

Peterborough United's problems and their bad habits hit them hard at Wycombe Wanderers

Just when you think Peterborough United have sussed League One out again, they throw in a performance which generates doubt and suspicion.

Ten points in four games lifted Posh into fourth place ahead of a game at a ground on Saturday which usually only delivers bad news, but [Wycombe Wanderers](#) were surely there for the taking this time?

They sat in the bottom half of the table, the home crowd was small and passive, probably because their team hadn't scored more than one goal in a game since August 20, which in turn was most likely because their primitive, limited tactics offer few surprises these days.

And yet, despite controlling the first quarter of the game, Posh went home chastened by a 3-1 defeat and with some injury concerns to give manager [Grant McCann](#) plenty to ponder.

Wycombe didn't work Lucas Bergstrom in the Posh goal at all and yet beat him from close range three times. Home goalkeeper Max Stryjek made several saves, but none of them that difficult.

A poor away record so far this season can be put down partly to a tough fixture list, but this was different. This was a game they should have expected to win.

Posh dropped a place to fifth, but they remain vulnerable. Barnsley, Bolton, Derby County, Shrewsbury and even 13th-placed Lincoln City would go above them by winning rearranged matches.

TALKING POINTS FROM WYCOMBE...

1) The crucial Wycombe equaliser on the stroke of half time arrived after the hosts won three headers inside the Posh penalty area. The last dominant Posh centre-back who could regularly create distance with his clearances with head or feet was Gaby Zakuani who was at the game displaying outstanding punditry for BBC Radio Cambridgeshire. Compare and contrast with Wycombe's centre-backs who dominated the airwaves with Alfie Mawson, an England squad player not that many years ago, outstanding. He's still only 28 so lord knows how he's ended up playing at 'little old Wycombe,' unless of course budget sizes are being considerably downplayed at Adams Park. If ion-loan Kell Watts comes through 90 minutes at Wycombe in a far less important match on Tuesday he has to play at Oxford in [League One](#) next Saturday.

2) Posh created all their best scoring chances by keeping the ball on the floor. Substitute Joel Randall struck a post, Nathan Thompson was denied a goal by a nearpost save, Harrison Burrows was thwarted by Stryjek stop late on after a fine pass by substitute Jack Marriott and Burrows sent a shot straight at Stryjek not long before he slammed a 25-yarder home at the height of Posh dominance midway through the first half. But, for reasons not entirely obvious, Posh went away from possession-based play and got sucked into a long baall which they were never likely to win. Far too often hopeful crosses and long. straight balls were delivered to and gobbled up by Mawson and co.

3) Jack Taylor's asbence was a big blow. Without him, once Wycombe upped their game, Posh laboured badly in midfield areas as Jeando Fuchs and Ben Thompson couldn't get a grip on the game.

McCann said Posh lacked control and Taylor is the man who has been supplying it in recent games. Let's hope the injury that forced him to miss a League One game for the first time this season is not serious. When he missed six games in a row at a key time in the 2020-21 promotion season Posh won one and lost four of them.

4) Taylor's 75th minute goal against Sheffield Wednesday at London Road in August is the latest goal scored by Posh in League One matches this season. In the last 10 minutes of matches Posh have conceded six times without scoring once themselves. Is the mental and physical fragility that afflicted Posh for a lot of the Championship season still here? Only Burton and Forest Green have conceded more away goals than Posh this season, another hangover from last season.

5) Posh have now dropped 11 points from winning positions in League One this season. They took the lead at Derby and Portsmouth before losing and the same happened at Wycombe. They also dropped two bad home points to Burton after scoring first. Posh haven't come from behind to win since the opening day of the season at Cheltenham

6) How different this game might have panned out had Joel Randall scored instead of hitting the post within a minute of him replacing injury victim Ricky-Jade Jones in the first-half. It would have put Posh 2-0 up and it would have given Randall the boost in confidence he so obviously requires. Without Jones, Posh lost their attacking pace and Randall was subjected to much on-line criticism for his stuttering display. He's a hard watch right now.

7) Would Posh have been better served sending Jack Marriott on ahead of Randall and changing shape? In hindsight maybe, but watching Marriott asked to win headers from long straight balls quickly became frustrating. When he found the ball at his feet he created a late chance for Burrows with a perfect pass. If he comes on, or indeed when he finally starts another game, he needs to be better served than he was yesterday.