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SPORT

Wanderers' 'off day' at Bolton W



Nick Freeman (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers midfielder Nick Freeman has stated that the club's 3-0 defeat away at Bolton was an 'off day' for the club.

The Chairboys were second best throughout the match at the University of Bolton Stadium as two strikes from Kyle Dempsey either side of an Aaron Morley strike gave the Trotters their first-ever goals and win over Gareth Ainsworth's men.

It ended a run of four straight victories and clean sheets for the Buckinghamshire side over their Greater Manchester opponents.

Freeman, who came on for the second consecutive week as a substitute following his 11-month absence due to injury, said: "It was tough, they are good team, and we weren't at our best."

"The gaffer said that it's all about what you do in the tough times that matter."

"The good times will always seem easy and bubbly, but during the tough times, it's all about sticking together."

"It was an off day and we will be alright but credit to Bolton as they are a good side."

Wycombe are now 11th.

Nick on his long await return

WYCOMBE Wanderers midfielder Nick Freeman has revealed that 'really missed' playing football following his long injury lay-off.

The 26-year-old, who is now in his seventh season at Adams Park, tore his anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in the Chairboys' 1-0 win over Lincoln City in August 2021.

He told BBC Three Counties Radio: "It feels good to be back."

"I had a good off/pre-season, I feel as I'm back to normal now and it's just good to be back with the boys, travelling, being involved and playing in the league again."

"That's something I really missed from the last year or so."

"We are a team but as an individual, I want to perform to my best as well and show the gaffer what I can do."

"But it feels so good just to be back with the lads again."

Bolton blow the Chairboys away

By James Richings

WYCOMBE'S 14-game unbeaten run in the league has come to an end as they lost 3-0 away at Bolton Wanderers.

A brace from Kyle Dempsey and a strike from Aaron Morley gave the home side their first goals and first win over the Chairboys at the fifth attempt, which saw Wycombe be second best throughout.

Despite the away side having the game's first chance when Wheeler's cross was palmed away by James Trafford, the Trotters were quick out of the traps and did to Wanderers what they did to Burton last week.

On 15 minutes, they took the lead through Kyle Dempsey with what was his first goal of the season.

He was found by Conor Bradley on the left-hand side, and the 26-year-old took one touch and placed it beyond Tyla Dickinson from 15-yards.

In his first appearance of the season, it was his first goal for the club.

Bolton continued to push Wycombe's backline to no end as Amadou Bakayogo, Dapo Afolayan, and Aaron Morley all tried their luck.

Wycombe responded as Lewis Wing hit the post on 27 minutes, whilst Josh Scowen tested James Trafford with two first-time efforts.

However, the Chairboys going forward meant they were exposed at the back.

This allowed Afolayan to produce a stunning cross-field pass to find Morley, who took one touch before placing it under Dickinson five minutes before the break.

That's his second goal in two games.

This came moments after Anis Mehmeti saw his close-range



It wasn't Wycombe's day as they lost 3-0 away at Bolton for the first time in their history. This means in the five matches between the two, five clean sheets have been kept (four for Wycombe and one for Bolton)

header go over the bar.

Wycombe improved in the second period as Wing, Garath McCleary and Mehmeti all tried their best to Gareth Ainsworth's men back into the contest.

But MJ Williams and Ricardo Santos were on hand to thwart and attack in the centre of Bolton's defence.

The game was wrapped up mid-way through the second half when Dempsey's first-time shot went beyond Dickinson to make it 3-0.

The rookie keeper was on hand to deny Dempsey his hat-trick in the final 10 minutes with a terrific save from 10-yards, but in all, the game belonged to Ian Evatt's

men.

In each of the five matches between the two, five clean sheets have been kept.

To read more news on Wycombe Wanderers FC, follow James Richings on Twitter (@James_BFP) or visit the Bucks Free Press website (www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/sport)



Gareth Ainsworth spoke about his side's performance against Bolton (PA)

Frustration after lacklustre display

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth believes his side created 'some real good chances' despite his side's 3-0 loss away at Bolton.

The Chairboys were 2-0 down by half-time thanks to goals from Kyle Dempsey and Aaron Morley before the former got his second of the afternoon around the hour mark.

Bolton could have had more if it wasn't for rookie goalkeeper Tyla Dickinson making some important saves and if the Trotters hit the target.

Despite the defeat, Lewis Wing hit the post for Wycombe whilst Josh Scowen also tested James Trafford in the Wanderers goal, but the day belonged to Ian Evatt's men.

Speaking on his side's performance, Ainsworth said: "The boys gave me everything, and there are a few things that I will need to touch on which we will talk about in the week."

"But Bolton took theirs and that's the story of the first half but I will get the boys up and running again for

next week."

On being compared to playing like Burton the week previously, which saw them beat the Brewers 3-0 at Adams Park, Ainsworth said: "We created chances whilst Burton didn't create anything."

"We created some really good chances and scoring them would have been a real plus."

Finally, on the performance of Tyla Dickinson, he concluded: "There were a couple of goals that I don't think he could have done much with."



Richard Dobson on Jasper Pattenden after Wycombe's win over Northampton in the Carabao Cup (PA)

Impressive performance

RICHARD Dobson has praised the performance of young Jasper Pattenden after the 20-year-old made his competitive debut for Wycombe Wanderers.

The central midfielder played the whole match in the first round Carabao Cup victory over Northampton, as the Chairboys defeated the Cobblers 2-1 at Sixfields Stadium.

However, Pattenden, who signed this summer from Non League Worthing, started the game in the right-back position.

But Dobson revealed that despite being played out of position, Pattenden had no issues being pushed out on the flanks.

The assistant manager said:

"At times, you're going to have to do that.

"When you get a sending off, people will need to play out of position, but the key thing is, is that they just get on with it.

"Jasper Pattenden was asked to play at right back and he said straight away that he will do it no problem.

"He's straight out of Non League, has had a season of men's football and even though he is a kid, he's a man in a kid's body still.

"He's bright and I think he's been a breath of fresh air since coming into the club, and I am delighted for him to play as well as he did tonight out of position."

Alan Parry's previews for Shrewsbury Town at AP



Gareth Ainsworth (PA)

BACK to earth with a bump. After the euphoria of their convincing opening day victory over Burton Albion, Wanderers crashed to their heaviest defeat for nine months in a disappointing 3-0 defeat at Bolton Wanderers.

Gareth Ainsworth accepted responsibility for the setback, admitting that his tactics and team selection failed on a day when Wanderers were second best all over the pitch.

It was hard to believe it was pretty much the same team who had performed so well against Burton just seven days earlier, the only changes seeing Jordan Obita preferred to Joe Jacobson in defence and Lewis Wing for Daryl Horgan in midfield.

The trip to Bolton was always going to be a much tougher task than a home game against Burton, but it was the manner of Wycombe's defeat that led fans to take to social media with criticism of the club's inactivity in the summer transfer market.

The immediate concern is finding a solution to their problems in time for a difficult set of fixtures in the opening month of the new season.

Wanderers face away games at newly promoted Exeter City, who had a thumping 4-0 win in their first home game against Port Vale, and Barnsley, who were playing in the Championship last season.

August is rounded off with the visit to Adams Park of Charlton Athletic, 1-0 winners against Derby County last weekend.

It makes the home game against Shrewsbury Town on Saturday (August 13) so important even at this early stage of the campaign. Lose this, and those fixtures become even tougher.

In stark contrast to Wycombe, Shrewsbury were busier than any League One club in the summer transfer window with seven new signings and the departure of nine senior players including former Chairboys defender Aaron Pierre.

They have recruited experienced men who have all played at a higher level, the likes of Taylor Moore (Bristol City), Tom Bayliss (Preston North End), Jordan Shipley and Julian da Costa (both Coventry City).

However, the Shrews have had two disappointing results so far, drawing away to Morecambe and losing at home to Accrington and they have yet to score a goal.

Dobson's analysis on League Cup win



Wycombe's assistant manager Richard Dobson took charge of the Chairboys' 2-1 win over Northampton Town (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers' assistant manager Richard Dobson spoke highly of his young team after they defeated Northampton Town 2-1 in the first round of the League Cup.

A wonderful Joe Jacobson free-kick and a brilliant D'Mani Mellor strike, which was his first for the club, gave the Chairboys a comfortable lead at half-time.

Louis Appere won and scored a penalty in the final 15 minutes for the Cobblers to give Wanderers a nervy ending, but they managed to hold on and secure their first win in the competition inside 90 minutes since December 2006.

The Wycombe starting line-up saw 10 changes from the defeat at Bolton, with Jack Wakely, Jack Young, Jasper Pattenden, Mellor, and Ali Al-Hamadi all making their first starts for the club.

Speaking to the press after the match, Dobson, who stood in for manager Gareth Ainsworth after the latter attended a family event, said: "We are delighted to have got into the next round and we decided to change things up a bit.

"I asked a few of the young players to step up.

"I told them that this wasn't a pre-season friendly as this was a game that matters, and they need to learn how to win games at this level.

"We played a very good Northampton side that will be near

By James Richings

the top end of League Two without a doubt, and I thought our boys played very well."

On the changes made, Dobson explained: "I'm all for youth and developing young players and it is important for the club to have that as part of their growth.

We've seen the likes of Anis Mehmeti and Chris Forino come through and we want the others to follow through, such as Tyla Dickinson this season.

"It was an opportunity for them and I told them that they need to take this opportunity.

"They are a strong/good side, so I said to the boys that they needed to match that and we did.

"When Northampton got the penalty, you start think, 'ok, what are we made of?' and we actually grew which was very good to see.

"I was delighted with the first half as we were solid, both goals were a moment of class and in the second half, they were at us but even after they scored, we were the better side and that pleases me a lot."

The last four matches between the two sides have taken place in cup competitions with Wanderers winning each of those four encounters.

One of them was a League Cup match in 2018, which the Chairboys won 7-6 via a penalty shoot-out at Adams Park.

SPORT



Alfie's 'happy' return back to Adams Park



Wycombe are in round two (PA)

Bristol City awaits in the League Cup

WYCOMBE Wanderers will play Bristol City in the second round of the League Cup at Adams Park.

The draw was conducted on August 10, a day after the Chairboys defeated Northampton Town in the previous round.

This will be the third time that both clubs would have faced each other in the competition, with all three fixtures taking place at Adams Park.

Coincidentally, both the previous games finished 1-0 wins for the Robins.

In the previous match between the two, Wanderers won 2-1 thanks to an injury-time penalty by Adebayo Akinfenwa in April 2021 - It was his only Championship goal for the Chairboys.

The match will take place on August 24 at 7.45pm.

Returning to the frame after injury

THE return of several key players from long-term injuries was a major boost in Wycombe's 2-1 away win at Northampton Town in the League Cup.

Needing to respond from the underwhelming display against Bolton Wanderers on August 6, 10 changes were made to the starting 11 with Tyla Dickinson being the only one to keep his place at Sixfields.

Coming into the starting line-up were Nick Freeman, Tjay De Barr, Jack Young and Jack Wakely to name a few, with those four names all recovering from long-term injuries.

Each of those four players played tremendously in Northamptonshire, and assistant manager Richard Dobson was quick to point out their 'mental strength' as part of their recovery process.

Speaking to the Free Press at full-time, he said: "As someone who has suffered from injuries myself, I know how difficult it can be and it's not just the physical toll of returning from injury, it's the psychological toll too after being out for so long, as you want to be part of something but you can't. There was a great enthusiasm, as the squad played with a lot of energy because they knew that we weren't good enough at the weekend."



Alfie Mawson re-joined the club on August 11, seven years after leaving Wycombe the first time round for Barnsley in the summer of 2015

By James Richings

WYCOMBE Wanderers have confirmed the signing of Alife Mawson on a one-year deal.

The 28-year-old joins the Adams Park club following his release from Fulham this summer, after several months of rumours linking him back to his old stomping ground.

Mawson previous spell with the Chairboys came in the 2014/15 season where he played 50 times for the club, scoring seven goals, whilst on loan from Brentford.

Each of those strikes came in his final 15 games of the season, as he helped Wycombe reach that year's League Two play-off final, which they would lose to Southend United.

This was in his first-full season as a

Football League player, where he also received numerous accolades which included winning the club's Player and Young Player of the Year awards.

Speaking on his move back to Adams Park, Mawson said: "I'm really happy to be back.

"It's been in the pipeline for a little while.

"I've been in contact with the gaffer [Gareth Ainsworth] and Dobbo [Richard Dobson] for a little while, so when the opportunity came about to come in a train, I told the gaffer that I didn't really "want to leave.

"So it was a decision that I was happy to stick with."

Since leaving Wanderers seven years ago, Mawson's stock increased that within two years after playing League Two football, he was a regular in the Premier League.

Moves to Barnsley, Swansea City and Fulham followed between 2015 and 2018, but the last four years at the West London side have somewhat stalled a soaring career.

He played 52 games for the Cottages in that time, where he also had an underwhelming spell with Bristol City in the 2020/21 campaign.

Speaking on his recent injury woes, he added: "I wish my body felt the same from a few years ago, but I loved my time here.

"It played a massive part in my career and it got me to where I thought I would never be a few years later, and I'm grateful to be back and I hope to repay the club with the trust that they have given me."

Mawson's arrival is the fifth new player Wanderers have signed this summer. He continued: "The club has got

much bigger and I'm happy to be part of this project.

"I'm just looking forward to kick on and working with the players such as Chris Forino.

"He has got loads of potential, Jack Wakeley too and I want to enjoy working with them and see the hunger they've got when I was their age."

Manager Gareth Ainsworth concluded: "He always said that this was the place that he enjoyed his football the most.

"He has had his fair share of knocks with injuries so we will manage him in the right way to get the best out of him.

"But to have Alfie Mawson in a Wycombe Wanderers squad is brilliant and we asked for patience with the signings, and I hope the fans will jump on this.

"We hope to get the best out of him."