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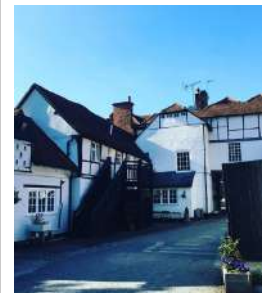
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Ex-hero is impressed after win



The Abbey Stadium (PA)

GARETH Ainsworth has paid tribute to his former club in Cambridge United, following Wycombe's brilliant 4-1 away win at the Abbey Stadium.

The 48-year-old spent the 1992/93 season with the Us scoring once in five appearances following his move from Northwich Victoria.

His solitary goal for the Cambridgeshire side which his first as a Football League player, when the Us were a First Division (Championship) side.

This is their first season back in the third tier of English football since the 2001/02 season.

Speaking after the 4-1 win, he said: "This is a nice old fashion stadium and I want to give credit to Cambridge United because 51 points for a side that came up and let's be honest, everyone thought they were going to struggle.

"I think Mark Bonner has done a fantastic job, a really, really top job and recently, they beat Ipswich at Ipswich, and Ipswich are a very good side.

"Don't dismiss Cambridge United being in the Championship.

"They've got a really good team."

Boss on the owners after win

WYCOMBE manager Gareth Ainsworth has once again thanked the support of the Couhig family as Wanderers continue to push for promotion to the Championship.

The Chairboys recorded their fifth win in seventh matches following a brilliant performance in their 4-1 away victory at Cambridge United, which has lifted them into the League One play-off places.

He said: "I wouldn't be able to get the players in if it wasn't for the Couhigs and the backing they have given me.

"I can't thank the board enough for backing me and giving me the tools to put give them and the fans nights like tonight and that's a team effort from top to bottom. We're coming good at a crucial time of the season as we've got into sixth so it's about staying there.

"We have worked hard on what we have needed to do."

Pushing for a play-off place this month

By James Richings

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth hopes his side can be a 'fortress' at Adams Park as they welcome two rival promotion-hopefuls in their season run-in.

Following their 2-0 win over Doncaster Rovers on April 2, which was their fourth win in five matches, the Chairboys are now one point off the play-off places.

In their final two home games of the campaign, Ainsworth's men face Plymouth Argyle and Sheffield Wednesday who occupy two of the four play-off spots, but the 48-year-old is hopeful that they can sneak into the top six before the end of the season.

Away from home, Wycombe still have to play Cambridge United, Gillingham, Wimbledon and Burton Albion.

Cambridge and Burton are safe from relegation but are not pushing for a play-off spot, whilst the Gills and the Dons are fighting to avoid the drop.

Speaking after the win over the Yorkshire outfit, the manager said: "We've probably played better and not won this season so you take the win all day, but I thought for around 20 minutes in the first-half, I thought we were sensational as I thought we could have had three or four in that period.

"The boys have seen it out really well and I always do this but when we have days off, I always think that the next game might be a dodgy one as we've lost them in the past.

"But today [Saturday], was good.

"The boys were rested, they'll be recovered for the next game, so to give them a few days and get a result was perfect.

"Celebrate these days, celebrate these people and celebrate these moments."

Ainsworth was also pleased from the defensive display as Wycombe kept their fifth clean sheet in six games, meaning they have kept 16 in the league this season.

He continued: "It is really pleasing,



Gareth Ainsworth was pleased with his side's win over Doncaster (PA)

and Dave [Stockdale] has had to make two really good saves at the end, with Stewart and Tafazolli making some great tackles and blocks and a clean sheet is fantastic.

"We're becoming this solid team that will be hard to beat and if we're a fortress as we've got Plymouth and Sheffield Wednesday here to come, and they're crucial games to come."

And despite him naming the same team for the fourth straight week against Doncaster, he believes that changes could be made as Wanderers prepare for their final six matches of the league season.

Ainsworth added: "They'll be times for other players to games.

"We've got the likes of David Wheeler coming back who hasn't played for

a couple of weeks, whilst Dom Gape, Jack Grimmer and Sullay Kaikai weren't even in the squad.

"Those are big names as we've got Jordan Obita back today as well.

"It's all about the squad game but a settled side is a lot better than chopping and changing."

Up next for Wycombe is Cambridge on April 5.



Adebayo Akinfenwa has scored five goals for Wycombe this season (PA)

The Beast's brilliant day at Adams Park

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth has revealed that Adebayo Akinfenwa's cameo appearance in their 2-0 win against Doncaster Rovers was down to Anis Mehmeti.

The young Albanian scored his seventh goal of the season with 15 minutes to go in the fixture at Adams Park, giving the Chairboys a comfortable two goal cushion against the League One strugglers.

Akinfenwa came on in the final five minutes and was cheered every time

he touched the ball by the Wycombe faithful.

The Beast then spent the next hour-and-a-half after the full-time whistle singing autographs and taking photos with fans who stayed behind at Adams Park.

We even gave a free copy of this week's Bucks Free Press, which has been largely dedicated to him.

He said: "He can thank Anis! [for coming on as a substitute].

"At 1-0, I'm always worried about changing things but when Anis got his

goal, Bayo was allowed to come on.

"He got around 10 to 11 minutes there and he showed what he's all about.

"What a character, what a player and this isn't his last game, it's his day, and he'll play his part in this run in.

"I'm sure there will be an Akinfenwa moment before the season is out.

"It's still to come and it was brilliant to see him, his family and friends and it's been a privilege to be his manager.

"Beast Mode, Rock n Roll!
"It's been a great day."

Garath the goal getter

GARETH Ainsworth has praised the performance of winger Garath McCleary following Wycombe's 2-0 home win against Doncaster Rovers.

The former Reading man scored a close range header inside the first 20 minutes of the Chairboys' victory over Donny, which was his eighth this season.

All of this goals this campaign have come at Adams Park, and Wycombe have not lost a match in which he has scored in so far this campaign.

In fact, out of the 12 goals his has bagged for Wanderers, Wycombe have only fallen to defeat in one of those fixtures. That was in a 2-1 away loss at

Bristol City on Boxing Day 2020.

Ainsworth said: "Garath was awesome, especially in the first half and when Doncaster started to take a few risks and started to overload us down the sides, I made the decision to change it as David Wheeler is more of defensive player.

"The damage had been done at that stage and Garath is a terrific player to have in the team.

"All round it was a brilliant day for Wycombe and the beauty is that we know we can play better and will need to be better if we're going to make the play-offs before the end of the season.

"I can't wait for the next game against Cambridge."



Wycombe Wanderers' Garath McCleary has scored all of this eight goals this season at Adams Park. The Chairboys have won all those games (PA)

Having the freedom of expressing themselves



Garath McCleary (PA)

WYCOMBE winger Garath McCleary has thanked Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth to allow the club's attacking players to 'express themselves' in the final third of the opposition's half.

The 34-year-old scored in the Chairboys' 4-1 away in at Cambridge United on April 5, which was their seventh game unbeaten as they move into the top-six.

The strike was also McCleary's ninth of the season and his first away from home in the third tier of English football since April 2008, when he scored for Nottingham Forest in a 2-0 win at Carlisle United.

Speaking after the brilliant win at the Abbey, he said: "Since I have come in, the gaffer has given me a license to express myself in the final third.

"And with players such as Anis Mehmeti, who is a dribbler as well, to be given the freedom to express yourself in the final third from the manager gives us a lot of confidence and for us, it's brilliant to have. I have played in teams recently that have played out from the back and now that we have started to do that, it helps us a lot and that's credit to the gaffer."

Looking ahead to Saturday at Gillingham

WYCOMBE manager Gareth Ainsworth believes 'you can't judge anyone in this league', as Wanderers prepare for another away trip at struggling Gillingham on Saturday.

Speaking after the 4-1 away at Cambridge, Ainsworth said: "You can't judge anyone in this league.

"Cambridge went to Ipswich on Saturday and got a result and as they're safe, they can go and change things up which gives them freedom to be dangerous.

"We're the ones with everything to lose but at the moment the lads look like they are playing as if they've not got a care in the world and that's the best kind of football you can play."

The boss also revealed that the club will 'asses' Anthony Stewart following its absence in the win at the Abbey Stadium.

Positive thinking is needed this month



Wycombe boss Gareth Ainsworth is looking forward to the end of the season for Wycombe (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth firmly believes that his side will secure a play-off place before the end of the season.

The Chairboys defeated Doncaster Rovers in their most recent match 2-0 at Adams Park, which was their fourth win in six games.

They have also kept five clean sheets in that time becoming one of League One's most in form teams.

On the same day as their win over the struggling Donny, play-off rivals Oxford dropped out of the top six following 1-0 loss away at fellow promotion pushing Plymouth.

Wigan Athletic drew 1-1 at home to Bolton, Sunderland 1-0 against Gillingham, MK defeated Shrewsbury 2-0 and Sheffield Wednesday were 2-1 winners over Wimbledon, whilst league leaders Rotherham didn't play due to their appearance in this year's EFL Trophy Cup final against League Two Sutton United.

This means that with less than a month to go before the regular season finishes, there are just 12 points separating Wycombe in eighth on 69 points, to Rotherham who are on 80.

Ainsworth said: "This is going to chop and change from now, to the end of the season.

"We're going to get back into the play-offs and I'm telling you that.

"Once you're in the play-offs, it's about staying in there and when that happens? I don't know but I'm hoping we'll be ready for the play-offs.

"It's going to go down to Burton on the final day!"

By James Richings

The victory over Doncaster was memorable for several ways as it focused on the career of Adebayo Akinfenwa, who is retiring at the end of the season.

The game also saw Joe Jacobson make his 600th career appearance, and despite keeping with the same starting 11 for the fourth consecutive league match, Ainsworth believes changes will be made to keep their promotion hopes alive.

He continued: "JJ picked up a knock, Sam Vokes and Garath McCleary came off due to tired legs and I've got some fantastic players, like Akinfenwa that I can rotate into the squad, and I'll do what I need to do to win these games."

Finally, the boss has revealed that he asked his players to 'embrace' the day which was dedicated to Akinfenwa.

He concluded: "The fans were brilliant, thank you so much.

"We knew that today wouldn't be a distraction and I said in my team talk to embrace this.

"Embrace Akinfenwa, embrace Joe Jacobson's 600th appearance and embrace the day.

"Embrace the day.

"We're not going to say, is this going to distract from the game.

"Embrace it.

"He is one of us.

"This club would not be anywhere near we are if it wasn't for Adebayo Akinfenwa.

"We embraced it, and thankfully, we got the win.

SPORT



Chairboys crush Cambridge away



Jack Young moved on April 4 (PA)

Young signs permanently from NUFC

WYCOMBE Wanderers have confirmed the permanent signing of midfielder Jack Young from Newcastle United.

The 21-year-old has penned a three-year contract with the Chairboys following his loan move to the Adams Park outfit back in January.

And since being in Buckinghamshire, Young, who also had a brief spell at Tranmere Rovers last season on loan from the Magpies, has played for times for Wycombe.

Two of those matches have so far come in the league, whilst the other two were in the Berks & Bucks Cup.

Manager Gareth Ainsworth said: "Jack's really impressed us, since the day he arrived, and we're delighted to have him on board on a permanent basis.

"He was brought to our attention by our recruitment team earlier in the season and we were really pleased to have the chance to take a look at him during his loan deal."

Mixing it up at Adams Park

THE mixture of youth and experience within the Wycombe Wanderers squad is something that is pleasing manager Gareth Ainsworth.

In the Chairboys' 4-1 away win at Cambridge United on April 5, 21-year-old Chris Forino started alongside 30-year-old Ryan Tafazolli in the centre of Wanderers' defence, with 26-year-old Jason McCarthy and 35-year-old Joe Jacobson being in the right and left back positions respectively.

Up top, 21-year-old Anis Mehmeti hit the same post twice in the match, whilst 34-year-old Garath McCleary scored his ninth of the season, with 32-year-old Sam Vokes bagging a brace.

Speaking on his squad, Ainsworth said: "We've got a really good mix of youth and experience as the latter bring calmness and confidence to the game.

"McCleary and Vokes and Horgan and Jacobson, on top of Mehmeti and Forino and Young is a really good blend.

"Let managers build and I think we're seeing the results of brilliant recruitment and years of hard work from myself and Dobbo from when we had nothing to now, where we've got something."



Gareth Ainsworth was pleased with his side's biggest away win of the season, as they smashed Cambridge 4-1 at the Abbey Stadium (PA)

By James Richings

WYCOMBE boss Gareth Ainsworth believes his side's 4-1 away win at Cambridge United was one of his side's best performances on the road this season.

The Chairboys took control of the match early on thanks to a Sam Vokes tap in on seven minutes, before the Welshman scored his second and his 14th of the campaign with a great finish early into the second half.

Two minutes after he gave Wycombe a 2-0 lead, Josh Scowen smashed home a terrific goal from long-range to secure the points for Wanderers.

It was Scowen's first of the season and his first since re-joining the club last summer.

His last strike for the Chairboys was in October 2014.

Harvey Knibbs scored a consolation for Cambridge with 11 minutes remaining before Garath McCleary placed home Wanderers' fourth moments before the end.

It was his ninth of the campaign and his first away goal in League One since April 2008, when he scored in a 2-0 win for Nottingham Forest at Carlisle United.

This was his first-ever career goal.

Speaking after the thrashing at the Abbey Stadium, Ainsworth said: "The whole lot were

superb.

"It's our best away league result of the season and performance wise, I'd put it up there with Rotherham and Wigan as well.

"The lads were superb as I thought we attacked really, really well.

"Some of the play was super."

"I got the message to the players that I wanted us to go at them [Cambridge].

"We had a few words at half-time to try and deal with Ironside who has been one of the most prolific goal scorers in the league, but we kept him to a minimum and I thought Chris Forino, who we took out of university, is going from strength to strength with him being alongside Ryan

Tafazolli, who I thought was immense.

"But I don't like individualising people.

"We got the result but I thought we could have scored a few more as we hit the post and bar, but it was a big performance and it has come at the right time because we're at the crucial end of the season."

It was the first-time Wycombe had scored four goals away from home in a league match since November 2014, when they defeated Cheltenham Town by the same scoreline.*

The 4-1 away win at Fleetwood Town in July 2020 in the League One play-offs semi-final first league doesn't count as an official league match