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# Bucks Free Press

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Owner left devastated as car ploughs into restaurant causing significant damage

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## SPORT

## Season finale is moved

WYCOMBE Wanderers' final league fixture of the season has been pushed back by one day.

The Chairboys were due to take on Portsmouth at Fratton Park on Saturday, May 6, but the match against Pompey will be played on Sunday, May 7 with a 12.30pm kick-off time.

The decision to reschedule the game to Sunday is due to the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III taking place on Saturday, May 6.

This means all of the 12 League One fixtures will be played on May 7, whilst the fixture in the Championship and League Two will be played on Monday, May 8.

Out of the 17 matches between the two clubs, nine have taken place at Fratton Park with Wycombe being victorious on two occasions.

However, those wins have both come in cup competitions, which means the Chairboys have never won a competitive fixture at the ground.

On Wycombe's last visit to Portsmouth in March 2022, David Stockdale pulled off several important saves as it finished 0-0 on the South Coast.

## Berks & Bucks tie confirmed

WYCOMBE Wanderers will take on Bracknell Town or Newport Pagnell in the quarter-finals of the FA Berks & Bucks Cup.

The tie, which will be played away from home, will be played before March 1.

Last season, the Chairboys were eliminated in the semi-finals stage by Ascot United.

If Wanderers were to face Bracknell, it will be the second time that they would play the Berkshire outfit this season, following a pre-season friendly that took place in July last year.

The match finished 2-0 to the Robins with the Chairboys XI being compiled with a team of trialists - some included Antoine Makoli and Ben Kaninda who went onto sign for Wycombe.

Despite winning the competition a record 28 times since its inception in the 1878/79 season, Wycombe have not won the cup since the 2011/12 campaign.

The reigning champions for the Berks & Bucks Cup are Reading.

# Moore grateful for Ainsworth's praise



Gareth Ainsworth (left) praised Darren Moore (right) following the match that took place on January 14 at Adams Park (PA)

SHEFFIELD Wednesday manager Darren Moore has thanked Wycombe Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth for his 'kind words' following last weekend's match.

The Owls defeated the Chairboys 1-0 at Adams Park and following the result, Ainsworth stated that Wednesday 'will be crowned Champions of League One' come the end of the season.

The Yorkshire outfit currently sit second in the table, just three points off first-place Plymouth Argyle.

GA on Sheffield Wednesday: "We lost to the champions of League One this season."

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

Moore's side are also on a 20-match unbeaten run across all competitions.

Speaking to the press ahead of Sheffield Wednesday's home match against Fleetwood, which will be the first of two games against the Cod Army in a week, Moore said: "I am thankful for Gareth and his kind words."

"For someone who has been at the same club for well over a decade, what he has done at Wycombe by building them and giving them a platform is nothing short of magnificent."

"Wycombe have been superb under his stewardship."

"I always like spending time with Gareth because I get realism from him."

By James Richings

"I get continuity from his experience and, as we both played against one another as players, and we've both gone into management, he is still this person who is so consistent at what he does."

"He is very honest, true and his words are something I am very thankful for."

"His Wycombe team will certainly be in this shakeup [at the top of League One] because they are a good team."

"I expect them to keep being strong and in terms of his words, I hear it, I understand it, but in my professional state, I am able to put it in a container and carry on because you can only do what you can do."

Wycombe's overall record against Sheffield Wednesday:

2022/23: Wycombe 0-1 SWFC  
2022/23: SWFC 3-1 Wycombe  
2021/22: Wycombe 1-0 SWFC  
2021/22: SWFC 2-2 Wycombe  
2020/21: SWFC 2-0 Wycombe  
2020/21: Wycombe 1-0 SWFC  
2011/12: SWFC 2-0 Wycombe  
2011/12: Wycombe 1-2 SWFC  
2003/04: SWFC 1-1 Wycombe  
2003/04: Wycombe 1-2 SWFC

To read more of the latest Wycombe Wanderers news, please visit [www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/sport](http://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/sport).

Alternatively, you can follow @James\_BFP on Twitter for more Chairboys related content focusing on current news and history.



John Mousinho (playing for Wycombe in November 2009) has become Portsmouth's new manager - his first job in management

## Ex-Chairboy takes over at former PL club

FORMER Wycombe Wanderers midfielder John Mousinho has been appointed as the new manager of League One rivals, Portsmouth.

The 36-year-old, who spent two seasons with the Chairboys between 2008 and 2010, has taken over the hot seat at Fratton Park following the sacking of Danny and Nicky Cowley at the start of this month.

The appointment at the former Premier League club means Mousinho has officially retired from the sport as a player.

He had spent the last five-and-a-bit seasons with Wanderers' Thames Valley rivals, Oxford United, playing 146 times.

One of those appearances was against the Chairboys in the 2020 League One play-off final, which Wanderers won 2-1 at Wembley Stadium.

Speaking on his new job, the ex-Wycombe player said: "The club and I share similar ambitions and we're focused on delivering the short and long-term success that the supporters here deserve."

"I want our team to play on the front foot, with aggressive and attacking football that will win games and entertain the fans."

Mousinho played 79 times and won promotion to League One in 2009 with the Chairboys.



# Thank you, Mr Couhig

GARETH Ainsworth has revealed that the club's owner, Rob Couhig, is to thank for Wycombe Wanderers' rescheduled match against Oxford United going ahead.

The Chairboys defeated their M40 neighbours 2-0 on January 24, 17 days after the two sides were originally supposed to have met.

United were due to take on Wanderers on January 7, but Oxford's FA Cup fixture against Premier League leaders, Arsenal, on the same weekend meant their date with Wycombe would need amending.

The new date for their trip to Adams Park was also in doubt due, as games across the football pyramid have been postponed due to frozen pitches.

Speaking after the 2-0 victory over Oxford, the manager said: "We have got to thank Rob Couhig for the game going ahead.

"He left the undersoil heating on a few more days longer than he needed to because I asked him if we could put a session on the pitch.

"The training ground is frozen, half the boys cannot train on 4G as it wrecks their joints, so he switched the heating on for us.

"Football clubs are not exempt from these crazy heating bills and that will cost us a lot of money, so everyone can thank Rob Couhig [for the game going ahead], and Pete [Couhig] has also been over.

"He played a crucial role in that too, and it's great to have people who will go the extra mile."

## Midweek trip to the Pirates is confirmed



The Memorial Stadium (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers' away fixture at Bristol Rovers has been moved to a new date.

The Chairboys were penned to face the Pirates on Saturday, January 21, but due to an 'unsafe playing area' at the Memorial Stadium, the match was postponed.

However, a rearranged date has been confirmed, and Wanderers will head to the West Country to take on Joey Barton's men on Tuesday, March 14 with a 7.45pm kick-off.

In a brief statement regarding tickets, Wycombe said: "All tickets purchased for the original date will remain valid for this fixture.

"If you are unable to attend, please keep hold of your physical ticket and details about refunds will be available later this week."

So far this season, six of Wycombe's league matches have been moved to a new date, which includes the final match of campaign against Portsmouth.

Originally scheduled for May 6, it will now be played on May 7 to avoid clashing with His Majesty King Charles III's official coronation.

## Winger leaves for north of the county

WYCOMBE Wanderers have confirmed the departure of winger Sullay Kaikai to Buckinghamshire rivals, Milton Keynes.

The 27-year-old, who played a total of 33 games across an 18-month spell at Adams Park, joins the League One strugglers after having his contract with the Chairboys cancelled by mutual consent.

He leaves with two goals to his name for the club, with his strikes coming against Wigan Athletic and Accrington Stanley in February 2022 respectively.

Both fixtures ended in defeats for Wanderers.

A club statement read: "Everyone at Wycombe thanks Sullay for his efforts, and wishes him every success for the future."



The undersoil heating was used for a few extra days at Adams Park to ensure Wycombe's game against Oxford went ahead on Jan 24 (PA)

# Vokes ends goal 12-game goal draught



Sam Vokes (pictured in March 2022) scored his first goal in 12 games as Wycombe defeated Oxford 2-0 on January 24 (PA)

GARETH Ainsworth believes his Wycombe Wanderers team are 'a worthy rival' to Oxford United following the Chairboys' 2-0 victory over their Thames Valley neighbours.

First-half strikes from Sam Vokes and Anis Mehmeti secured the three points for the Adams Park side, as the club completed the double over the Yellow for the first time since the 2000/01 season.

The win now lifts Wycombe into seventh place just two points off the play-off spots.

They have also kept six clean sheets in their last 10 league matches.

Speaking on the match, Ainsworth said: "I thought we deserved the win because the boys pressed really hard.

"I changed formation to having a four at the back, because I had a feeling that Oxford might change formation too.

"They did a really good job against Ipswich [on Saturday] who are a very good team.

"They had chances but we shut them out really well and we have done that quite brilliantly recently.

"Everyone was superb from your Grimmer's, to your Tafazolli's, to your Wheeler's, Scowen was fantastic again, and Oxford, I think now, look at Wycombe as a worthy rival.

"For years, Wycombe were this little team down the road that they can always beat with Swindon being their number one ri-

By James Richings

val.

"But I think it's fair to say that Wycombe can be a match for them, and I am proud of that as we're fighting at the top end of League One when 10 years ago, we were near the bottom of League Two."

On the performance of Sam Vokes, who ended a 12-game barren run with scoring, Ainsworth added: "He should be touching double digits already this season.

"There have been a few that have been disallowed and I can't understand why, but for someone who scored 17 last season, I do believe Sam will have a purple patch and get to double digits very soon."

Finally, with no game until February 4, the boss once again revealed that the midweek schedule is a 'negative' for his preparation.

Ainsworth concluded: "It's a negative for me as I don't want these midweek fixtures in February and March as you have got no time to prepare but as a player, you just want to play.

"I used to love playing Saturday, Tuesday, Saturday, Tuesday as I felt I could play forever, but give me a week's break in between so we can prepare.

"It's a lot different for a manager."

Wanderers' next match is away at Port Vale one of Ainsworth's former clubs, in 10 days time.

# SPORT

0963-2336



David Wheeler in action against Cambridge in 2022 (PA)

## Popular Chairboy on helping those with mental health issues

WYCOMBE midfielder David Wheeler has encouraged those who are battling with mental health issues to 'talk to more people' to help find 'solutions and answers.'

The 32-year-old, who is now in his fourth season with Wanderers, has openly spoken about his battles with anxiety, and how it impacted the early stages of his career.

The right winger revealed to the BBC in November that he 'didn't address' his ongoing issues until suffering from several panic attacks in public places.

Now in a better place, Wheeler hopes that talking about his experiences can have a positive outcome on others facing similar circumstances.

He told the Free Press on January 19: "One of the funda-

mental things that will help you improve your mental health and help you recover from anxiety, depression, and addiction is sharing your experiences and realising that other people might be going through the same thing.

"I found out through my anxiety when it was quite extreme that, I didn't really truly believe that anyone else was experienc-

ing what I was experiencing on that level.

"So, I think that it's really important to talk to more people about these topics the more likely you are in finding solutions and answers.

"There is still a long way to go but it's good to see that people nowadays are a lot more accepting and open in talking about certain issues."

# Transfer update at Adams Park

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth has revealed that 'one or two' players could join the club before this month's transfer window comes to an end.

The Chairboys are yet to sign any new faces this January, whilst forward players in Connor Parsons, Ali Al-Hamadi, Sullay Kaikai and Daryl Horgan have all left the Adams Park outfit.

So when asked if Wycombe could be dipping into the transfer market after his side's 2-0 victory over Oxford United on January 24, Ainsworth said: "Only for the right price for the right player - I will never put this club in jeopardy.

"I could be that manager that could ask for an extra £1,000 a week for a player, but I know where this club was all those years ago.

"I scrimped, saved, and did other jobs because we had nothing at one stage.

"I would not want to put Wycombe back there and Rob [Coughig], has been superb with me in that aspect.

"I would never take advantage of someone by saying this could work or that could work.

"We work really well together so if we do bring someone in, it will be the right person at the right price."

In terms of more departures, Ainsworth added: "There could be one or two that could be going out, as there are a couple of boys who are on the fringes that need some games.

"I've got about 23 players that I can rotate with, and I am real-

By James Richings

ly happy with where the squad is at the moment.

"We may bring in one or two, but don't hold your breath as this is Wycombe Wanderers."

Finally, Ainsworth has revealed he is 'banking on keeping' Anis Mehmeti this transfer window.

The 21-year-old, who has scored nine goals in 27 league outings this season, has been one of the division's best players following some brilliant strikes and individual performances.

His recent goal in the 2-0 victory over Thames Valley neighbours Oxford, along with an assist, will no doubt add value if any potential lookers come along for the Albanian.

Ainsworth said: "We are banking on keeping him.

"He is a sensational player and I do believe he will play at the top level.

"But at the moment, he is enjoying his football at Wycombe and speaking to his representatives and his family, he loves it here.

"For someone who joined us from Non League and his first season with us was in the Championship, he has grown from strength to strength.

"It's a pleasure to coach someone like him, and he'll be the first to credit his teammates who have given him the platform to do what he does."

Since joining Wanderers in 2020, Mehmeti has scored 19 goals in 97 matches for the club.



Anis Mehmeti (pictured in 2020) has been linked with a move away (PA)



Tjay De Barr in action (PA)

## A return for Tjay De Barr

WYCOMBE Wanderers' 2-0 victory over Oxford United on Tuesday night was a momentous occasion for numerous reasons.

The win over the Chairboys' Thames Valley rivals made it five unbeaten against the Yellows, they have kept four clean sheets over the U's in the last four games, and Wycombe are now two points off the play-off places.

But one moment surpassed all of the achievements above, as the derby win saw the return of striker Tjay De Barr following his collapse at Plymouth Argyle on December 29.

His cameo appearance for the final few moments on January 24 was the perfect way to end what was the perfect night for Wycombe, as the Gibraltar international has fully recovered from his medical episode from nearly one month ago.

Speaking on his return to the squad, manager Gareth Ainsworth said: "It's a great moment for Tjay.

"You look at what happened in America with the lad in the NFL (Damar Hamlin) and Tjay had a serious whack on his chest and everyone was worried.

"Moments like that make you realise what football is about.

"It's a fantastic sport, a brilliant game, but it is no way near as important compared to life and death.

"So to see Tjay give his all and have a smile on his face during his spell on the pitch was great to see."