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SPORT

GA: 'We don't sign d-heads'

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth has praised both Brandon Hanlan and Sam Vokes following the club's 1-0 victory over Ipswich Town.

Hanlan's goal just before the break was enough to secure the Chairboys' first win over the Tractor Boys, who visited Adams Park as the league leaders in League One.

His return to the starting 11 in recent weeks has meant Vokes has had to take up a place on the substitutes bench, but despite the change in system, Ainsworth has hailed the attitude of both players.

Speaking to the press after the win at Adams Park, Ainsworth said: "I am as pleased with Brandon Hanlan as I am with Sam Vokes because Sam has been on the bench, and he has accepted it."

"When I told him [Vokes], he said to me 'if that's what it takes gaffer, then it's OK' and that's brilliant."

"We've got a fantastic spirit amongst the players here at Wycombe, and I've said it before...we don't sign d-heads."

"Both of those players [Hanlan and Vokes] are the kind of ones you want as a manager."

"Sam wants to start and he will without a doubt but at the moment, Brandon has taken his chance and has given us something different that teams can't cope with it."

Moving out on loan

TWO Wycombe players have had their loan deals extended with Non League teams.

Adams Leathers, who was once on the books at Leicester City, will stay with Hampton until the new year after initially joining the club on a one-month deal.

The news was confirmed on December 15, which was the same day that striker, Ben Kaninda, has moved to Hanwell Town in the Southern League Premier Division South.

The youngster arrived at Adams Park in the summer after leaving Shrewsbury Town, and made his debut in the Papa Johns Trophy tie with Tottenham Hotspur U21s in August.

Other development players that are currently out on loan in the Non League include Luca Woodhouse and Arnold Matshazi who are Slough Town, Connor Parsons at Solihull Moors, Antonie Makoli and Chesham United, Christie Ward at Hungerford and Jasper Pattenden and Dorking.

Chairboys beat the Tractor Boys



Max Stryjek was rarely tested in the match at Adams Park, but he did make a brilliant save in stoppage time to deny Freddie Ladapo an equaliser (PA)



Gareth Ainsworth was pleased with how Wycombe saw out the game against Ipswich on December 17 (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth has admitted that extra motivation was added ahead of the club's clash against Ipswich Town on December 17.

In what was the Chairboys' highest-attended home game of the season so far with 7,602 people in attendance at Adams Park, with 2,612 fans being in the away, the Tractor Boys were given additional tickets for the fixture back in November.

The decision was met with a mixed reception, as the move allowed the spectators from Suffolk to not only sit in the away end but also in the Franks Adams and PreSounus stands.

The move made it one of the largest away days for Adams Park since its opening in 1990, and Ainsworth has since revealed what the former Premier League side made their presence known in Buckinghamshire.

Speaking after the win, he said: "There was a bit before the game when the Ipswich players were spilling out into the dressing room, as they bought more equipment here than I have ever seen another team bring."

"They were stretching in the corridors and my boys were stopping over them."

"My boys took that as a little bit of a whack as they thought 'this is our place, this is our home so don't take over.'"

By James Richings

"I know we sold a lot of tickets as their fans travel incredibly well and that helps us financially."

"If this fixture was five years ago, there would be 9,000 people here for a third round FA Cup tie."

"Now, we're in the same league we are on the same playing field."

"This is Wycombe Wanderers and in a way, we're still looked like as this club that people should be beating, but, sometimes they go away from here thinking, 'how did we not beat them?'"

"And that's because my boys are a special group of players and lots of people have said that the 'Wycombe bubble has burst' after the sticky period we had at the start of the season no chance."

"We're bulletproof and as long as I'm in charge, these boys will give it their absolute all in every single game."

"But Ipswich are a huge and brilliant club and they deserve to be respected."

The result was only Ipswich's seventh league loss in 2022 and the first time they had not scored in a league fixture since the start of the season.

To read more about the latest Wanderers news, visit www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/sport or follow James Richings on Twitter: @James_BFP.

Ainsworth's analysis after Ipswich victory

GARETH Ainsworth has revealed that Wycombe's performance against Ipswich on December 17 reminded him of last season's play-off semi-final victory over Milton Keynes.

Brandon Hanlan's goal against the Tractor Boys was all that separated the two sides at Adams park, which has moved the Chairboys up to seventh.

The victory has also knocked Ipswich from first to second, with the result being Town's first league fixture of the season where they failed to score.

It was also only their third loss in League One since July.

Ainsworth said: "The game

reminded me of MK away in the play-offs last season."

"We defended unbelievably well [today] and they didn't feel the pressure."

"Alfie Mawson being in the heart of defence is so inspirational as he is just incredible to be in the team."

"Dominic Gape is back, Sam Vokes is back from injury, Chris Forino is back and it'll take time for us to be back, but I just want to say it's looking pretty good at the moment."

"Of course, one win doesn't make a season we have some really consistent performances over the last few weeks."

"We had a plan and we executed it."



Kieran McKenna (pictured) celebrated his first anniversary as Ipswich Town manager with a defeat against Wycombe Wanderers (PA)

McKenna is praised

GARETH Ainsworth has praised Ipswich Town boss Kieran McKenna after Wycombe defeated the league leaders 1-0 at Adams Park.

Brandon Hanlan's amazing solo goal on 40 minutes was all that separated the two teams in what was Wanderers' first win over Town in their history.

It ended a run of four games without a victory against them, in which they had scored just two goals prior to the triumph on December 17.

Speaking after the match, Ainsworth said of McKenna: "Kieran is a fantastic manager and he is at a

fantastic football club.

"Anyone who finishes above Ipswich or Sheffield Wednesday deserved to be promoted as they are two huge, awesome, and great clubs."

"But we're on a level playing field as we're in the same league and it was a great performance."

Finally, on squad selection and injuries, Ainsworth concluded: "Ryan Tafazolli, Sullay Kaikai, and Tjaj De Barr were all absent with illness.

"Anis was ill midweek but was fit enough to play."

Up next is Bristol Rovers at home on Boxing Day.

Alan Parry previews Boxing Day clash

WYCOMBE gave their fans the perfect Christmas present when they beat league leaders Ipswich Town last week, can they now provide them with a Boxing Day treat by defeating Bristol Rovers?

With another big crowd expected at Adams Park on Monday, December 26, Wanderers have the added incentive of knowing that a win could propel them into the play off places.

The victory against an Ipswich team which had lost only one away game this season saw the Chairboys move to within two points of the top six.

Brandon Hanlan's brilliant solo goal was followed by a defensive master class and those social media critics who were predicting a relegation battle just a few weeks ago have suddenly gone quiet.

There are big challenges ahead, including top three opponents Plymouth Argyle and Sheffield Wednesday in the coming weeks, but on their day Gareth Ainsworth's men are a match for any team in the division.

Next up are old foes Bristol Rovers, the clubs having met forty-one times over the years with honours almost even.

Wanderers won the last meeting 3-1 at Adams Park in February 2020 thanks to goals by Bayo Akinfenwa, Darius Charles, and Matt Bloomfield.

The current Rovers team are only one point below Wycombe in the table and their record suggests we could be in for a Boxing Day goal feast.

Only four teams have scored more than Joey Barton's side, but their goals against column is one of the worst in the division.

Wanderers record of four clean sheets in the last five games is sure to be put to the test by one of the league's hottest attacks, but they also have the attacking talent to cause problems for a leaky Rovers defence and send Chairboys fans home happy in the final game of the year at Adams Park.

Midfielder Wheeler named Champion For Earth 2022

DAVID Wheeler has been crowned the Champion For Earth 2022.

The Wycombe midfielder was given the award for inspiring and demonstrating action in the climate and nature emergency.

Wheeler has been outspoken on holding the FIFA World Cup in Qatar for its environmental impact.

He also declared he would not play football in a shirt sponsored by any petrochemical company.

He said: "I was initially afraid to speak out because of the way you can be attacked with accusations of hypocrisy.

"I thought I needed to be perfect first, but I learned that it's not just about individual changes, it's system changes which are needed."

"I am honoured to have been recognised by my fellow athletes."

Hanlan is the hero as Wycombe win



Brandon Hanlan got the winner just before the break as Wycombe recorded their first win over Ipswich in five attempts of trying (PA)

BRANDON Hanlan's first goal since February saw Wycombe Wanderers defeat Ipswich Town 1-0 at Adams Park to register their inaugural victory over the Suffolk team.

In what was a very close opening period, the Chairboys nearly took the lead inside the first 10 minutes as Jason McCarthy's attempt was blocked, whilst Lewis Wing's header was easily saved by Christian Walton.

Wanderers continued to allow Ipswich to have the ball and get in behind, as Obita's cross was flicked towards goal by Brandon Hanlan, but Walton again did well to keep out the first-time effort on 17 minutes.

The Tractor Boys came to Adams Park as league leaders and you can see why they are favourites for automatic promotion, as their patient 'pass and move' play put Gareth Ainsworth's men on the back foot.

This tactic saw Freddie Ladapo hit long-range shot just over the bar, whilst Max Stryjek was there to deny Conor Chaplin on two occasions.

But the possession meant nothing as Hanlan scored the winner just before the break.

With five minutes left of the half, the former Bristol Rovers man won the ball around 25 yards out from goal and ran towards the box.

He beat four players and brilliantly placed the ball over a diving Walton as the Chairboys went into the break 1-0 up.

By James Richings

It was his first strike for Wycombe in 301 days, since the 5-5 draw against Cheltenham Town in February at Adams Park.

Ipswich threw the kitchen sink in the second half as Kayden Jackson, Kyle Edwards, Sone Aluko and Chaplin all going close.

The league leaders continue to search for the equaliser as in the final few seconds of stoppage time, they thought they had rescued a point, but Stryjek brilliantly denied a looping Ladapo shot and a Wes Burns thunderbolt.

It was the first time Ipswich had failed to score in a league game this season, and the first they had not scored at Adams Park.

Wycombe sit in seventh place, two points off the top six.

Attendance: 7,602 (2,612 away)

Wycombe's next fixtures:

Dec 26: Bristol Rovers (H)
Dec 29: Plymouth Argyle (A)
Jan 1: P'borough United (A)
Jan 14: Sheffield Wed (H)
Jan 21: Bristol Rovers (A)
Jan 24: Oxford United (H)
Jan 28: Fleetwood Town (H)
Feb 4: Port Vale (A)
Feb 11: Derby County
Feb 14: Accrington S (A)
Feb 18: Bolton Wanderers (H)
Feb 25: Shrewsbury Town (A)
Mar 4: Exeter City (H)
Mar 11: Burton Albion (A)
Mar 18: Barnsley (H)
Mar 25: Charlton Athletic (A)

SPORT



The winger with his prize at Wanderers' training ground

McCleary's magic in the West Country wins monthly award

WYCOMBE Wanderers winger Garath McCleary recently won the Sky Bet League One Goal of the Month winner for November.

The 35-year-old picked up the prize in the club's 2-0 away win over Forest Green Rovers on November 12, in which he bagged the second goal of the game.

His strike on 27 minutes saw

the ex-Jamaican international bend the ball with the outside of his right foot from just outside the penalty box.

The strike was scored in front of the travelling Wanderers faithful.

Speaking on picking up the accolade, McCleary said: "I'm over the moon to win this award and I'm really grateful to everyone who voted for me.

I've never won this award before so it's a proud moment.

"It's my best goal for Wycombe, and in my top three of all-time I think.

"Apparently it's called a Trivela but I've never heard that phrase!

"I just caught it nicely with the outside of my boot and I knew it was flying in.

"Jack Grimmer made a

great run down the right to move the defender out of the way and gave me the opportunity to shoot."

Sky Sports pundit Don Goodman said: "There's always something extra special about a long-distance strike with the outside of the foot and, if anything, the ease with which Garath pulled it off underplayed what a superb goal it was."

Ainsworth has new Xmas plan

GARETH Ainsworth has revealed his side will "try something different" this year in a hope of an upturn in fortune after disappointing festive periods in recent years.

The Wycombe manager described the club's points tally in recent Christmas and New Year period as "slim pickings" but he is looking to rectify that in the next week or so.

Wanderer's last Boxing Day victory came five years ago in a 2-0 win over Newport County in 2017.

In the years after, Wycombe have only picked up five points out of a possible 33 on games played throughout Boxing Day and New Year's Eve period.

The Chairboys will play three games in six days facing Bristol Rovers, Plymouth and Peterborough in the hectic schedule.

Bristol Rovers and Plymouth currently sit in the two positions below Wanderers who sit seventh whilst Plymouth will be looking to stay top of the tree past throughout the period.

Ainsworth will likely give the players Christmas Day off to spend with their families with the Bristol Rovers game at Adams Park the following day.

Planning has already been made by the Wycombe boss as we wait to see how the Chairboys navigate the group of fixtures.

He said: "It is one of the few times you have to really plan forward over the three games, not just the one game, and that's really tough.

"Whoever comes up with football fixtures historically has really made Christmas difficult for football staff, we are in everyday.

"I may give them Christmas Day off because a lot of people have

By Robert Folker

families here and a lot of travellers but the rest of the days right up to January 1, we will be in.

"There will be no days off here. We make sure we plan right, we are going to have something in place that is probably a little bit different this year than we historically have done.

"We have looked at it, Christmas has been slim picking for us over the years, so we are going to try something different but I'm looking forward to how all the teams approach this.

"It's nine points in six days, that's how we look at it, how many can we get."

He revealed that the club would remain sensible in the January transfer market admitting some teams around Wycombe in the table will be looking to spend.

Ainsworth continued: "I am sure there will be teams spending in January, some big spenders, people trying to gamble for that Championship. We won't be doing that.

"We will be steady as always, I like to get my ship in order early in the season so I can get through the whole season and not panic in January."

Discussing the long-standing festive schedule, Ainsworth believes he has become "institutionalised" to the period of fixtures around Christmas time.

He added: "From 16 years old I have not been out of this game, Boxing and New Year's Day have been standard working for me in my working life. I have never had the chance to really have Christmas off. I'm lucky because that means I have been in football all my life."



Gareth Ainsworth on the touchline (PA Media)



Chris Forino in action (PA)

Positive update on Forino

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth has provided an update on centre back Chris Forino.

The 22-year-old, who has scored two goals in 16 appearances this season, has not featured for the Chairboys since the club's 2-2 draw against Port Vale on November 1.

Forino was replaced at half-time with a leg injury, and has missed the last five games which have resulted in two wins, two draws, and one defeat.

Speaking to the press ahead of Wanderers' home match against Ipswich Town on December 17, Ainsworth said: "Chris has recovered from his dead leg, he is back on the training pitches and it's just a case of when I pick him for selection.

"At the moment, we've had a couple of clean sheets and have defended really well, so, the more time we can get Chris' match fitness up, the better because of the number of games we have got over the Christmas period.

"Considering we had around nine out at the start of the season, we have now got most of our players back so the injury room is looking quite empty which is good to see.

Forino's return to the frame has come in the same week he committed his allegiance to play international football for the Eastern Caribbean country, Saint Lucia.

Ainsworth added: "I am so proud of any player [at Wycombe], that can go on and play for their country."