 home draw against Derby County at Adams Park on April 10.

Speaking on Wycombe's draw in South Yorkshire, Bloomfield said: "On balance, it was probably a fair result but in reality, we want to see the game out."

"We have to respect the point because this isn't an easy place to come but we have to expect to win in that situation."

"Barnsley are high energy and make it difficult to play a free-flowing game but we had good moments and stood up to their physical threat."

"Our young defenders especially played very well."

"Lubala brings such intensity and energy, took his goal from a great cross. Kone came on and really gave us a goal threat and competition off the bench is only a good thing."

"They had too many moments towards the end from corners."

"Two, three, four corners in a row often indicates the inevitability of a goal being conceded."

"We were the smaller side tonight, so I thought we did excellently at the end from set plays - it was just unfortunate that one found the back of the net."

"We want to keep adding to our points total and there's plenty to work on after a nice start to the season."

For Barnsley, the draw means they sit one place and one point above the Chairboys at this very early stage of the season.

Manager Darrell Clarke, who has promotions with Bristol Rovers (twice) and Port Vale, added: "Credit to the lads for getting back into the game and I can't fault the effort and application but I expect more and want more."

"We have to produce more quality and be sharper with the ball."

"We have to show more confidence moving forward into the final third."

"It's up to us as staff to work with the boys to ensure the performances are more consistent in that area."

"There were a lot of fives and sixes tonight and I expect sevens and eights."

"We need to keep chipping away to get better."

SPORT: FOOTBALL

Wheeler up for Green Sports Awards Athlete of the Year

WYCOMBE Wanderers' David Wheeler has been nominated for the BBC Green Sports Awards Athlete of the Year.

The utility player, who recently played his 200th game for the club in the 2-1 away win at Bristol Rovers, is a well-known advocate in promoting environmental-friendly lifestyle choices.

This year's awards will be presented by journalist and television presenter, Qasa Alom, and the winners of every category, except Athlete of the Year, will be announced on October 7 on the BBC Sport website at 6am.

Athlete of the Year will then be unveiled live on The One Show on BBC One and iPlayer from 7pm that evening, before being celebrated at the special awards event at the BBC Radio Theatre.

Those in attendance on the evening will include some of the world's leading experts in sport sustainability, as well as some of the top sporting names who are advocating for a greener sector.

The nominees for the awards

have been confirmed:

Athlete of the Year
Jamie Farndale Imogen Grant
Cameron Norrie Amy James
Turner David Wheeler

World Athlete of the Year
Rhydian Cowley Jessie Fleming
Pragnya Mohan Chris Paul
Sofie Junge Pedersen

Evergreen Athlete of the Year

Chris Boardman Adrian 'ACE'
Buchan Lewis Pugh Alexandra
Rickham PLY Melissa Wilson

Elite Organisation of the Year

Extreme E Paris 2024 Professional
Footballers, Australia
World Athletics World Rugby

Grassroots Organisation of the Year

Clean Water Alliance Cricket
for Climate The Green Runners
Pledgeball Surfers for Climate

Alex Kay-Jelski, Director of BBC Sport says: "It is incredible to see such strong competition in each category - a real testament to the hard work being done in each respective field to encourage sustainability in sport."



David Wheeler (right) will find out if he wins the award on October 7 Image: Rhianna Chadwick/PA Wire

Autobiography on Wycombe hero up for award

AN autobiography belonging to a Wycombe Wanderers cult hero has been nominated for an award.

Simon Garner, who spent two years with the Chairboys where he played his part by helping the club win the 1994 Division Three play-off final, released his book, 'One Last Shot', 12 months ago.

It received rave reviews from fans of the Adams Park side, as well as with supporters of Blackburn Rovers and West Bromwich Albion, two sides that Garner also played for.

The former striker is Rovers' all-time record goal scorer, with 194 strikes between 1978 to 1992.

His novel has been nominated for the annual William Hill Sports Book of the Year.

Speaking on his nomination, Garner said: "I am just happy to be nominated, to be honest."

"It's very nice."

"I enjoyed doing the book, it brought back a lot of memories, things I had forgotten all about until I had to really think about my time playing football."

"I have been really pleased with the response to the book from supporters and I am glad that I have been able to provide a little more entertainment."

"I can't do it on the pitch any more so it's nice to do it this way."

"Good luck to all those who have been nominated."

Garner scored 194 goals in all competitions for Blackburn Rovers, in a career that began as an apprentice in 1976 and lasted until 1992 when he was sold by Sir Kenny Dalglish following promotion to the new Premiership.

After a stint at West Bromwich Albion he was signed by Martin O'Neill to help Wycombe Wanderers reach the old Second Division, and later forming a formidable strike partnership with ex-England international Cyrille Regis.

The William Hill Sports Book of the Year - also known as The Bookies - is an annual British sports-writing award that was first presented in 1989 and is considered the most valuable literary sports-writing prize.

For more information, www.simon-garnerbook.co.uk

SPORT



Wheeler on milestone and late away league victory



David Wheeler played his 200th game last weekend (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers utility player David Wheeler has reflected on his time at the club after making his 200th appearance for the Chairboys.

The 34-year-old reached the milestone in the recent 2-1 away victory at Bristol Rovers which he started, before he was taken off just after half-time for Bez Lubala.

He joined Wanderers in the summer of 2019 following his departure from QPR, but played for MK on loan from the West London team ahead of his move to Adams Park.

Speaking on his achievement,

Wheeler told the Free Press: "These things creep up on you as it doesn't seem like that long ago I arrived here.

"But to play 200 games for a club like Wycombe across League One and the Championship is something I'm proud of.

"I want to keep playing and keep contributing."

Out of his 200 matches for the club, he has started on 125 occasions and has scored on 19 occasions.

Some of those strikes have come in the second tier, whilst others have come in much-needed Wycombe wins.

In fact, Wheeler could be regarded as a good luck for the Chairboys, as Wanderers have only lost on four occasions when he has scored.

In that time, Wycombe have secured 12 victories and three draws when Wheeler has got himself on the scoresheet.

On his strikes, he said: "Scoring a couple of goals in the Championship, like the header against Cardiff, the goal against MK in the season we got promoted, the goal against Fleetwood... there are a few that stand out.

"There are some nice goals in there

and hopefully, this can be a season where we can do something."

Finally, on Wanderers performance against Bristol Rovers, which was only his third appearance of the season, he concluded: "They [Rovers] started well as they tested us by playing it long and it stretched us.

"We didn't really settle on the ball as much in the first half, even though we caused a couple of issues here and there.

"But we were so much better in the second half and that pressure eventually told.

Wanderers' Sam Vokes on his highs and lows

THE Bucks Free Press has teamed up with Sky Bet to speak to Wycombe Wanderers forward Sam Vokes about his time at the club so far.

The Welshman joined the Chairboys in the summer of 2021 and has played a huge role in the club's recent successes.

This includes scoring on 17 occasions in his debut season as the Adams Park side reached the 2022 League One play-off final.

We asked him the following five questions:

How did your move to Wycombe in 2021 come about?

"I was at Stoke at the time and it was a time when I wasn't playing as much as I wanted.

"I remember that pre-season I was on the bike in the gym and Gareth Ainsworth popped up on my phone explaining that he knew I was looking for a move and that he wanted to sign me.

"That got the ball rolling, and it escalated from there, and within a couple weeks, I was down at Wycombe training with the team."

You came into the Wycombe team and performed brilliantly in your first season - was that the release you needed to start enjoying football again?

"Joining Wycombe when I did was that opportunity to get back to enjoying football again.

"At the time, I was getting frustrated at Stoke with my lack of playing time, so for me, it was a good chance to rest.

"I came in, joined a great dressing room and I loved it in my first season. "Baring that last game of the season in the play-off game against Sunderland, which was a tough one to take, we were close to promotion that year."

What have been the highlights of your time at Wycombe so far?

"One of the highlights of my time at Wycombe is from my first season in the two play-off semi-finals.

"The first leg was against MK Dons

Exclusive by James Richings

at home, and I managed to score the second goal, then we went to their place and did a job there, so those two semi-finals were great moments.

"The final was a great event, but losing is never nice and it was a tough one to take."

How different are Gareth Ainsworth and Matt Bloomfield's styles when it comes to tactics, and when the latter took over, how did you find the adjustments?

"Losing Gareth Ainsworth and gaining Matt Bloomfield was quite a smooth transition.

"The manager now had played under Ainsworth for several years, so he knew the club inside out.

"I think slowly, over the last year, he's implemented his own ideas on the team, dictating how we want to look and how we want to play, so I think that's started to come out.

"The club is going to make a lot of changes in the next couple of years so it's an exciting time."

What was it like to play with Adebayo Akinfenwa

"Bayo was a huge presence in the dressing room, within the squad and with the role played, so it was great to have him in and around the team.

"We didn't get to share the pitch too many times together, it was one or the other with us.

"We did have one game together, away at Fleetwood, and I remember where somehow I was playing off the left and he was playing off the right, so we had a strong frontline that day.

"Bayo was great and embedded what Wycombe was about at the time and the success the club had over the years are down to people like him."

Visit www.skybet.com/football/skybet-league-one/10005381.



Sam Vokes has scored 30 goals in 139 matches for Wycombe since he moved to Adams Park from Stoke City in 2021 (PA)

Chairboys and Tykes share the points

WYCOMBE Wanderers scored for the 13th league game in a row as they drew 2-2 away at Barnsley on Tuesday night.

The Chairboys looked to be the better of the two sides in the opening 45 minutes with the best chance of the half falling to centre back Caleb Taylor, but he looped his header over the crossbar.

But Matt Bloomfield's side eventually took the lead moments into the second period, as Bez Lubala fired home after being assisted by Kieran Sadlier.

It was his first goal in the league this season but his fifth overall.

Going a goal behind seemed to wake Barnsley up, as striker Sam Cosgrove slotted the ball past Franco Ravazzoli just three minutes later, but the assistant referee had his flag raised for offside.

Luca Connell almost hit back immediately for the home side, striking a post with a fizzing left-footed effort, before Tykes boss Darrell Clarke made two changes and was rewarded with substitute Stephen Humphrys' cool, right-footed finish in the 58th minute.

The game was posed for a winner and Wycombe thought they got it with five minutes remaining, as Richard Kone put Wanderers back in front with his fifth of the season, before Marc Roberts struck a late equaliser with one minute left.

The result means the Chairboys have kept up their record of scoring two goals per game in the league this season, as they sit two places and one point off the play-off places.

The club are only behind Birmingham City (17) with the most goals scored in the league this season (16).

Up next is a home match against Crawley Town on Saturday, which is the first league encounter between the two teams since March 2018, and the first with both sides being in the third tier of English football.

The previous six encounters have all been in League Two (2015 to 2018).