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## SPORT

## Positive update on Tjay De Barr

WYCOMBE Wanderers striker Tjay De Barr has publicly spoken for the first time following his medical emergency on December 29.

The 22-year-old collapsed seconds after the Chairboys had lost 1-0 away at Plymouth Argyle at Home Park.

He had come on as a 71st-minute substitute for Ali Al-Hamadi in the clash against the Pilgrims, but just moments later, he collided with Argyle's Danny Mayor and was seen holding his chest in discomfort.

Notably, De Barr was spotted on his haunches whilst Wanderers were on the attacking in the latter stages of the game.

Following his collapse, he was stretched off and taken to a nearby hospital in the city for tests but was discharged hours later.

De Barr then returned home in the early hours of December 30.

Taking to Twitter on New Year's Eve [December 31], the forward said: "Just wanted to take this time to thank everyone who's been sending me messages and support over the last two days.

"Special thanks to everyone at Wycombe Wanderers, the medical team, all my teammates, staff, and supporters.

"I would also like to thank everyone involved with Plymouth Argyle for their messages of support.

"The response from everyone has been very humbling, also thank you to the ref who kept checking on me during the game. "Luckily I am much better now and all tests came back positive, I'll be back very soon giving 100 per cent like always."

De Barr missed Wycombe's next match, away at Peterborough United on New Year's Day, which ended in a 3-0 victory for the Chairboys.

Following the medical emergency, assistant manager Richard Dobson said: "Tjay is in good hands and will be taken to hospital to have further tests.

"What happened at the end there [against Plymouth], is something that we don't want to see as it caused great concern for everyone involved.

"His wellbeing is the most important thing, and I just want to say that the paramedics from both teams dealt with everything so professionally

"They were very quick to aid Tjay and that just highlights how important these people are when these situations do happen."

The next Chairboys fixture after they visit London Road isn't until January 14, when they take on promotion-pushing Sheffield Wednesday.

# Interesting facts after Posh victory



The win at P'boro was Wanderers' first at the ground since 2006 which ended a run of four visits without a victory at London Road (PA)



The defeat is Wycombe's first in the league away at Plymouth since April 2004 and their first at Home Park since August 2007

HERE are five things you may have missed from the win at London Road.

**A century of games as a Chairboy**  
The victory over the Posh saw Wanderers winger Garath McCleary chalk up 100 appearances for the club.

The 35-year-old played the whole 90 minutes in the New Year's Day win, where he registered an assist for Lewis Wing's second of the match in the latter stages of the game.

Here is a breakdown of the Jamaican's appearances with the Adams Park side:

League: 95 (77 starts/18 substitute appearances)

Play-offs: Three (three starts/zero substitute appearances)

FA Cup: One (zero starts/one substitute appearance)

In that time, McCleary has scored 19 times for the Chairboys.

**Ending a two-decade wait**

The win on New Year's Day not only leaped-frogged Wanderers over Peterborough in the table, but it secured the club's first league double over the Posh in 20 years.

The last time Wanderers' celebrated beating the Cambridgeshire-based side twice in the same league season was during the 2002/03 campaign.

It is only the third time in Wycombe's history that they have achieved this, with the first occasion happening in the 1994/95 season.

As it stands, Wycombe are unbeaten in three games against Peterborough.

**A long wait for a win at London Road**

On top of doing the double, it was Wycombe's first win at the stadium since May 2006.

**By James Richings**

Since that 2-0 victory in the spring of that year, Wanderers had not won in four visits where they shipped 13 goals and lost on three occasions.

**A 100 per cent record for Tafazolli**

Ryan Tafazolli scored his first of the season in the victory, as his header put Wycombe 2-0 up against his former side.

Interestingly, Wanderers have won every competitive game he has netted in.

Here is the centre back's record when getting on the scoresheet for Wycombe:

2020/21: Wycombe Wanderers 2-1 Cardiff City 2020/21: Wycombe Wanderers 1-0 Preston North End 2021/22: Shrewsbury Town 1-2 Wycombe Wanderers

**A first for the boss**

For the first time in his managerial career, Gareth Ainsworth won an away match at Peterborough.

Additionally, it was the sixth time as Wycombe boss he took charge on New Year's Day.

All of his wins for Wanderers on January 1 have come away from home.

2013: Wycombe Wanderers 0-1 Exeter City

2018: Forest Green Rovers 1-2 Wycombe Wanderers

2019: Wycombe Wanderers 0-2 Coventry City

2020: Wycombe Wanderers 1-1 Ipswich Town

2022: Charlton Athletic 0-1 Wycombe Wanderers

2023: Peterborough United 0-3 Wycombe Wanderers

## Old boy Scarr sinks Wycombe at Home Park

WYCOMBE Wanderers lost their final game of 2022 as they were defeated 1-0 by the League One leaders, Plymouth Argyle.

The Chairboys made eight changes going into the match against the table toppers, as Ali Al-Hamadi, Sullay Kaikai and Curtis Thompson were all given their first league starts of the season.

But it was Argyle that bossed the game's early stages as Sam Cosgrove headed wide after 60 seconds before Ryan Hardie saw his shot miss the target by a matter of inches.

The Chairboys continued to hold the Pilgrims at bay but on 32 minutes,

their barrier was broken as Dan Scarr gave Plymouth a deserved lead.

A corner from Adam Randell was tapped in by Scarr who was on hand to score his first of the season, and his first of 2022.

Wycombe rarely threatened with Jacobson testing Michael Cooper with a long-range effort in the dying seconds of the first-half, which was Wanderers' first shot on target.

The introductions of Tjay De Barr, Anis Mehmeti and Sam Vokes in the second half did see Wycombe muster up 12 attempts in the latter stages of the contest, but again, Cooper in the Plymouth goal was rarely tested.

Attendance: 15,729

# Arnold is back at AP

WYCOMBE Wanderers have confirmed that striker Arnold Matshazi has returned to the club following his brief loan spell at Non League Slough Town.

The 19-year-old had been with the Arbour Park side since October where he scored three goals in 14 appearances.

His arrival in Berkshire came a matter of months after he penned a professional contract with the Chairboys, following his departure from Blackpool.

So far, Matshazi has played two games for Wanderers with both of his outings coming in the cups.

His debut for Wycombe was in the 3-1 home defeat against Bristol City in the League Cup back in August, whilst his second appearance was away at Stevenage in the Football League Trophy.

Wanderers lost the latter 3-0.

Other players that are currently out on loan are Ben Kaninda at Hanwell Town, Josh Blunkell at Bowers & Pitsea, Luca Woodhouse at Slough Town, Adam Leathers at Hampton & Richmond Borough, Jasper Pattenden at Dorking Wanderers, Christie Ward at Hungerford Town and Antoine Makoli at Chesham United.

## Starting the new year with a Posh win



Lewis Wing scored two (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers completed the double over Peterborough United for the first time in 20 seasons, as the Chairboys defeated the Posh 3-0 at London Road.

A brace from Lewis Wing and a Ryan Tafazolli header gave Gareth Ainsworth's men an important victory over their fellow play-off contenders.

On 15 minutes, Wing stepped up and brilliantly dispatched a 30-yard free-kick for his first away goal since March.

The second period saw Wanderers go into overdrive as they put Grant McCann's men to the sword.

Sam Vokes, who has only scored three goals all season, headed over whilst Jordan Obita saw his free-kick get pushed away by Will Blackmore.

But in the final 20 minutes, Wanderers put the game to bed with two quickfire strikes.

On 67 minutes, Ryan Tafazolli scored his first goal of the season with a close-range header against his former club, before Wing got his second with an incredible first-time screamer that struck the underside of the crossbar.

Attendance: 7,483 (538 away)

## A New Year's Day gift for the Chairboys

FOUR Wycombe Wanderers players have made it into the current League One Team of the Week, following the club's brilliant 3-0 away win at Peterborough United.

Max Stryjek, who made several important saves at London Road, Lewis Wing, who got a brace in the victory, Ryan Tafazolli, who scored in the win against his former side, and David Wheeler, who played in numerous positions, made the first all-star starting 11 of 2023.

Additionally, manager Gareth Ainsworth was named Manager of the Week.

The win was the first of his career away at the Posh as manager of Wycombe.

The victory has lifted Wanderers up into seventh place in the table.



Arnold Matshazi has returned to Adams Park following his loan spell at Slough Town. He had been on loan at the club since October

# Changing things over festive period



Gareth Ainsworth smiles as Wycombe defeated Peterborough 3-0 at London Road on New Year's Day (January 1) (PA)

GARETH Ainsworth has revealed that he decided to make wholesale changes in Wanderers' last two festive fixtures after 'looking back at results from five years ago.'

Prior to this season, Wycombe had a notorious record of not being able to pick points over the Christmas and New Year periods with the Chairboys only winning six fixtures over the festive season since 2017.

However, the Adams Park team have managed to pick up nine points from 12 this season, with Wycombe's only blemish coming against Plymouth Argyle who sit top of the table.

The other victories were against Ipswich Town, Bristol Rovers, and Peterborough United respectively.

Speaking after the club's 3-0 win over the Posh on New Year's Day, Ainsworth said: "Everyone now knows that my plan was to rest everyone for the middle game [against Plymouth]."

"I looked back at our recent Christmas results over the last five years and thought, 'why have not we picked up many points over Christmas?'"

"What is going wrong?" "We looked at tactics, performances, and selection, and we noticed that I had pretty much used the same team for the three games.

"So I decided to change it up about four weeks ago and no disrespect to squads gone by, but, we haven't had a squad like

By James Richings

this before, as we are changing players like for like, and I thought the difference today was the energy.

"We pressed, we battled and it looked like we could have gone on for a lot longer.

"Their home record is really good and I'm pleased the boys believed in themselves as this helped get the win.

"The boys were up for it and I'm really happy with where we are because this is a really hard place to come."

The victory has not only put Wanderers back in the play-off places, but it was the club's first win over the Posh at London Road since May 2006, and it was the first-time Wycombe had done the double over Peterborough since the 2002/03 season.

Additionally, Wycombe are three games unbeaten over the Cambridgeshire side.

Speaking on the fans that made the trip up, he added: "Thank you to everyone who came up to Peterborough as you made so much noise.

"It really got me going and they were brilliant and they came in numbers and they did not stop signing.

"So thank you for that."

"You were brilliant."

Wycombe's next game is on January 14 at home to Sheffield Wednesday.

# SPORT

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Mawson has not featured since Dec 17 for Wanderers (PA)

## Ainsworth provides injury update on star centre back Alfie Mawson

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth has explained why Alfie Mawson has been excluded from recent fixtures.

The centre back has not featured since the 1-0 victory over Ipswich Town on December 17, and has since missed the last three games against Bristol Rovers, Plymouth Argyle, and Peterborough United respec-

tively.

In that time, Wanderers have picked up nine points from 12, with the former Fulham and Swansea City man being absent as a 'precaution'.

But Ainsworth has revealed what the injury is.

Speaking after Wycombe's 3-0 win over Peterborough on New Year's Day, he said: "We all know that Alfie carries a prob-

lematic knee which he has had several operations on.

"He jarred it against Ipswich and once you do that, it's best to keep him out but we had Ryan Tafazolli, Joe Jacobson, and Jack Grimmer in a back three and they were fantastic [against Peterborough].

"Taf was imperious today [January 1] and I had a chat with him on Thursday where

there were a couple of things we could have worked on, but today, he has given me no case for me to pull him at all.

"He's a great lad, good character, and for him to score against his old club and have a good battle with Jonson Clarke-Harris, who is one of the league's best players, was great for him."

The win was Wanderers' first at London Road since May 2006.

# Ryan Tafazolli's goal for 2023

WYCOMBE defender Ryan Tafazolli has revealed that his goal against Peterborough United was 'long overdue', as he registered his first strike of the season.

The centre back headed in Jordan Obita's corner on 67 minutes to put the Chairboys 2-0 up in an eventual 3-0 victory at London Road.

His inaugural strike of the campaign, which came against his former club, was his first in any capacity since scoring against Milton Keynes in the play-off semi-finals back in May.

Speaking to the press at the full-time whistle, he said: "It was long overdue!

"It was about time I scored as I got five last season, but, we're a team that prides itself on winning our individual battles, and we knew if we did that today [January 1], we would have a great chance of winning.

"Peterborough are a free-flowing, high-scoring team so we knew it was going to be tough to contain them, but we started off really well and it's a great start to the year."

The 31-year-old also hopes to add more to his tally before the season is out, as he continues to build a reputation of being a goal scoring centre back.

Since joining Wanderers in September 2020, Tafazolli has bagged eight goals in 73 appearances for the club.

In total, the defender has netted 27 times in 347 professional career appearances

By James Richings

since making his first-time debut for Non League Salisbury in October 2009.

Tafazolli continued: "It was great to score and to be honest, I really couldn't miss because Jordon [Obita] has pretty much put it in the goal for me, so all I had to do was get a little touch on it and I'm delighted.

"It settled us a lot as we really needed that second goal to push on, and Wingy [Lewis Wing] got his second strike of the game which was unbelievable too, and killed the game off.

"And I need to score more!

"I got five last year and I think the most I have ever scored in a season is seven, so for a centre back, I would happily take five but anything above that is good."

Since joining the club, the Chairboys have won every game Tafazolli has scored in.

**Tafazolli's goalscoring record for the Chairboys:**

2020/21: Wycombe Wanderers 2-1 Cardiff City

2020/21: Wycombe Wanderers 1-0 Preston North End

2021/22: Shrewsbury Town 1-2 Wycombe Wanderers

2021/22: Wycombe Wanderers 4-3 Morecambe

2021/22: Wycombe Wanderers 2-1 Crewe Alexandra (brace)

2021/22: Wycombe Wanderers 2-0 Milton Keynes

2022/23: Peterborough United 0-3 Wycombe Wanderers



Ryan Tafazolli has scored eight goals for Wycombe since 2020 (PA)



Max Stryjek in action (PA)

## Super Max is shining

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth has praised the performance of goalkeeper Max Stryjek following the Chairboys' 3-0 away win at Peterborough United.

The 26-year-old was on hand to deny Ricky Jade-Jones on two occasions, which included preventing the striker from scoring via a one-on-one in the first-half.

He has now kept 10 clean sheets in 24 games for Wycombe since joining the club in August, which includes five in the last eight fixtures.

Speaking on his display at London Road, Ainsworth said: "Max has done so well for us, and for a keeper who joined us a few weeks into the season, he might have got 12 or 13 clean sheets now.

"The one-on-one save he made in the first-half was brilliant and I've not known a keeper to be so good at saving them.

"There are of course some things we would like to work on with him, but that is why we get keepers like him as we want to improve all the players that come through our doors."

Stryjek joined Wycombe in August following the departure of David Stockdale to Sheffield Wednesday on a free transfer.