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# Bucks Free Press

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## SPORT

## Big dreams for athlete

PARA-SHOOTER Paul Barker is embracing the path to a potential Paralympic place.

The Stoke Mandeville-based star, 39, has been shooting since he was a child and has been a part of the British Shooting programme since 2019, training in Buckinghamshire in recent years.

And having had a first taste of significant silverware in 2022, Barker is now ready to push on - and see if he can one day achieve his dreams of making a Paralympic Games.

He said: "Everybody would like to get to the Paralympics. Whether that's achievable I'm not sure, but it should be if I can keep picking my rifle up and achieving good scores.

"The Paralympics is my main goal, but I'm just enjoying the journey and seeing what competitions become available.

"I'm trying not to get too ahead of myself, because I know the next competition is Hannover at the end of the month. I know it's going to be even tougher there.

"With it being my first international competition, it's going to be a different experience, travelling down there.

"I've got to go down there to get my international classification, but it's just to give myself a bit of a measuring stick if you'd like, to see how good I am against all the other nations."

## Free fixture for teens

AYLESBURY United will allow under 16s to watch their match against Ware for free.

The fixture, which will take place on April 22 at the Meadow, is help youngsters in the area.

The town's Mayor, Cllr Tim Dixon, who is leaving his post this year, said: "I wanted to provide a fun day out for all of our residents in the town.

"This will be one of my final engagements as the Mayor and I wanted to celebrate a year with you.

"Aylesbury United, the supporters' trust 21st Century Ducks, and the club's fans have been brilliant in helping the Mayor's 10 Tonne Challenge, and have raised more than £3,500 alongside some pretty big food donations at a game earlier in the season and at the club's quiz night for Aylesbury Foodbank."

# Rugby comp is a good success



The Papa Johns Community Cup will hopefully be a big hit (Sportsbeat)

AYLESBURY Rugby Club chair Paul Milham believes the new Papa Johns Community Cup has breathed new life into the club's season as players and fans dream of cup glory.

Aylesbury won in dramatic fashion in the first round of the inaugural competition, beating Witney 32-31 to set up a home tie against Newent on Saturday 15 April in the next step on the road to Saracens' StoneX Stadium.

After a hugely successful day both on and off the pitch, Milham hopes there are some more magical cup moments in store.

"We made a day of it for the minis and juniors and had a really good crowd," said Milham.

"Twenty-five of our minis formed a tunnel and applauded Witney onto the pitch, which was a nice touch, then they ran on with our guys as mascots.

"We wanted to make a thing of Cup day to encourage more people down to the club. We've been encouraging parents to come down for a match day for years and basing it around the Cup worked well.

"The kids were buzzing, and a lot of the parents said they couldn't believe how good it was. They didn't know what to expect from a match day and loved it, so they said they'd come again which is brilliant."

It was not just the spectators who got swept up in the drama of the cup at Ostler's Field, with the players too having an extra spring in their step at the start of the inaugural Papa Johns Community Cups.

"Cup rugby is different, it's special because at this level it's a knock-out - you can't miss any chances," he said.

By Ben Hart

"It brings another level of intensity. Players came off the field saying it felt different too. They couldn't believe how loud it was.

"Unlike leagues, where you get a chance to right your wrongs, in the Cup you get one shot, if you mess it up, you're done."

According to Milham, Witney more than played their part in a fantastic contest which ebbed and flowed one way and then the other before the hosts triumphed at the death.

"We know Witney, our second XV are in the same league as them, they're a great club and always good company, so we knew we were in for a good day on and off the pitch," he said.

"They scored the first points, we then came back, and it went to and fro.

"Witney scored with what we thought was the last play of the game, but it wasn't, the ref blew again.

"A reversed penalty on our ten metres gave us the opportunity to kick for a lineout. The lineout was sound and what must have been a 14-man-maul ensued which saw us go over in the last play of the game."

Milham is looking forward to welcoming Newent to Ostler's Field this weekend, with both sides hoping their journey will continue towards Saracens' StoneX Stadium in north London, where the Papa Johns Community Cup concludes for those vying for the South Plate. There is still a lot of rugby to play, with close to 500 grassroots clubs in 24 competitions taking part in the new end-of-season finale.



Wycombe have defeated Peterborough twice this season with an aggregate (NQ)

## Points deduction for rivals after breaching rules

ONE of Wycombe Wanderers' play-off rivals has been given a suspended three-point deduction for failing to comply with EFL Regulations.

Peterborough United, who sit in fifth place on 70 points, three places and five points clear of the Chairboys, were also given a fine of £50,000.

The points deduction is suspended until December 31 this year.

The punishment follows an investigation by the EFL into the appointment of David Paton as the Club's Chief Executive Officer in January 2022.

The Posh failed to declare Paton as a 'relevant person' as per the requirements of its regulations.

The Cambridgeshire-based team then acted in the role without receiving written authority from the EFL.

In addition, Peterborough allowed Paton to act as a relevant person despite him being subject to a disqualifying condition.

As a result of this, Paton has been banned from being a relevant person for a period of two years.

His suspension came into play in May 2022.



Wycombe have failed to score in their last three visits to Portman Road - losing two of those matches (PA)

# Good Friday turns bad

WYCOMBE Wanderers had a Good Friday to forget as they lost 4-0 away at Ipswich Town.

First-half strikes from George Hirst and Conor Chaplin, along with a Wes Burn goal and a Freddie Ladapo penalty in the second period, succumbed the Chairboys to their 14th league loss of the season in a fixture they were second best.

Wanderers let Kiarnan McKenna's side have the ball and soak in the possession during the opening 45 minutes, which eventually gave Ipswich the lead on 38 minutes, through Hirst.

He rose the highest to head in a Leif Davis corner to register his fourth goal in as many games. Seven minutes later on the

stroke of half-time, Ipswich doubled their advantage through Chaplin.

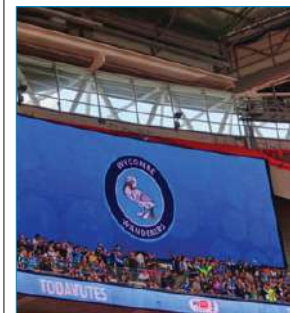
His low finish beyond a statuesque Stryjek was his sixth in eight matches.

The second 45 was a continuation of the first, with the Tractor Boys wrapping up the win inside the opening 12 minutes thanks to a well-taken Burns strike.

His first-time effort flew past Stryjek, as he registered his second goal against Wanderers in as many seasons.

Ladapo then made it 4-0 with 15 minutes remaining from the penalty spot, after Josh Scowen bought down Kyle Edwards in the box. Attendance 28,511 (643 away).

# Alan Parry's Previews: The final five fixtures



Five games remain (Carol)

THE countdown has begun and with just five games left to play Wycombe are still in contention to claim a place in this season's League One play-offs.

Ahead of their trip to strugglers Morecambe on Saturday, April 15, Wanderers occupy eighth place in the table, but victory in Lancashire could see them move into the top six if other results go their way.

The Chairboys are only three points behind Bolton Wanderers, who are away to an Oxford United team unbeaten in their last four games under new manager Liam Manning.

Wycombe can reach eighty points by winning all their remaining games, but even if they do, their fate is out of their hands as Barnsley, Peterborough United, Bolton, and Derby County can all surpass that total.

Realistically, Matt Bloomfield's men know that now only wins will do, and they cannot afford any more slip ups like the Good Friday hammering at Ipswich Town.

They bounced back by beating bottom club Forest Green Rovers on Easter Monday and now face another relegation threatened team in Morecambe, who have spent most of the season in the bottom four.

They have only won seven of their forty-two games in League One and look destined to drop back to League Two after a couple of seasons at the higher level.

Morecambe have gone ten games without a win, losing six of them and only Forest Green Rovers have conceded more goals.

However, they do have a better home record than nine clubs in the division and have held promotion contenders Bolton Wanderers, Derby County and Portsmouth to draws at their Mazuma Stadium.

Their away record is a different story - the worst in the division - but they took a point from Adams Park back in October, 2022 despite going a goal behind when Chris Forino scored from a Garath McCleary cross.

They grabbed a controversial late equaliser through Adam Naylor with Wycombe's players adamant that the ball had not crossed the line.

That was one of six games in which the clubs have shared the points since their first meeting in 2007 with Wanderers winning 10 and Morecambe only five.

# Feeling good after Forest Green win



All of Matt Bloomfield's wins as Wycombe manager have ended 2-0 since he took over from Gareth Ainsworth in February (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield has reflected on his side's 2-0 home win over bottom-of-the-table Forest Green Rovers.

The Easter Monday fixture saw a Chem Campbell header, and a Charlie Savage own goal, seal the victory for the Chairboys, as they sit in eighth place on 65 points - three points off the top six with five games to go.

The gap at the start of the day was at five points, but an injury-time equaliser for Cambridge United against Bolton Wanderers, coupled with Derby County's draw against Milton Keynes, has now given Wanderers a huge chance in reaching the play-offs for the third time in four years.

Bloomfield said: "I'm so pleased.

"The boys have been sharp in training over the last couple of days, they had a spring in their step, they had smiles on their faces and they were great.

"It's what I've asked for and it's what they've given me.

"I hoped they would follow up on how good they've been in training in today's game and they did.

"We had many opportunities as Wheels had one go across the box, we went up and down the hand side hand and I thought Dave has been great in that role this season.

"He's got intensity in how he plays so that was good for us.

"We got our goal, the game then went into a bit of a lull, but it was

By James Richings

good to see it out with the second. "We've had a lot of talk on how we can improve and of course, we want to put that into action.

"The boys care about each other, the team, and this club, and we want to keep ourselves right in the fight for the play-offs. "So I'm really pleased with how we went about the game."

Up next is Morecambe away on April 15.

Wycombe's team against Forest Green Rovers

1. Stryjek
2. Grimmer
3. Jacobson
5. Forino
26. McCarthy
7. Wheeler
10. Wing
27. Campbell
28. Scowen
29. De Barr
18. Hanlan

- Substitutes**
38. Cartwright
  16. Willis

- Unused substitutes**
38. Cartwright
  16. Willis

To read more about the latest Wycombe Wanderers news, go to [www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/sport](http://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/sport) or follow James Richings on Twitter (@James\_BFP).

# SPORT

0963-2336



Chris Forino was named MOTM on April 10 (PA)

## Fantastic Chris Forino impresses again in Easter Monday victory

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield believes his players' positive attitude was one of the key reasons for their 2-0 victory over Forest Green Rovers.

Strikes from Chem Campbell and an own goal from Charlie Savage secured the club their first win in four games, with the result and performance coming just three days after a 4-0 thump-

ing against high-flying Ipswich Town.

The latter was the Chairboys' heaviest defeat of the season.

Bloomfield said: "It wasn't the perfect performance [against Forest Green] as we always want to improve, but it was so important to get the win and I'm very pleased.

"Of course, the results [Derby and Bolton drawing on Easter

Monday] have gone our way and they do help, but we need to fight and focus on what we need to do.

"I'm so pleased to be working with this incredible group of men and they reacted the way I wanted them to."

On Chris Forino, who was named the Man of the Match, Bloomfield added: "Chris is improving all the time.

"One thing I love about him is

that he is willing to take responsibility for everything, he wants to improve, he keeps seeking new ways to learn and he wants to add more to his game.

Since joining the club two years ago, Forino has played in 49 competitive matches (which includes appearances in the Berks & Bucks Cup), has kept 15 clean sheets, and has scored six goals.

# McCarthy signs one-year deal

WYCOMBE Wanderers right-back Jason McCarthy will remain at the club until the end of the 2023/24 season after penning a one-year contract extension.

The 27-year-old, who has played 197 times for the Chairboys across four separate spells, joins David Wheeler, Josh Scowen, Joe Jacobson, and Jack Grimmer in committing their futures to the Adams Park side for the following campaign.

Speaking to the Bucks Free Press and BBC 3 Counties on April 13, he said: "This is my club and I'm excited to be here.

"The club is in a great place, and everyone respects Wycombe now as we're seen as a very good club in League One.

"But we've got aspirations to reach higher, and I want to be a part of that.

"I feel valued here and the manager has been brilliant."

Under the brief tenure of Matt Bloomfield, the ex-Barnsley and Millwall player has featured in nine of the boss' 10 games in charge.

This includes seven starts and two substitute appearances.

And even though the results have been mixed with three wins, three draws, and four losses, McCarthy believes the 'foundations are in place' for Wycombe to be a regular top-six side in League One and more.

He continued: "I'm enjoying life under the new manage-

By James Richings

ment too - it's been a breath of fresh air.

"Under the new manager, personally, I've found a new lease of life which I'm enjoying.

"The style of play is good, and I just like working with the gaffer.

"It took me a little while to not call him 'mate'!

"But I have got a great relationship with him before he left and now, and I'm happy to be staying.

"We've also been close to scoring the perfect goal and having the perfect performance, so it's been really good so far and I'm confident that we can have a lot of success in the next couple of years, that's why I signed up.

"The foundations are in place for that, and I want to be part of the club driving forward."

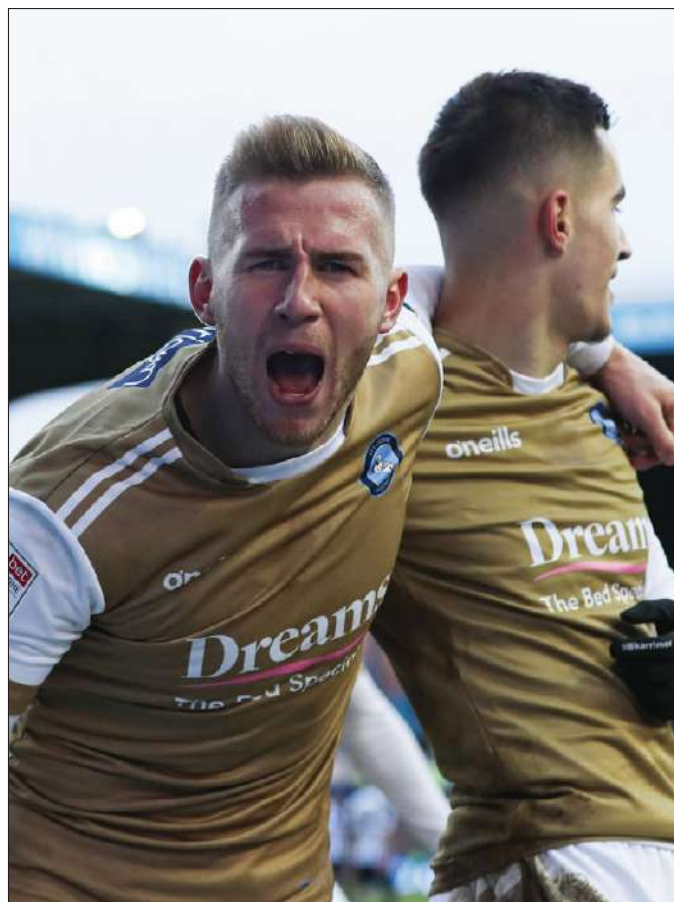
"But I did love it under the old management too."

Finally, one of his love for Wanderers, concluded: "Staying here is the best feeling in the world.

"Everyone knows my affiliation with Wycombe and how I feel about this club.

"I love it here, my family live here and they are now Wycombe fans so I'm buzzing to be here.

"Long term, everyone will see the gaffer's way and style which I think is evident now, as we're getting good results."



Jason McCarthy (pictured in November 2021) is staying at Adams Park (PA)



Matt Bloomfield (Carol Mason)

## Gearing up for the final five

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield as stated that his side 'can't celebrate too much' after their 2-0 victory over Forest Green Rovers.

The triumph ended a run of four games without a win and has put the Chairboys just three points off the play-offs with five games remaining.

In their remaining fixtures, they face four sides who are in the bottom half, with two of those teams (Morecambe and Cambridge United) being in the bottom four.

After the victory on Easter Monday [April 10], Bloomfield told the press: "It was a tough day for us on Friday [against Ipswich], so we needed to pick ourselves up and that was never going to be easy.

"I'm pleased with the spirit the boys showed, whilst the fans turned up in their numbers and played their part too so thank you for that.

"It was also important to get over the line with the clean sheet.

"I said to the boys before the game that I know that I've made a big thing about getting the result, but I'm still wanting a good performance."