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Drivers enjoy bus lanes free-for-all

No fines given to rule-breaker motorists



A COUNCIL could be missing out on thousands of pounds worth of fines after admitting motorists breaking the rules by driving in bus lanes are not being fined.

Buckinghamshire Council has admitted that across the county it is not enforcing any bus lane restrictions.

By Charlie Smith

There are 16 bus lanes – and pedestrians have criticised the council for not taking on action on drivers who “dangerously” break the restrictions..

A Freedom of Information Request submitted by this newspaper found that the authority had

not issued any warning notices or penalty charge notices for driving in bus lanes since mid-February, when its new enforcement cameras were switched on.

The council said eight of its ANPR enforcement locations were currently operational.

Full story: Page 5

Origins of your cards



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Sport

HOW DID THE SQUADS DO LAST WEEKEND?

Women's hockey team results in Marlow

MARLOW Women's 1st team travelled to Woking to play the British Women's Army team in the EH tier 2 cup.

Marlow started well and had a lot of possession but the Army defence was strong.

The Army were quick on the break and clinical in the attacking circle and scored two quick goals to lead at halftime 2-0.

Captain Rachel Goodwin showed excellent

determination and resilience in midfield and continued to give Marlow attacking chances but they were unable to score past the Army defence.

The Army scored another two goals in the second half to ensure the win.

Lauren Hilditch scored a goal in the final minutes to give Marlow a consolation goal.

The final score of 4-1 reflects the Army's ability to score when they entered the circle,

but not the hard work, determination and possession that Marlow showed.

Marlow will resume the second half of the season with a rearranged game vs Bournemouth on January 6th hoping to maintain their unbeaten league record.

Other women's results. The 5th team beat Eastcote 32-1 in the 4th tier cup, 6s beat Wallingford 4 5-3, 7s beat Maidenhead 5s.



How did the women's teams do last week?

SPORT: GETTING READY FOR THE 2024 GAMES

Olympic preparation for Buckinghamshire rower

HEIDI Long believes the heat of battle helped fire her to a redemptive victory at the British Olympic Rowing Trials.

The Chalfont St Peter star combined with Rowan McKellar to lay down a marker for Paris 2024 after coming out on top in the women's pair event at Caversham.

After a disappointing run in Saturday's time trial, the duo responded with a rousing victory to give Long fresh hope of a maiden Games appearance.

"We're really happy," said the 27-year-old, who is one of over 1,000 elite athletes on UK Sport's National Lottery-funded World Class Programme.

"We knew we had a lot to do to turn it around so we just tried to stay in our lane, focus on the process and we couldn't be happier with the result.

"This is the first side by side racing we've done all year and we both love it. We love racing and getting against everybody.

"We can really take a big boost from a good race where there were difficult conditions and lane draws, and trust that this is what we're good at and that we've got time to make it perfect before the summer."

McKellar echoed those sentiments: "I'm just so happy. I weirdly went into this confidence after a bad day, I was so confident and just thought please can we do the job.

"I knew we could do it. We've been going well and I'm super pleased we've done it."

Long has been earmarked for success at the top level for

By Ben Hart

some time, having competed at a Rowing World Cup event in 2021 as part of a young 'Project Paris' squad.

She finished fourth on her first senior team appearance and just a year later completed the 2022 season unbeaten in the women's four, with gold at the World and European Championships.

But with double Olympic gold medallist Helen Glover among those vying for a spot in the boat, Long knows she cannot afford to take her eye off the ball.

"I have no idea what the Games is going to be like so I'm just taking it one Games at a time and seeing how much we can step up each season and each race," she said.

"It's a super strong squad and it's all to play for over the next few months.

"I'm hoping we can come together to get all those seats into medal positions."

Subject to selection, Long's path to Paris will continue at April's World Cup event in Italy, but she is refusing to look too far ahead.

"I can't imagine what it would mean to get there, my emotions are all over the place now because this is a step in the right direction," she added.

"I can't think about the prospect of it too much, it's just about taking the most out of every single day and making those small changes, and hopefully the process will start to produce results."



The Games will take place in Paris in the summer of 2024 (PA)

SPORT: FOOTBALL

Hero opens up on brief AP stint

FORMER Wycombe Wanderers cult hero Simon Garner has released his second autobiography.

The 64-year-old, who spent two years on the books at Adams Park where he scored 15 league goals in 66 league appearances, spoke about his stint in South Buckinghamshire.

The ex-forward, who is also Blackburn Rovers' all-time top scorer with 194, revealed how he joined the club following his departure from West Bromwich Albion, how he spent some time in prison, and how he fell out with manager Alan Smith, who took over from Martin O'Neill in 1996.

In his latest tell-all book, 'One Last Shot', he recounts: "Under Martin, we finished sixth in Division Two.

"Under Smith, we dropped to 12th.

"He dumped Steve Thompson, Paul Hyde and Terry Howard into non-league football, he changed the first team kit to resemble that of Crystal Palace, the club that had just sacked him after being relegated from the Premiership.

"He made us train at Bisham Abbey where the facilities were good, expensive and, coincidentally I'm sure, where he had his tennis lessons.

"He wore very short shorts.

"On one occasion it was raining as we were walking on to the training pitch and we could see fake tan running down the back of his legs.

"One of the lads laughed and he never played for the club again.

"He presided over the worst attendance in the league history of the club and looked on as the Wycombe board announced record losses of £300,000 for the season."

"Martin's philosophy was to play to our strengths and not to worry about our deficiencies, a dream to a player like me.

"So long as we scored more than the opposition, he didn't care how many we conceded.

"We rarely practised set pieces, rather we'd play by instinct.

"Anyone would take a corner or throw-in and we weren't assigned positions to defend or attack at particular points in the game.

"Martin was much keener that we use our heads and take responsibility for situations ourselves.

"It made us an attractive attacking side."

His previous autobiography, 'There's Only One Simon Garner', was released in 2002.

To purchase the book, which is now out, you can visit www.simgarner.co.uk.

For more Wycombe Wanderers news, go to @James_BFP's profile on X (formerly known as Twitter).

WANDERERS: KVV IS BACK

Vincent-Young's return pleases Bloomfield



Matt Bloomfield was very happy that Kane Vincent-Young has returned from injury following a three-month absence (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield believes Kane Vincent-Young has been 'missed' following his return to first-team action.

The right-wing back had not played for three months after injuring his hamstring in the club's 2-0 win over Blackpool in the middle of September.

He eventually made his comeback in the Chairboys' 1-1 draw against Derby County exactly 90 days later, where he came on as a second-half substitute for Jack Grimmer.

With Wycombe chasing the game in the final few minutes, he nearly scored an equaliser before Luke Leahy's injury-time penalty rescued a point for Wanderers at Pride Park.

Bloomfield said: "He performed to his maximum this week as he's been

out with a hamstring for a little while, so to come back and nearly score at the end shows how much he has been missed.

"We wanted him to come here as Kane is a very talented boy, he cares about his football and he wants to do well for himself.

"We're pleased to have him back as he has a lot of quality."

Despite the late point, the result means Wycombe are now winless in nine in the league and have dropped to 18th in the table, but the manager is feeling confident going into the Christmas period.

He continued: "I was convinced today [December 16] was the day, whatever the perception is of our current form, was going to change today."

AP'S COLUMN

A point in the right direction?

THE visit of Port Vale to Adams Park on Saturday, December 23 is the first of four fixtures in ten days that could help decide if Wycombe's disappointing start to the season has reached a more positive turning point.

The Chairboys have gone nine games since their last league win, but a draw and a much improved display at Derby County, the biggest club in the division, have given hope that a change of fortunes could be just around the corner.

Luke Leahy's last minute penalty equaliser at Derby felt like a pivotal moment after a run of poor performances that have seen Wanderers slide down the League One table.

They are just seven points above the relegation places but have a game-in-hand on most of the teams in the bottom half of the table, with home matches over the festive period against Vale and Bristol Rovers and trips to Exeter City and Leyton Orient in between.

Manager Matt Bloomfield opted to change to a 4-2-3-1 formation at Derby and his team produced their best display since the 4-1 win at Fleetwood Town in early October.

With key players like Sam Vokes and Freddie Potts returning from injury, the prospect of climbing back into the top half of the table looks much brighter, but the next four games are crucial, starting with the visit of Port Vale.

The Potteries club are just two points ahead of Wanderers and they are one of the lowest scoring sides in the division with only 18 goals in 20 games.

On their last visit to Adams Park just over a year ago, Vale twice came from behind to earn a point in a 2-2 draw, with the Wanderers goals scored by Anis Mhmeti and Lewis Wing, both of whom have since moved on to other clubs.

Wanderers won 3-0 in the return fixture at Vale Park in February this year, with Brandon Hanlan, Joe Jacobson and Gareth McCleary on the scoresheet.

The Chairboys have lost only three of their 18 previous meetings with Vale, winning seven and drawing the other eight.

Another win on Saturday would end the drought and give Blues fans the perfect Christmas present.

Up next for Wycombe after the match against Port Vale is an away trip to Exeter City.

SPORT: POINTS ARE SHARED IN THE MIDLANDS

Wycombe leave it late with last-minute strike at Derby

LUKE Leahy scored a 96th minute penalty as Wycombe Wanderers drew 1-1 against promotion-pushing Derby County at Pride Park.

The opening half was an even affair as both sides went close to taking the lead.

Whilst no keeper had to make a save, Garath McCleary, who of course spent some time at Nottingham Forest, saw his attempt from 12-yards go wide, whilst Kieran Sadlier fired over.

For Derby, they enjoyed large

portions of possession and were very dangerous just outside the penalty area, with Conor Hourihane and Nathaniel Mendez-Laing making things tick for the hosts, but goalkeeper Max Stryjek wasn't called into action.

The second period saw the tempo increase dramatically as both teams pushed to try and find a winner in what was a nervy half for each side.

For the Chairboys, Sam Vokes, who came on from Lyle Taylor fired wide, whilst Phillips, Sad-

lier, McCleary and Harry Boyes all tried their luck but to no avail.

Down the other end, Derby pushed on with James Collins, Mendez-Laing Louie Sibley and Curtis Nelson all going close.

And on 77 minutes, the Rams found their opening goal through substitute Tom Barkhuizen.

Mendez-Laing's low cross was parried into the six-yard box by Stryjek, but only to the ex-Preston North End man to tap in.

It was his fourth of the season and his second in as many games.

Wanderers pushed on for their equaliser as Vokes, McCleary and Kan Vincent-Young, who was making his first appearance in exactly three months, all went close, but in the final seconds of the match, drama unfolded.

David Wheeler was brought down in the box by Joe Ward, and up stepped Luke Leahy who converted his seventh of the season.

It was the last kick of the match as Pride Park was stunned into silence.

Up next for Wycombe is Port Vale at home on December 23.



The moment that Wycombe were given a penalty in the final seconds in their match against Derby (PA)

TEAM THAT FACED THE RAMS

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Stryjek | 22. Phillips |
| 2. Grimmer | 12. McCleary |
| 5. Forino | 30. Taylor |
| 17. Low | SUBS USED: |
| 23. Sadlier | 16. Keogh, |
| 10. Leahy | 44.V-Young, 7. |
| 4. Scowen | Wheeler, and |
| 11.Boyes | 9. Vokes |

Never give up attitude saves the Chairboys

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield believes it would have been a 'travesty' if the Chairboys failed to gain a point following their 1-1 draw at Derby County.

The Adams Park side went into the contest with no wins in eight league matches, but put the Rams, who are in the play-off places on the back foot.

Despite this, County took the lead in the final 15 minutes thanks

to a Tom Barkhuizen tap-in, before Luke Leahy equalised with an injury-time penalty.

This came after Joe Ward fouled David Wheeler in the box, with the successful spot-kick being the final kick of the contest.

The result means Wanderers have now not won in nine and drop to 18th, but it's the first time this season that they have gained a point with an injury-time strike this season.

He said: "We were up against a side with a huge stadium and following, so to come away with more XG and shots makes me so proud of the boys.

"The discipline they showed was brilliant as they were putting in the hard yards during the week in training.

"We lost Dale [Taylor] to illness so we thought today was the right to try something fresh with a new shape.

"We worked very diligently and had meeting after meeting this week as we had a whole week to prepare for this.

"I'm so proud of them.

"We showed so much quality as the players are fighting for each other, this club and for the fans that travel every week.

"It would have been a travesty if we didn't get anything from the game as we played so well."

Up next is Port Vale at home.

SPORT

0963-2336



Leahy scored his seventh goal of the season on Dec 16 (PA)

Point secured by Leahy with the final kick of the contest

WYCOMBE Wanderers utility player Luke Leahy has admitted he didn't realise his last-minute penalty to rescue a point against Derby County was the last kick of the contest.

The Chairboys secured a 1-1 draw away at the Rams on December 16 after the Adams Park side were awarded a spot-kick in the 96th minute of the match.

This came after Tom Barkhuizen thought he had won the fixture for the promotion-pushers

with a strike in the 83rd minute to which the Rams the lead.

However, in the final seconds of the contest, David Wheeler was fouled by Joe Ward in the penalty box and Rebecca Welch pointed to the spot, which was duly converted by Leahy for his seventh of the season.

He said: "There's nothing better when it's the last kick of the game.

"I didn't realise it was until at the end of the celebration when I saw the linesman standing

next to the referee, so that feel is great.

"It feels like a win for us, and for them, it feels like a defeat.

"But we can't ahead of ourselves as yes, this is a point we deserved, we need to get ready for next week."

The goal was Leahy's seventh for the club since moving from Shrewsbury Town in the summer, with five of his strikes coming from the spot.

On his 100 per cent penalty record at Adams Park so far, he said: "I

don't want to give it the kiss of death but it's just down to practising.

"I practise all the time.

"I usually get someone to take all the flack with the ball on the penalty spot then I arrive, gather my thoughts, and today it paid off."

The goal means Leahy is now Wanderers' highest scorer of the season.

The two strikes which didn't come from 12-yards were against Fleetwood Town and Bolton Wanderers respectively.

Bloomfield on delight over Derby away point

By George Gutteridge

WYCOMBE manager Matt Bloomfield has emphasised his delight following his side's 1-1 draw away at Derby County at the weekend.

The manager spoke of how pleased he was for his side to secure another point, adding how he enjoyed sharing the moment with the travelling supporters at full-time.

Midfielder Luke Leahy scored a 97th minute penalty to ensure Wanderers travelled back to Buckinghamshire with a deserved point, sparking pandemonium as fans celebrated in the away end at Pride Park.

The point was Wycombe Wanderer's first point-scorer away from home since the 2-2 draw at Oxford at the end of October, and the boss was delighted with the circumstances it came in.

"We've been close to a lot [of points], so to get a point in that manner was obviously really pleasing."

Bloomfield was quick to praise the 475 Chairboys who made the trip to Derbyshire, as he did on Saturday, and spoke fondly about the scenes following the final whistle.

The manager said: "It was a nice moment for the support-



Wycombe Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield during a previous match at Derby. Pic: Barrington Coombs/PA

ers to share with the players on the pitch."

Wycombe have picked up twelve points from ten away league games so far this season, but the manager feels his side have gone unrewarded in recent weeks following numerous positive performances.

"[...]the supporters, who've

spent a lot of money following us away from home and we've put in some really good performances, at Portsmouth we were a foul away from getting a point, Charlton I thought we were extremely good for half an hour in the second half, at Peterborough we could've come away with a result, at Oxford

we were a minute from getting all three so we've been close to a lot."

Attention to Bloomfield and his players now turns to Saturday's home game against Port Vale, where season ticket holders are invited to bring a friend along for £10.

Up for the challenge of busy festive schedule

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield has admitted that the football schedule over the festive season can be "tough", but said it is all part of the job that he loves.

The Chairboys host Port Vale in league action this coming weekend, and the boss gave his honest view when quizzed about the effect football can have his family around Christmas time.

He said: "Without me trying to sound like I am trying to play a violin or anything, it is tough.

"I have missed my girls in their nativity plays, I have missed Christmas Day.

"I will be leaving my family home at midday [on Christmas Day] and making my way into training and then we go down to Exeter."

The 39-year-old did however admit that the traditional festive football schedule was part and parcel of the sport and his job.

The Wanderers manager added: "It is part of life and it is the life I signed up for.

"It is part of the gig - I love my job."

Bloomfield expects a tough game on Saturday, and a potential reunion with former fan favourite Uche Ikpeazu, who was rumoured to rejoin Wycombe in the summer.

He said: "We know the threat he offers, we know the physicality he brings and the goal threat he brings."