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SPORT: A lot to look forward to with new signings

An exciting future ahead for Wanderers



Ollie Pendlebury. Pic: Reading FC

Pendlebury the first signing

FORMER ROYALS STAR, 19, PENS A DEAL TO JOIN DEVELOPMENT SQUAD

WYCOMBE Wanderers have completed their first signing of the summer as midfielder Ollie Pendlebury pens a deal with the club.

Pendlebury is a former England under-16 captain and signed his first professional contract with Reading in January 2019.

He featured once for the first team at Reading losing 1-0 in an FA Cup tie against Luton last season.

The defensive midfielder spent the majority of his time playing for the Royal's under-23s making 11 appearances.

The 19-year-old will now join the Chairboys' development squad which is led by Sam Grace, who previously worked with the youngster at Reading.

Grace said: "Ollie is a really talented youngster who has made excellent progress over the past couple of years, and it's great to be able to bring him to Wycombe Wanderers.

"I first saw him playing at Marlow as an eight-year-old and his determination and qualities on the ball were apparent even back then.

"It's been fantastic to see his career develop ever since.

"It's an exciting time for the club to be going into the second year of the development squad, with more players coming through the door this summer, and we're confident of going from strength to strength over the coming months and years."

Meanwhile, former Wycombe midfielder Dennis Adeniran has been released by his parent club Everton.

The 22-year-old spent last season on loan with the Chairboys in their first campaign as a Championship side.

He played 22 times for Gareth Ainsworth's men and failed to score, but impressed following his debut against Swansea in September.

Following his release from Everton, it is not known if Wanderers are going to take up the option to sign the former Fulham man on a permanent basis.

He started off his career with the West London side and played five times for the Cottages, scoring once in the 2016/17 season.

A move to the Toffees followed.



It's a great time to be a Wycombe Wanderers fan. Photo of Adams Park by PA

THE Couhigs took over the club back in February 2020 but they continue to impress Wanderers fans at Adams Park with their refreshingly ambitious and positive approach.

Some owners at other English clubs have completely distanced themselves from the fans this year with proposals to join a breakaway European Super League.

But that couldn't be further from the situation in south Bucks.

The Trust retained a 25 per cent share in the takeover and former chairman Trevor Stroud has kept a seat on the club's board.

There have been talks of introducing the Bundesliga's 50+1 model to English football after the 'top six' parted ways with the breakaway league.

The model sees 51 per cent of the voting majority in the fans control meaning they have the majority when it comes to any and all deci-

By Jamie Cameron

sions.

Even though Wanderers are not quite following that model, the Couhigs have shown they are conscious of the fans' voice.

Rob and Pete Couhig and the rest of the board are determined to put the club in the best position it's ever been in and they've hardly put a foot wrong so far.

In particular, Chief Financial Officer, Pete, has endeared himself to many supporters with his understanding of fan culture and his presence in the away end at several games in the 2019-20 campaign.

On and off the pitch, the club is almost unrecognisable from the takeover point in February 2020, with a maiden season in the Championship under the belt allowing for several improvements.

Although still in its early stages,

the development squad is coming along nicely and the addition of Ollie Pendlebury this week should be the first of many with the size of the group set to be doubled.

It's one of many long-term strategies put in place that ensures there will always be competition for places in the first team.

Rob Couhig is clinging on to a glimmer of hope that Wycombe may be reprieved of relegation - but with fixture release day on the horizon, that will surely signal the end of any survival chances.

That won't be a cause for disappointment though as record season ticket sales are expected, depending on Covid-19 restrictions.

Fans visiting home games in the coming seasons will enjoy a massively enhanced matchday experience and it could be the difference that turns a casual fan into a season ticket holder.

Adding some top players to one of

the best squads in Chairboys history looks a real possibility this summer too, because of the larger-than-usual budget at Gareth Ainsworth's disposal.

The owners have given him the platform to do his usual excellent recruitment at a higher level, and with some of the names being linked already, it could be a very exciting few weeks of arrivals.

Those new signings will be pleased to see an improved training facility, which is undergoing a much-needed lift into the modern era.

Rob Couhig also confirmed there are plans to move to a new state-of-the-art training facility in the coming years, with Little Marlow tipped to be the preferred location.

All in all, putting the pandemic to one side, it's a great time to be a Wanderers fan - and under the stewardship of the Couhigs, the club looks to be in great hands for years to come.