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Hamilton pain not right for Ricciardo



MERCEDES' Lewis Hamilton is having back issues in his car.

DANIEL Ricciardo insists Lewis Hamilton was not exaggerating his back injury after the Azerbaijan Grand Prix and believes Formula One drivers do not deserve "unnecessary" pain.

Hamilton's participation at this weekend's round in Canada was thrown into doubt after he required assistance to get out of his Mercedes cockpit following last Sunday's race on the streets of Baku.

The 37-year old is expected to be fit to participate, but it is likely he will have to race through the pain barrier again in his bouncy Mercedes machine.

McLaren driver Ricciardo told the PA news agency: "There was talk about Lewis after the race. I saw some of his on-boards, I saw pictures of him getting out of the car and stretching his back, and he wasn't exaggerating. It really was uncomfortable.

"The good thing is that it is very visible. If you have the car's audio, you can hear it jumping and bouncing, and from the images, you can see the helmet is moving around, too. It is not normal or comfortable.

"The position we sit in the car, we don't have much room to move so we are not prepared for the impacts.

"If that is up to a rule change, or the way the teams are setting up the cars, I am not 100 per cent sure. But I wouldn't like anyone to go through any unnecessary injury or pain.

"We have spoken about it this season, but with Baku being such a big one, I am sure it will get discussed in the drivers' briefing."

Meanwhile, the Australian Grand Prix, Ricciardo's home race, will remain in Melbourne and Albert Park until 2035, it was announced this week.



MANCHESTER City had to fight back at West Ham last month, earning an important 2-2 draw in their title quest.

City to visit Hammers as fixtures out

PREMIER League champions Manchester City will begin the defence of their title at West Ham in the final match of the opening weekend.

Pep Guardiola's side will start their bid for a fifth championship in six seasons at the London Stadium at 4.30pm on Sunday, August 7.

Main rivals Liverpool go to Fulham in the Saturday lunchtime match, which pitches the Reds'

new signing Fabio Carvalho against his old club.

New Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag opens his maiden season in England at home to Brighton on the Sunday.

Frank Lampard, who guided Everton to safety with one match to spare last month, comes up against former employers Chelsea in the Saturday evening kick-off.

Nottingham Forest's first match in the top-flight in 23 years will be away to Newcastle.

Promoted Bournemouth host Aston Villa first game back before taking on City, Arsenal and Liverpool in consecutive matches.

For the second season running Arsenal kick off the new campaign, this time with a trip to Crystal Palace on Friday, August 5.

Skipper sure Mott will hold no fears

By David Charlesworth

Press Association Sport

EOIN Morgan believes new England white-ball coach Matthew Mott will be unafraid "to hold some of the best players in the world accountable" ahead of their first assignment.

The Morgan-Mott captain-coach partnership starts today in the low-key surroundings of Amstelveen, a suburb of Amsterdam, for the first of three one-day internationals against the Netherlands.

Brought in to split coaching duties alongside Brendon McCullum, Mott has vowed not to assert himself too much at the beginning of his reign.

But having overseen sustained success with Australia's women's team, Morgan is convinced the Queenslander will be undaunted at speaking up in a changing room containing a number of men's 50-over World Cup winners.



ENGLAND'S Eoin Morgan (centre).

Morgan said: "One of the attributes when thinking about the future of our white-ball game and what the team require is an experienced coach that brings that hunger for success and isn't afraid to hold some of the best players in the world accountable in a team environment. Mott brings that.

"Motty is a guy I've come across not a lot but certainly at Glamorgan and Kent and had a lot of feedback from (former England coach)

Trevor Bayliss. All of it was of someone who is a well-rounded guy who is not afraid to challenge things and drive them forward."

The decision to divide who supervises the red and white-ball groups was taken following the sacking of Chris Silverwood after a disastrous Ashes series.

Silverwood's reign was blighted by Covid and the bio-secure bubble environments that were necessary for cricket to resume.

Morgan said: "Covid exacerbated both roles and in my opinion it became impossible to lead in all three formats.

"There's so much going on, Covid bubbles with players of 21 or 22 people, sometimes 28. Trying to manage that amount of people on the ground and off the field gets too much and your job doesn't revolve around performance, it revolves around just getting by.

"With splitting the roles, there are so many things that it allows the coach to do."

Twins get England squad nod



JAMIE Overton has been called up for England's final Test against New Zealand, joining twin brother Craig in a 14-man squad.

The uncapped Surrey seamer, who is the younger sibling by three minutes, has been drafted in for next week's trip to Headingley following a rousing, series-clinching victory at Trent Bridge.

England have reported no injury concerns among the bowling group, but the addition suggests they are keen to assess their options in Leeds, having relied on a three-man pace attack of James Anderson, Stuart Broad and newcomer Matthew Potts in the last two Tests.

Jack Leach is the only frontline spinner in the squad after Matt Parkinson was released to Lancashire.

Houghton 'not ready'



ENGLAND boss Sarina Wiegman described it as a "really hard" decision to leave Steph Houghton out of her final Euros squad as she stressed she feels the defender is "just not ready to compete".

Houghton, the Lionesses' captain at their last three major tournaments, failed to make the cut as a provisional 28-player group named last month was reduced to 23, ahead of this summer's showpiece on home soil getting under way on July 6.

The Manchester City centre-back has not played since January due to an Achilles issue, for which she has had surgery.



Wycombe Wanderers trio make the cut in Adebayo Akinfenwa's 'Perfect XI'

3 in Bayo's 'Perfect XI'

RETIRING Chairboys legend Adebayo Akinfenwa named three former Wycombe Wanderers stars in his 'Perfect XI' for FourFourTwo magazine.

The 40-year-old has hung up his boots after more than two decades scoring goals across the Football League, including more than 60 for Wycombe in 250 appearances.

His chosen goalkeeper is former number one at Adams Park, David Stockdale.

Explaining his decision in the popular magazine, Akinfenwa said: "There's a tick next to so many aspects of his game- and he's a good kicker."

Alongside a defence consisting of England star Kyle Walker and former Leeds United boss Gary

Monk is Chairboys captain, Joe Jacobson.

A full-back with almost 350 appearances for the club since his arrival in 2014, Jacobson has been un-droppable across the rise from League Two to the Championship.

When discussing Jacobson, 'The Beast' said "he has one of the best left foot's I've come across in my career."

The final Wycombe player which makes the cut is current Crystal Palace star Eberechi Eze.

Spending a spell on loan at Adams Park in 2017, the Nigerian midfielder scored five in 22 appearances before being recalled and becoming a regular at Queens Park Rangers until his £17m move to Selhurst Park in 2020.

Tickets on sale for development side friendly



Credit: PA

TICKETS for the Chairboys' Development team pre-season friendly with Aylesbury United have gone on sale.

The Ducks play their home matches at Chesham United's The Meadow and are due to play Sam Grace's side on Friday, July 22.

This comes just three days after the members of Division One Central of the Southern League host Kings Langley.

The development side, which will feature a number of trialists, are also due to face Bracknell Town and Chesham United in July ahead of the Football League big kick-off on the last weekend of the month.

Tickets are £5 for adults, £3 for concessions and free for those under 16.

Friendlies are yet to be announced for the first team as the season finished late due to the play-off final defeat to Sunderland.

Fixtures for the new League One campaign are released at 9am on Thursday, June 23.

Aylesbury Vale Dynamos announce new joint-manager structure

AYLESBURY Vale Dynamos have announced a new joint-manager structure ahead of the 2022/23 campaign.

Playing in the Spartan South Midlands League Premier Division, Michael East and Liam Dwyer have now been tasked with leading the club next season.

East took charge of the Development side as they won the Suburban League Central Division.

Dwyer has arrived from Kings Langley as they survived in the Southern League Premier South.

Member of the Development side's coaching team, Damien Eatwell, will join the first team set up.

An official club statement read: "We welcome Liam to the club and congratulate Easty and Damo on their new roles."

Bayo: 'You will always be in my heart'



Credit: PA

ICONIC Chairboys striker Bayo Akinfenwa has penned an emotional message following his retirement from professional football.

The 40-year-old played 250 times for Wycombe Wanderers and is the top scorer for the club during the EFL era.

Since arriving at Adams Park in 2016, the fan favourite has netted 61 goals across three tiers of the game including a sole strike in the Championship.

Hanging up his boots after more than 20 years, he leaves having scored more than 200 career goals in almost 800 matches for 13 clubs.

His final involvement was 15 minutes under the Wembley arch in Gareth Ainsworth's sides' 2-0 defeat to Sunderland in the League One play-off final- a bittersweet moment in a distinguished career.

Releasing a statement on social media on Saturday, he made special comment to those involved in Buckinghamshire.

"To my football family at Wycombe Wanderers," he started. "Words will never do justice what you all mean to me. To the board, both past and present, thank you!

"To the Couhig family thank you for your drive and ambition which aided in taking the club to the next level. To all the staff, thank you! I've got to shout out Cian, Watesy and Josh who have been there from the beginning of my Wycombe journey, got mad

By James Earnshaw

love for you guys. To every single teammate that I shared the dressing room with, we have a bond that will live with me for a lifetime. We defied limitation and overcame the odds. Thank you.

"And of course, to our amazing fans we've shared some special moments, and nobody can ever take that away from us. Thank you for everything, you will always be in my heart."

It was not just the hierarchy and supporters who got a shout out, with assistant manager Richard Dobson referred to as 'Yoda' from Star Wars and Chairboys boss Ainsworth a 'trailblazer.'

His message concluded: "A special thank you goes to Richard Dobson, who throughout my time at Wycombe was my Yoda. Last but not least, to the man I believe I was not only destined to meet in a professional capacity, but I know on a personal level Mr Gareth Ainsworth. Your unwavering belief, support and love has been unmatched. Never change, continue to be a trailblazer."

He is one of three key stars leaving Adams Park ahead of the 2022/23 campaign, with Matt Bloomfield retiring and ending his 19-year spell as a Wanderers player, as well as goalkeeper David Stockdale departing to join Sheffield Wednesday.

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'No brainer': First words with Owls



Credit: PA

By James Earnshaw

NEW Sheffield Wednesday goalkeeper David Stockdale said that his move to Yorkshire was a 'no brainer' after leaving Wycombe Wanderers.

Joining as a free agent from the Chairboys, after an in-form campaign in which he kept the most clean sheets in the league, Stockdale departs after two years in Buckinghamshire.

His first season as a permanent signing, following two loan stints in 2019 and 2020, he played 17 times as they almost survived in the Championship before becoming an ever-present last season.

In his first interview with the

Owls, he said he was "delighted" with the move.

"It was a bit of a no brainer for me," he said: "When I knew it was settled, I spoke to the gaffer, and it was a done deal. I wasn't touted as being available, everything was fine at Wycombe, but as soon as we had our little chat it was dead on for me. The first thing I said to him was that I'm not here to waste time, I'm here to win trophies. Imagine lifting the trophy with a full house, that's the thought. I like to manifest my thoughts and live it out."

With more than 400 career appearances across the top four professional leagues in England, he believes that experience is a key component he will

bring to the side next year.

He concluded: "He said we've got the players, but we need a bit of experience which, if you knock over my zimoframe, I've got a little bit of. I don't take myself too seriously- I said that to the gaffer- and I said I might be disappointed if I'm not playing, I want to play and finish on a high.

"I spoke to the gaffer and I set it out - promotion is my aim... It was last year, it was the year before. I'm not here for money, I'm not here for fame, I'm obviously not here for fashion. I'm here for medals, and that's my one drive.

"Hopefully I can be a big part of that, but if my experience helps other people across the line - being a part of it and getting this

massive club back on the rung of the ladder to where you eventually want to be - then it'll be an unbelievable achievement."

Tweeting following his departure from Adams Park, he said: "Just like to come on and thank the staff top to bottom, the fans who took me in when at a low point and the players I've shared incredible memories with. I thank you all from the heart. All the best."

This was his second message, as hours beforehand he had started: "Thank you to each and every player and staff. Thanks to the gaffer, Dobbo and Harry. Gave me the chance and got my love back for the game. Can't thank you all enough. Good luck and see you soon."



Credit: PA

Ryan Tafazoli beaten to end of year prize

WYCOMBE Wanderers defender Ryan Tafazoli was beaten to the Football League World Player of the Season award by Sunderland's Ross Stewart.

The 30-year-old joined the Chairboys in 2020, making 33 appearances last season as Gareth Ainsworth's men reached the League One play-off final.

The former Peterborough United and Hull City defender also popped up with four goals.

Alongside Tafazoli and Stewart were Plymouth Argyle keeper Michael Cooper, Sheffield Wednesday star Barry Bannan, MK Dons favourite Scott Twine and Wigan Athletic forward Will Keane.

Scottish forward Stewart netted 26 times for the Black Cats in the 2021/22 campaign as Alex Neil's side beat Wanderers in the play-off final at Wembley Stadium.

Chairboys confirm Stockdale exit

LEAGUE One rivals Sheffield Wednesday have officially announced the signing of former Wycombe Wanderers goalkeeper David Stockdale.

The 36-year-old played more than 50 times for the Chairboys since arriving in 2020 and nobody kept more clean sheets in League One last season than the former Brighton keeper.

He played in all 46 league matches as Gareth Ainsworth's men were losing play-off finalists.

Joining from July 1, he will add experience to the ranks at Hillsborough as they look to return to the second tier.

With more than 400 career appearances to date, and an England international call-up a decade ago, he has played in all four professional English divisions.

Breaking the news on Wednesday, June 16, the club said: "We wish him well for the future at his new club, where he will be closer to home and able to enjoy more time with his family."