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SPORT

Ainsworth on first friendly win



Gareth Ainsworth (PA)

WYCOMBE boss Gareth Ainsworth has revealed that his players not suffering from any serious injuries is a 'big thing', following Wanderers' 3-0 win over the Fulham Under 23s.

The pre-season match saw Josh Scowen, Sam Vokes and Daryl Horgan all get on the scoresheet against the Cottages in a behind-closed-doors match at the Marlow Road training ground on July 9.

This took place a day after a team entirely of trialists played for the Chairboys in a friendly match against Bracknell Town, which they lost 2-0.

Speaking to the club's media, Ainsworth said: "It was a really good run out and no injuries was a really big thing for me.

"I asked the boys to win the game for me and I know people say it pre-season doesn't count but you want to get to a good start.

"There were people learning the systems, the intensity which is really big for me, and all in all, it was good.

"Dave Wheeler filled in at centre half for me because we lost Chris Forino with a knock but everything else has been a solid start."

A winning start and a new shirt

THE Wycombe Wanderers first-team won their inaugural pre-season friendly of the summer as they defeat the Fulham Under 23s 3-0 on Saturday, July 9.

Played behind closed doors at the Chairboys' Marlow Road training ground, goals from Josh Scowen, Sam Vokes and Daryl Horgan gave Gareth Ainsworth's men a comfortable win in South Buckinghamshire.

Their match against the newly-promoted Premier League development team came a day after the club announced their brand new kit for the upcoming season.

The new shirts wear seen for the first time during their win over the Cottages, which sport the traditional light and dark blue quarters, along with a distinctive, white, v-neck collar, whilst the away strip is an all red kit.

For more info, visit wwfshop.co.uk.

Pre-season round up for Wanderers

James Richings

WYCOMBE Wanderers lost their first pre-season friendly of the summer as a team full of trialists fell to a 2-0 defeat away at Bracknell Town.

Played in front of a crowd of around 400 people at the SB Stadium in Sandhurst, the young Chairboys squad started brightly but individual errors lead them to concede preventable goals.

Bracknell's first strike of the evening came on 11 minutes when one of Wanderers' centre backs played a short back pass to the goalkeeper, which allowed the Robins' centre forward to poke home from close range.

The second half was similar to the first as Wycombe got in good positions but failed to penetrate the Non League team's defence, with the fixture being wrapped up in the final few seconds thanks to a brilliant goal from the hosts.

Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth, along with first-team players in Garath McCleary and Tyla Dickinson were amongst the crowd watching on.

Their opening friendly match of the summer will take place on July 9, when they face a Fulham Under 23 team behind closed doors at the Marlow Road training ground.

Bracknell's manager Bobby Wilkinson, said: "I'd like to thank Wycombe Wanderers for giving us a fantastic game tonight.

"A big thank you to Sam and Gareth for allowing this to happen.

"Thank you for everyone who came out tonight, it was a special night for the club."

Three days later, the Chairboys drew 0-0 in another BCD match, this time against Non League Oxford City, as Gareth Ainsworth's men continue to prepare for the season ahead.

Ali Al-Hamadi looked the most



The match took place at the SB Stadium in Sandhurst

likely to break the deadlock in the opening period, while Sam Vokes went close with a header in the closing stages.

Next up, the Blues face Watford in a behind-closed-doors encounter on Saturday which will kick off at 1pm.

Starting XI: Dickinson, Grimmer, Jacobson, Trialist-CB, Mehmeti,

Young, Kaikai, Horgan, Al-Hamadi, Parsons, Pattenenden
60+ XI: Trialist-GK, Trialist-CB, Gape, Wheeler, Vokes, McCleary, Hanlan, Mellor, Freeman, Obita, Scowen

Wycombe's remaining friendlies are as follows:

July 16: Watford vs Wycombe Wanderers (behind-closed-doors)

July 22: Bournemouth XI vs Wycombe Wanderers

July 22: Aylesbury United vs Wycombe Wanderers XI

July 23: Southampton B vs Wycombe Wanderers

July 29: Chesham United vs Wycombe Wanderers XI

August 2: Worthing vs Wycombe Wanderers XI



Anthony Stewart has been named as the captain of Aberdeen (PA)

Stewart the skipper at Scottish outfit

FORMER Wycombe Wanderers centre back Anthony Stewart has been named the captain of Scottish Premiership side, Aberdeen.

The 29-year-old joined the four-time Scottish champions on a free transfer this summer following the expiration of his Chairboys contract.

And despite only being with his new team for a matter of weeks, Dons manager Jim Goodwin has confirmed that the Brixton-born

defender will lead out the side.

On being made captain, Stewart said: "It's an honour and privilege to be captain for this great club.

"Alone, we can do so little. Together we can do so much! Can't wait for the season to start."

Wanderers owner Rob Couhig added: "This club is in great hands.

"A true leader and a very special player.

"He will never be satisfied with less than 100 per cent commitment to success by all involved.

"And he leads by demanding 100 per cent of himself."

Stewart will also wear the number five shirt for Aberdeen, as he did at Wycombe.

Across two spells with Wanderers, Stewart played 292 games and was part of the promotion-winning teams of 2018 and 2020.

Christie is a Chairboy

WYCOMBE Wanderers have confirmed the signing of 18-year-old Christie Ward from Non League Brockenhurst.

The teenager has become the club's third new arrival this summer along with Jasper Pattenden and D'Mani Mellor respectively.

Ward was also part of the highly-regarded Pro Direct Academy, and caught the attention of the Wanderers' recruitment team during a practice match against Watford Under 23s.

His former manager, Brockenhurst boss Pat McManus, said: "We're incredibly proud of Christie and delighted that he has this opportunity to embark upon his journey as a professional footballer. "It was evident when he came to

the club as a 16-year-old via the Pro Direct Academy that he was destined for bigger and better things.

"His consistent exceptional performances at this level, which often included some spectacular goals, soon highlighted him as one of the brightest young talents in the South.

"We wish him well and know that he's now in good hands to develop further and realise his massive potential."

A Wycombe Wanderers development will take on AFC Bournemouth on July 22 at Brockenhurst's stadium.

He made his debut for the club in their pre-season match against Oxford City on July 12.

Comparing the M40 rivals in pre-season



Ross Jenkins in 2009 (PA)

OXFORD City boss Ross Jenkins believes Wycombe Wanderers' style of play is 'a bit more physical' than Oxford United's as the Chairboys prepare to face the Non League side in a pre-season friendly.

Gareth Ainsworth's men took on the Marsh Lane club in a behind-closed-doors fixture at their Marlow Road training ground on July 12, which was their third non-competitive fixture of the summer.

This came 10 days after the National League South side lost 5-2 at home to their city rivals, Oxford United, with Jenkins praising the football his opposite number Karl Robinson played.

Speaking to the Oxford Mail, the 31-year-old said: "Oxford United play some great football under Karl (Robinson) and they play in a manner that I really like.

"Wycombe have got success with what they do as well, they go a bit direct and a bit more physical.

"Coming up against a different opposition might just help us, we want to be flexible and I think if we get challenged by Wycombe going a bit direct then it'll be brilliant for us.

Delays on the opening day of the season

SEVERAL rail companies will strike on July 30 which is the opening day of the Football League season.

Taking place in July due to this year's World Cup in Qatar starting in November, the disruptions will see train drivers at eight different companies refuse to work.

It comes a day after the RMT union said its members at rail operators and Network Rail would walk off the job for 24 hours on 27 July.

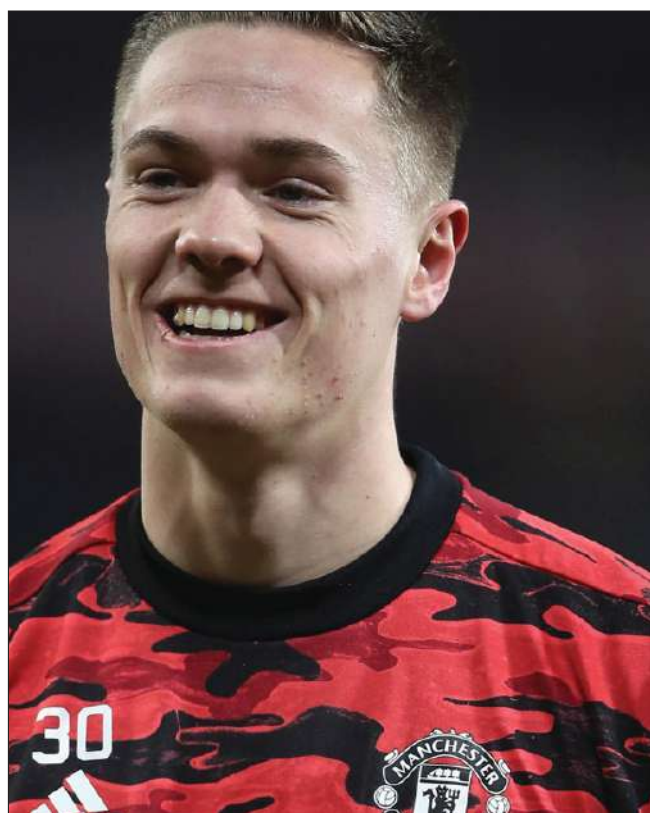
Wycombe Wanderers will start their league campaign at home to Burton Albion, with the match kicking off at 3pm.

Members from Arriva Rail London, Chiltern Railways, Greater Anglia, Great Western, Hull Trains, LNER, Southeastern and West Midlands Trains - will join the strike action on the penultimate day of July.



Christie Ward will now play his football at Adams Park after signing for the club from Non League Brockenhurst on July 12 (PA)

Wanderers target included in tour



Nathan Bishop (pictured) has been with Manchester United since January 2020, but has yet to make a first-team appearance (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers target Nathan Bishop has been included in Manchester United's pre-season tour of Thailand and Australia.

The 22-year-old, who spent last season on loan at Mansfield Town in League Two, has been heavily linked with the Chairboys as they continue to search for a new goalkeeper.

At this present time, Tyla Dickinson is the only shot-stopper on the club's books, following the departures of number one David Stockdale, and number two Adam Przybek to Sheffield Wednesday and Walsall respectively.

Man United's 31-man squad for their tour also included three other goalkeepers in David De Gea, Tom Heaton, and Matej Kovar.

Speaking to Sky Sports News on June 30, manager Gareth Ainsworth said: "I'm known to give youngsters and unknowns a chance but it's up to them to keep their places.

"A few more [players] will be added without a shadow of a doubt, hopefully from a big club which will be nice but at the moment I'm more or less business as usual with the squad that I had last season.

"Fans don't panic, watch this space."

It has also been confirmed that Non League keeper Nathan Boman has been on trial with the Chairboys in recent weeks.

A member of the Kinetic

By James Richings

Foundation which helps young players find clubs at grassroots level, the highly-rated teenager has been seen being put through the paces at the Marlow Road training ground at the back end of last season.

In April this year, he made his official debut for Cray Wanderers in the

Isthmian League Premier Division and recently signed for Sutton Common Rovers at the end of June.

Nathan came through the youth ranks at Cray Wanderers & last season had a short loan with Kent football united. He went on to feature for Cray's first team in the Isthmian League Premier.

He has also spent some time at Kent Football United in the Southern Counties East League Division One during the course of the previous season.

Wycombe's remaining pre-season matches this summer

July 16: Watford vs Wycombe

July 22: Bournemouth vs Wycombe

July 22: Aylesbury vs Wycombe

July 23: Southampton B vs Wycombe

July 29: Chesham vs Wycombe

August 2: Worthing vs Wycombe

The league season will start on July 30 at home to Burton Albion.

SPORT



An important year for Nick Freeman



Nick Freeman has played over 100 games for Wycombe Wanderers but has only featured 12 times for the club since September 2020 (PA)

By James Richings

WYCOMBE Wanderers' 3-0 win over the Fulham Under 23s on July 9 may have been a game to get the fitness levels up, but it meant so much for one Chairboys player.

Nick Freeman played the first-half of the pre-season victory in what was his first game for the club in 322 days.

The 26-year-old has not had a single second of fixture football since suffering a serious anterior cruciate ligament injury (ACL) in Wanderers' 1-0 win over Lincoln City on August 21 last year.

His injury was a tough pill to swallow as it occurred in what was his only league start of that season, following three consecutive appear-

ances from the bench.

His season-ending injury came at the worst possible time for the then 25-year-old, as he was on the road of getting his Wanderers career back on track after being somewhat of a forgotten man at the club.

This is because prior to the start of the 2021/22 campaign, Freeman's future looked in doubt.

He had only played eight games for Wycombe during their Championship year with seven of those fixtures coming in the league.

Deemed surplus to requirements, he was loaned out to Leyton Orient in League Two on a six-month loan deal which seemed to re-energize the midfielder, as he played 15 times for the O's, starting 10 of those fixtures.

A return to Adams Park followed

in the summer of last year and after Gareth Ainsworth admitted to the BFP that he and Freeman had 'some real one-to-ones', it seemed that the central midfielder was going to make his mark on the campaign ahead.

He was involved during pre-season, he was getting minutes, and he played in Wanderers' first four matches of that campaign.

Alas, it wasn't to be.

But after spending a year on the sidelines where he took part in community projects, offered his services to the club's media team, and signed a one-year contract extension to remain at Wanderers, could 2022/23 be the season that Freeman gets his career back on track?

He impressed in the four games he played prior to his injury and with Curtis Thompson still out, this cam-

paign could be the perfect opportunity for the midfielder to get some regular game time and remind fans of his talents.

He can pick out a pass, can attack, can defend, can read the game well and most importantly, he will have that hunger and desire to be one of the main names of Ainsworth's team-sheet after being out for so long.

Jasper Patten, Dominic Gape, Jack Young, Lewis Wing and David Wheeler are just some of the names Freeman will be fighting against in order to secure that space in midfield alongside Josh Scowen, and after only playing 12 times for Wycombe in two seasons, he will want to make his mark.

Nick Freeman could be a born-again midfielder, and I for one can't wait to see it.



The 1878 Stadium (@

A new home for the ladies

WYCOMBE Wanderers Women will play their home games at the 1878 Stadium for the 2022/23 season.

Confirming the news on July 13, the Chairgirls will groundshare with Burnham FC after both teams reached an agreement.

Both home games and training, for all three women's squads, will take place here from August.

New Head Coach, Carl Simon commented on the move "We are delighted to be relocating to our new home ground at the 1878 Stadium for the new season.

"I believe this to be the perfect place, with its excellent playing surface and first class facilities for us to play and welcome supporters."

The 1878 Stadium boasts a free car park which can hold up to 120 vehicles, and a list of the Chairgirls' friendlies is as follows:

July 17, 2pm vs Bedford Ladies - Flackwell Heath College

July 24, 3pm vs Luton Town (away)
July 31, 2pm vs Maidenhead United (away)

August 7, 2pm vs Sutton United (away)

August 14, 2pm vs Northampton Town (away)

August 21, 2pm vs Kettering Town - Burnham FC

August 28, 2pm vs Royal Wootton Bassett - Burnham FC

The news of the stadium move comes four days after the Women's team enjoyed their annual celebration night at Adams Park.

Hosted by the club's head and audio in Phil Catchpole, the winners of the respective awards were the following:

Most Improved player:
U18s- Summer Owen-Smith
Reserves- Rohanna Myers
First Team- Sammy Nazif
Golden Boot:
U18s- Molly Carter & Jorja-Louise Bray

Reserves- Amelia Gilbert
First Team- Chante Inniss
Managers Player of the Year:
U18s- Victoria Collett
Reserves- Emily Norfolk
First Team- Kara Howes
Players Player of the Year:
U18s- Chloe Mackay
Reserves- Emily Norfolk
First Team- Kara Howes