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# Bucks Free Press

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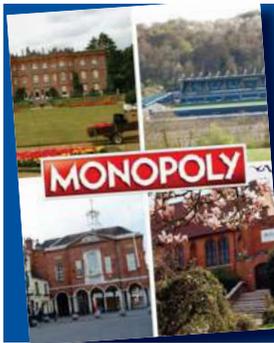
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- Page 34

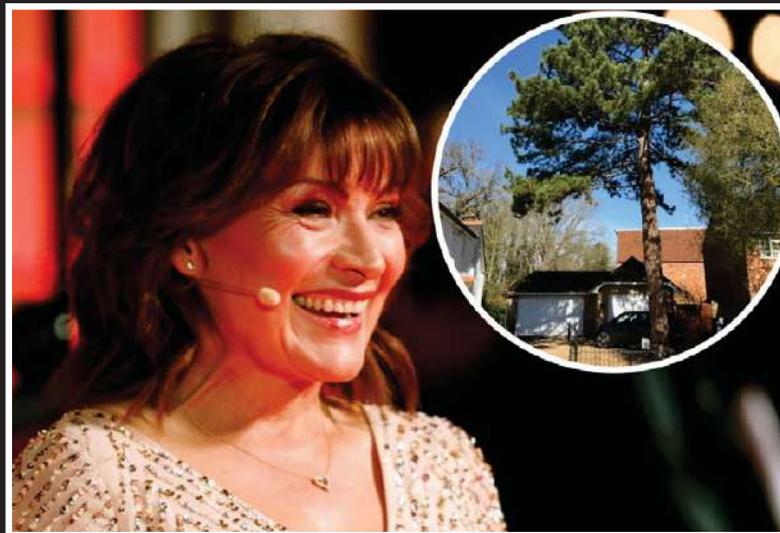


## TAKE A CHANCE!

Landmarks revealed for Monopoly board  
- Page 12

# PERMISSION DENIED

TV star has bid to cut down protected tree rejected  
Page 3



## NEWS

'Nan' Eva celebrates centenary



Page 8

## VOTE!

For Bucks' best pub



Page 18

# Tributes left to motorcyclist, 26, who died in crash

Story Page 7

**INSIDE** • Local building plans, 26 • In The Dock, 22 • Nostalgia pages, 40-41 • Puzzles, 54-60

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# The Mexican Chairboy

## Wells stars as Bucks victorious

IT'S been a somewhat mixed bag for Wycombe Wanderers so far this season.

Four games, two wins and two defeats have seen them go from top to 18th in League One, whilst also progressing to the second round of the League Cup.

New signings have arrived, cult heroes and legends have left, and fans are bracing themselves for what 2022/23 could bring for the Adams Park club.

But for Marcelo Gonzalez, this summer has so far been 'the best experience of his life', as he has achieved a lifelong dream.

The Mexican has flown all the way over from his home country to England to watch the Chairboys in action for the entirety of August.

He has also been given an opportunity to work with the club's media team during the course of the month, as he will travel to various parts of the land cheering on Gareth Ainsworth's players.

But why is Marcelo a Chairboy when he could have supported either America, Cruz Azul, Guadalajara or Universidad Nacional in his homeland?

The clubs above are regarded as 'the Big Four' in Mexico, and are considered by the country's press to be the most popular and successful sides in the country.

Speaking exclusively to the Free Press, Marcelo said: "Around 2017, I was watching Premier League games but I got bored of that type of football as it got quite dull.

"Instead, I decided to watch the EFL games, and it was random in choosing Wycombe but it has been great."

Since arriving in England to work with the club during his one month stay, Marcelo watched



Marcelo Gonzalez after Wycombe Wanderers' 2-1 defeat against Shrewsbury Town on August 13 at Adams Park

his first Chairboys match away at Bolton Wanderers which ended in a 3-0 defeat on August 6.

He was on the road again as he witnessed Wycombe's 2-1 away victory over Northampton Town in the League Cup, and even though his first-ever experience at Adams Park resulted in a 2-1 loss at the hands of Shrewsbury Town, trips to Exeter City, Barnsley and home match against Charlton Athletic are games he is looking forward to.

Marcelo continued: "I'm here

rooting for the club, I'm here in England and I'm loving it. "It's unreal and so far, it has been a great experience.

"I have been treated the best way possible by the fans, the media team and the other guys in the office and I am so glad to be here.

"This is the best experience of my life.

"I want to embrace it. "Just to be here talking to the players, seeing everything is just surreal and this is my dream."



Marcelo Gonzalez (Marcelo Gonzalez's Facebook page)

A SPARKLING century from young Buckingham batsman Michael Wells inspired Bucks to a two-day victory over Northumberland at Jesmond which gives them a great chance of promotion in National Counties Eastern Division 2.

Wells, who turned 20 the previous week, scored a spectacular 179 not out in only his second Championship outing to lead Bucks to a first innings score of 362-9 from their 90 overs after choosing to bat first.

Bucks bowlers then followed his lead, dismissing the host county for 96 and 237 to secure a massive victory by an innings and 29 runs.

With Hertfordshire only drawing against Cumbria in a rain-affected match, it means Bucks need to secure only a maximum of three bonus points from their final match against closest rivals Cambridgeshire at Tring Park, starting this Sunday to secure the Division 2 title and promotion to Eastern Division 1.

Wells's score is one of the highest in Bucks's history.

His unbeaten 179 came from 241 balls and included two sixes and 23 fours.

Other main contributors were Michael Payne (64), with whom Wells shared a fifth-wicket stand of 114, and Ed Bragg, who made 34.

After fielding in the heat on the first day, Northumberland slumped to 41-4 in reply by the close, Cameron Parsons and Bragg each taking two wickets.

The hosts' first-innings decline continued on the second day, with Bucks skipper Tom Hampton taking two wickets, before AJ Woodland wrapped the innings with a stunning spell of 4-12 from seven overs as the home side were shot out for 96 in 39 overs.

Bucks enforced the follow on and Northumberland batted better second time around, although no batsman reached fifty.

After an opening stand of 52, wickets fell steadily, with Mo Choudhry taking 2-18 from 11 impressive overs.

This time it was left-arm spinner Conner Haddow, who wrapped up the two-day victory with 4-81 from 19.3 overs as the hosts' second innings closed on 237 in 70.3 overs.

The three-day game against Cambridgeshire at Tring Park, starts at 11am on Sunday.

Bucks make one change to their squad, with Ross Richardson, who missed the Northumberland game due to a one-match ban, replacing Jack Rodnight.

Bucks squad (to face Cambridgeshire): T Hampton (High Wycombe, capt), A Woodland (High Wycombe), M Wells (Buckingham), M Choudhry (Tring Park), C Marrow (Gerrards Cross), A Kervezee (Halesowen), M Payne (Amersham), R Richardson (Blackheath), E Bragg (Halesowen), C Parsons (High Wycombe), C Haddow (High Wycombe), T Weymes (Tring Park).



Great Britain's Heidi Long, Rowan McKellar, Samantha

## Rowing gold for Long

HEIDI LONG and Britain's women's four rowers reckons radical restructuring is reaping rewards after a memorable Munich morning at the European Championships.

British stars racked up four gold medals on Saturday morning - including three in a row - in the women's and men's four, women's quadruple sculls and men's eight events at the city's 1972 Olympic Regatta Centre.

And they followed it up on Sunday as Chalfont St. Peter star

Long also helped Britain to silver in the women's eight event.

The multi-sport European Championships Munich 2022, featuring Athletics, Beach Volleyball, Canoe Sprint, Cycling, Gymnastics, Table Tennis, Triathlon, Rowing, Sport Climbing, takes place 11th-21st August on the 50th anniversary of the Olympics Games in the German city. Watch daily live coverage across BBC One, Two, Red Button, BBC iPlayer, BBC Sport website.

## Football club responds to speculation over ground

FLACKWELL Heath FC has responded to social media rumours that their ground has been sold.

The club's chairmen denied that their ground, Wilks Park, has been sold after online speculation the site could be turned into a housing estate.

Three teams play at Wilks Park, off Heath End Road, which has a capacity of 2000 fans.

The club's first team plays in the Cherry Red Combined Counties Premier North Division, the reserve team is in the Suburban Football League, and the U18 team competes in the Allied Counties Youth Football League.

The first team recently stepped out onto Wilks Park and eased their way into the next round of the FA Cup after beating Keynsham Town



Wilks Park (Image: Flackwell Heath FC)

4-0.

Terry Glynn, chairman of Flackwell Heath FC, said: "Wilks Park has not been sold.

"We are concentrating on trying to win the league this season and having good runs in all the FA and league cup competitions.

"Key to our progress is developing both our youth and development teams as they make their way into senior football.

"We continue to do lots of work in the community with a strong relationship being forged between the parent club and the minors setup."

## SPORT

## Wing on Wanderers' home loss



A day to forget (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers midfielder Lewis Wing has revealed that he 'didn't see Shrewsbury scoring' in their 2-1 loss against the Shropshire side.

The Chairboys had taken the lead through Garath McCleary just six minutes after the half-time break, before a header from Matthew Pennington and a Luke Leahy penalty gave the Shrews their first-ever league win at Adams Park at the 15th minute of trying.

It was also only their fourth win over Wycombe in what was the 30th match between the two sides.

Speaking on the loss, Wing, said: "He said: "It did really come out of nowhere.

"I was sat on the bench for it [the second goal] so it was hard for me because I can't do anything or make an impact. "It was really disappointing.

"We were on top for large parts of the game and you just couldn't see them scoring, but it was two mistakes from us.

"I think we showed what we can do today as we were really good, but it was just two stupid mistakes that let us down."

## Cotterill on Wanderers' style of play

SHREWSBURY Town manager Steve Cotterill admitted that his side "needed to be better" after a lacklustre first-half showing against Wycombe Wanderers.

Speaking to the club's press, Cotterill said: "In the first-half I thought they were better than us.

"I felt we needed to liven up a little bit at half-time.

"We had spoken about, potentially, how they could score a goal and low and behold ten minutes later they do score it.

"I told them we needed to be better.

"But it's funny, as soon as we got the equaliser we did all the things we should have been doing from the start of the game better.

"I don't know whether that was the change in formation, I think the change in formation actually got us the win."

## Ikpeazu rumours end after transfer

By James Richings

FORMER Wycombe Wanderers striker and fan favourite Uche Ikpeazu has left Middlesbrough to join a club in Turkey.

The 27-year-old Ugandan international has penned a deal to sign for Turkish Super Lig outfit Konyaspor on a permanent contract.

There had been several rumours linking the forward back to Adams Park this summer, after it was made public he would not be included in Chris Wilder's plans for the current season.

Ikpeazu spent the 2020/21 campaign with the Chairboys and became a big hit with the supporters, due to his high work ethic, stunning goals and build-up play.

He scored six goals in his only season with the club in 33 appearances.

His performances led him to be looked at by various Championship clubs following Wanderers' relegation from the division in May 2021, where he eventually signed for Boro for an undisclosed fee.

However, despite starting brightly for the North East club, Ikpeazu fell out of favour and was loaned out to Cardiff City for the latter parts of the 2021/22 season.

In a brief statement, Middlesbrough said: "Chris Wilder has signed strike duo Marcus Forss and Matthew Hoppe so far this summer, and is determined to further strengthen at the top of the field.

"The Boro boss had made it clear that Ikpeazu didn't feature in his plans and that he was available for transfer.

"Everyone at MFC wishes Uche all the best for the future."

After Ikpeazu's departure from Wycombe, the club opted to sign Sam Vokes as his replacement.

When the striker left Wanderers, he took to social media to thank the



Uche Ikpeazu (pictured playing against Barnsley in March 2021) will not re-join Wycombe this summer after rumours linked him to the club as he has joined a team in the Turkish Super Lig from Middlesbrough (PA)

fans for his brief spell at Adams Park.

Taking to Instagram in 2021, he said: "I didn't expect to be saying bye so soon but sometimes in life opportunities come you just can't turn down.

"I just want to say a big thank you to Wycombe Wanderers FC. I appreciate the opportunity you gave

me.

"People say Wycombe is such a unique club and so I wondered what it would be like to play for them.

"I now understand why and feel really blessed and privileged to have been a part of such a special club.

"I also want to thank all the staff

and everyone connected to the club, especially the gaffer, Gareth Ainsworth, who has played an integral part in my development on and off the field.

"The amount of faith he has shown in me, bringing me to the Championship, and having the belief in me throughout is something I'll never forget."



Ainsworth was not happy with his side's defending against Shrewsbury (PA)

## Ainsworth angry at the Wycombe defending

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth has been 'devastated' after his side fell to a 2-1 home defeat against Shrewsbury Town.

Garath McCleary gave the hosts the lead early in the second period, but a Matthew Pennington header and a Luke Leahy penalty succumbed the Chairboys to their first-ever home league loss against the Shropshire side in 15 attempts.

The defeat is also Wycombe's second in a row as they drop to 18th

in the League One table.

This was in spite of Wanderers having 19 shots on goal with 11 being on target, compared to Shrewsbury's five on goal, and two being on target.

Both of those two attempts were Shrewsbury's goals.

Speaking to the press after the defeat, Ainsworth said: "I'm devastated for the boys as that was some of the best stuff we have played for a long time going forward.

"But you have got to defend your box at set pieces, and you have got to

put your head where it hurts.

"That was the difference. "You can't have all the shots, possession, and great play and then not defend.

"The game was won and lost in the penalty areas and we didn't hurt them enough.

"That's the story of the game, but we will keep it in-house and we will go again."

It is the first time since February that Wycombe have lost back-to-back league games.

## Chairboys lose three in a row

WYCOMBE Wanderers fell to their third consecutive league defeat as they lost 3-1 away at Exeter City.

Goals Harry Kite, Archie Collins, and Tim Dieng, sandwiched between a David Wheeler strike see Wanderers have their worst league start since September 2020.

The opening stages of the first-half was a slow and patient affair but it was the Grecians who took control of the contest taking the lead midway through the half.

Collins' in swinging corner was met by Pierce Sweeney, but his header crashed against the inside of the left-hand post with Kite on hand to bury the rebound.

It was soon 2-0 as one ball over the top completely took out the Wycombe backline and allowed

Matt Jay to latch onto the pass, laying it off to Collins to score his second goal of the campaign.

Wanderers needed the break with the Chairboys coming out in the second half as a different team.

Alfie Mawson, who made his first start for Wycombe in seven years picked out McCleary with a brilliant long ball enabling him to set up Wheeler who smashed in a half-volley from 20-yards.

The wind was with Wycombe as substitute, Ali Al-Hamadi, who made his league debut, came close two scoring on two occasions.

However, it was all in vain as the hosts regained their two-goal through a Dieng header from a Jevani Brown corner with 15 minutes left.

## Alarm bells ringing after three early defeats



(PA Media)

THREE defeats in their opening four league games have set alarm bells ringing at Wycombe and although it is far too soon to call it a crisis, the return to fitness of key players like Ryan Tafazolli and Sam Vokes cannot come soon enough.

Losses to Shrewsbury and Exeter in the space of four days have left Wanderers short on points and low on confidence, and it is not about to get any easier.

On Saturday they face the long trip to Barnsley, who were playing in the Championship last season.

A worrying vulnerability to set pieces has been a major factor in Wycombe's disappointing start to the new campaign, but the main reason is surely the loss through injury of at least seven senior players.

Ask yourself, would you back Liverpool to win their next game if they were missing Alisson, Alexander-Arnold, van Dijk, Henderson, and Salah? Probably not, so spare a thought for the situation Gareth Ainsworth finds himself in.

In addition to Tafazolli and Vokes, he is without Jason McCarthy, Curtis Thompson, Brandon Hanlan, Sullay Kaikai and Tjay De Barr, all currently on the casualty list.

Despite being under-strength against Shrewsbury, Wycombe dominated the game.

They had twice as much possession as their opponents, made twice as many passes and had eighteen goal attempts compared to Shrewsbury's six.

However, the only statistic that mattered was the final score line and defensive errors contributed to Wanderers losing 2-1.

At Exeter, a woeful first half performance was followed by a much improved second half, but more mistakes cost them dearly when it looked as though they might snatch a point.

Wanderers desperately need a win, but it does not get much tougher than a trip Barnsley, who have spent eight of the last ten years in the Championship.

The clubs have met on eight previous occasions and Wycombe's only victory came in December 2018, Randle Williams scoring the only goal of the game.

Defensive errors; a hangover from losing the play off final; a failure to recruit enough players in the transfer window; or simply a crippling injury list? Whatever the reason, Wanderers need to find their form and find it quickly.



It was nearly a full house at St James Park as Exeter City defeated Wycombe Wanderers 3-1 on August 16 (PA)

# Ainsworth's analysis after shock defeat



Shrewsbury Town Captain Luke Leahy took the penalty that gave his side the win over Wycombe on August 13 at Adams Park (PA)

GARETH Ainsworth has spoken about his side's 'disappointing' defending, but praised the attacking play after Wycombe lost 2-1 at home against Shrewsbury Town.

The Chairboys had an incredible 19 shots on goal with 11 being on target, and despite forcing the visiting keeper Marko Marosi into several saves, they could only beat the shot-stopper once.

Shrewsbury on the other hand only had five attempts on goal, with two shots being on target.

Their first goal came from a long throwing which was scored by Matthew Pennington, with their winner being converted via the penalty spot after captain Joe Jacobson brought down substitute, Tom Bayliss.

Both of those attempts were from set pieces.

Speaking on the defeat, Ainsworth said: "I said before the game that this team score goals from set pieces, and I have got no complaints about the penalty.

"I haven't seen it back, but I don't know why we have given it away.

"I don't think their player is going anywhere as it seemed that he was going to see the game out for a corner, and it was a real sucker punch at the end.

"We played really well and there were loads and loads of positives to take away, but I am fuming with the goals that we conceded as we have given them two goals.

"They haven't really worked to

By James Richings

earn it [the win].

"It's not like we have been massacred and I said this last week – when you get your chances, you need to take them and stick them.

"We didn't defend our goal and that was so disappointing, and we need to do that much better.

"It was too easy for them, but we played really well."

On the positives, the 49-year-old praised his attacking players and hopes that 'more goals' can be scored in the upcoming games.

Going forward, Wycombe showed what they can do but did not take advantage of their chances.

Speaking on his team's encouraging signs, Ainsworth said: "I was really happy with us going forward as we worked on it.

"People will look at the result and go Wycombe lost again but if you were at the game, you would have seen how well we played and we deserved to win, but you need to stick it in the net.

Finally, on D'Mani Mellor on what was his first-ever league start, Ainsworth concluded: "D'Mani played really well.

"He wouldn't have been at Man United if he wasn't good and he was a really bright spark, and we've got a couple of players that are not 100 per cent fit and are out but when they are, we will have a really good squad."

# SPORT

0963-2336



## 'Unrecognisable' display angers boss



Max Stryjek joins the Chairboys

### Wycombe sign new goalkeeper

WYCOMBE Wanderers have confirmed the signing of Polish goalkeeper Max Stryjek from the Scottish Premiership side Livingston on a permanent transfer. THE 26-year-old, who played 71 times for the West Lothian side, joins the Chairboys as the club's new number one shot-stopper following David Stockdale's move to Sheffield Wednesday this summer.

SINCE the latter's departure, development keeper Tyla Dickinson has stepped up to fill in the void as he has played in each of Wanderers' five league and cup matches so far this season, winning two and losing three.

STRYJEK'S arrival comes two days after Gareth Ainsworth's side lost their third league game in succession, as they fell to a 3-1 defeat at Exeter City on August 16.

SPEAKING about his squad after the match, he said: "Tyla has done fantastically well, he is such a great kid and he is gaining experience as well as the others in Jasper Pattenden, Ali Al-Hamadi, and D'Mani Mellor." THE former Polish Under 19 international was on the books at Sunderland between 2014 and 2019, but did not make a single first-team appearance for the club.

INSTEAD, he was loaned out to Boston United and Eastleigh in the Non League, and to Accrington Stanley in the Football League during the 2017/18 season.

HIS only year with the Lancashire side saw him play just three times as they gained promotion out of League Two into League One, along with Wycombe. HE then permanently left Sunderland to sign for Eastleigh for the 2019/20 campaign before moving to Livingston. IN all, he kept 25 clean sheets in 71 games but was sent off in his final appearance for the club, which was in a 2-1 home defeat against Inverness Caledonian Thistle on July 12 this year.

STRYJEK'S announcement was not the only transfer Wycombe made, as they confirmed the signing of the forward Charles Hagan on the same day. THE 20-year-old joins Wanderers on a free transfer from Sheffield Wednesday following his release from the Owls this summer.

HE joins as part of the club's development squad, and has been given the number 32 shirt, which was last worn by Junior Morias during the 2012/13 season.



Gareth Ainsworth (PA)

By James Richings

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth admitted to having 'one or two choice words' with his team as they fell to a 3-1 loss away at Exeter City.

The Chairboys were 2-0 at half-time thanks to goals from Harry Kite and Archie Collins before David Wheeler pulled one back for the Adams Park club just after the break.

But a free header by Tim Dieng confirmed Wycombe's third league defeat in four games.

The loss means Wanderers are now 20th in the table after being top of the pile on the season's opening weekend.

Speaking to the press after the

match, Ainsworth said: "We were unrecognisable in the first-half, and even though we did a bit better in the second-half, conceding two goals from corners is not Wycombe Wanderers."

"They are becoming an issue and that's four in two games."

"That's not good enough as we need to be solid."

"At half-time, I did say one or two choice words about how far we have come and where we have been, and that seemed to work."

"Once we started putting it on them, we looks a lot better but the corner is a free header for their third goal and you just can't do that."

"We will be working hard on set pieces."

The boss also revealed that

missing players through injury is a 'factor' following their poor start to the season.

At present, the club have got seven first-team players out, so have therefore given development players such as Ali Al-Hamadi, Jasper Pattenden and D'Mani Mellor their chance in the main frame.

Speaking on his club's poor run of form, Ainsworth added: "It's a factor of few things [Wanderers' poor start to the campaign]."

"We're playing players that are not really up to speed."

"I've got players out due to injury in Ryan Tafazolli, Sam Vokes, Brandon Hanlan, Curtis Thompson, Jason McCarthy and David Wheeler nearly missed the trip too."

"We need to make sure that we can play without these guys, but

we just didn't get going."

"They deserved the win tonight and that hurts to say."

Ainsworth added: "They want to win no matter what these boys."

"They are no people who are going 'I'm glad they lost, I wasn't not in the team."

"We haven't got that anymore at Wycombe."

"It is totally everyone for the cause."

"Like I say, some bright sparks tonight, some of the young boys getting on and getting more minutes under their belt."

This was Wycombe's third league defeat in a row since March 2022, leaving them sat 20th in the table [at the time of writing].

Up next is Barnsley on Saturday at Oakwell.