

Bucks Free Press

Friday, August 9, 2024

Wycombe, South Bucks, Chilterns and Aylesbury since 1856

£1.60

SHE'S MUM IN A BILLION

Backshall hails Olympic hero Helen



PAGE 3

Pop Idol Gareth on living with a stammer



PAGE 49

MP queries why council 'give' Primark & Tesco cash: Page 2

Rioting thugs not welcome in our town

Leaders united against far-right violence



RIOTING thugs are not welcome in High Wycombe, MPs, councillors and faith leaders have said as the UK prepares for another night of violence.

Community leaders in the town have lined up to condemn the week of riots which erupted across the country following misinformation about the identity of the suspect charged with the murder of three girls at a Taylor Swift-themed dance class in Southport last week.

Wycombe MP Emma Reynolds told the Bucks Free Press: "It is unaccep-

By Charlie Smith

table that far right thugs are trying to exploit the horrific murders in Southport to stoke division and target communities.

"It is terrible to witness the violence and rioting we've seen in other towns and cities.

These are not peaceful protests, but they are trying to intimidate and scare people."

Full story: Page 7

PAGES 8-9



Far-right protest a failure in Wycombe

£250 prize giveaway in our puzzles section: See page 58

Family law solicitors in Wycombe



Searching for legal advice will help you to make an informed decision.

Contact our family team today to arrange a free consultation.



kiddrapinet
SOLICITORS

01494 619973

kiddrapinet.co.uk

Hopes run high for British Olympian



Katarina Johnson-Thompson

JESSICA Ennis-Hill is confident Katarina Johnson-Thompson can end her Olympic heartache by winning heptathlon gold at Paris 2024.

Johnson-Thompson has failed to capture an Olympic medal during a glittering career that has brought gold at the World Championships in 2019 and 2023, as well as at the 2018 and 2022 Commonwealth Games.

The 31-year-old Liverpoolian finished 14th at her debut Olympics in 2012 – when Ennis-Hill took heptathlon gold in front of a London home crowd – came sixth at Rio 2016 and failed to finish at Tokyo three years ago owing to injury.

“She’s very capable of winning that gold medal,” Ennis-Hill told the PA news agency ahead of Johnson-Thompson beginning her bid for Olympic glory at the Stade de France on Thursday morning.

“There were positives last year and she came out to win another world title.

“I think people expected her to get on the podium, but perhaps not win gold. It was incredible to see.”

Johnson-Thompson has said this is best she has felt before an Olympics, despite uncertainty over her fitness during the build-up to Paris.

She pulled out of the European Championships in Rome at the start of June after only three events.

She missed a fortnight of training and had injections in her Achilles, but did compete at the UK Athletics Championships in Manchester and the London Diamond League last month.

As well as managing her fitness, Johnson-Thompson has to deal with the expectation that comes with being one of Team GB’s highest profile track and field athletes in Paris.



George Mills and Hugo Hay exchange words after their 5,000m qualifier

Pic: PA

Runners in heated row over race accident

GEORGE Mills admitted he was “probably not allowed” to repeat what he said to France’s Hugo Hay after he was involved in a four-man fall in his 5,000 metres heat.

After the men had crossed the finish line, Mills and Hay were seen arguing, Mills pointing furiously at the Frenchman.

Mills claimed Hay was responsible for the incident and

officials agreed the Briton had been disadvantaged, advancing him to Saturday’s final following a review by the video referee.

Mills, the son of former Leeds and England full-back Danny told the BBC: “I think it’s pretty clear. I got stepped out on as I was about to kick in the home straight and boom, the French lad took me down.” Asked what he said when

he confronted Hay: “I’m probably not allowed to say.”

“From my perspective that was the perfect qualifier for me, going through first 2k in six minutes. I was like, ‘Nobody in this field can run away from me at this pace’, so I was just sitting, waiting, biding my time, gonna kick off the home straight then bang, hit the deck. What can you do?”

Final will ‘go down in generations’ – Kerr

By PA Sport

Press Association

JOSH Kerr insisted the Olympic 1,500 metres final fulfilled his vow to deliver a race that would “go down in generations” even after a surprise ending written by American gold medallist Cole Hocker in Olympic record time.

The penultimate event on Tuesday evening had been billed as a two-man showdown between Scotsman Kerr, the reigning world champion, and his arch-rival Jakob Ingebrigtsen, who claimed gold in Tokyo three summers ago.

The duo were neck and neck down the final stretch, but perhaps paying too close attention to one another when Hocker seized on his opportunity to surge ahead and cross the finish before either of the two heavy favourites.

“I got beaten by the better man today,” said Kerr, who smashed Mo Farah’s 11-year-old national record with a time of three minutes 27.79



1,500m silver-medallist Josh Kerr

seconds. I could feel (Hocker) coming and I kept getting pushed out, so there was nothing I could do.

“Obviously I wanted that gold, that’s not something that I was able to shy away from. I’m proud of the way I executed today. It was not a slow race. I think that record will stay for a very long time.

“We had a lot of storylines this year, back and forth with me and Jakob and things like that, but I

knew that there was going to be threats coming from the Americans and Cole put together a performance that is the best the Olympics has ever seen.

“It’s the fastest I’ve ever ran, it’s the best 1,500m performance that I could ask for. I told you guys we were going to put a 1,500 on that would go down in generations, and I think we did that.”

Ingebrigtsen ultimately finished fourth, with the United States Yared Nuguse claiming bronze. Kerr’s fellow Scotsman Neil Gourley finished 10th.

The storyline that began after Kerr pipped Ingebrigtsen to the title in 2023 now looks set for a longer arc, one that might cap off at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028.

The two have frequently traded jibes, the Norwegian before these games claiming Kerr: “is known as the Brit who never competes”.

Kerr said of the narrative: “The storyline is going to continue. I’m sure comments will be made over the next couple of days.”

England eyes ‘serial winner’



NASSER Hussain believes there are not many better options than “serial winner” Andy Flower for the vacant England white-ball head coach role but has doubts over whether he will get it.

Matthew Mott left the position last week after a mixed two years, guiding England to T20 World Cup success in 2022 before underwhelming displays in the last two major limited-overs tournaments.

The hunt for Mott’s successor is under way after Rob Key, director of England men’s cricket, said a “new direction” was required.

“There are some really good candidates, there is Kumar Sangakkara, there is Andy Flower, who is a serial winner with England,” Sky Sports pundit Hussain told the PA news agency.

Liverpool in for Martin?



LIVERPOOL have identified Real Sociedad’s Martin Zubimendi as their first major signing of the summer.

The Euro 2024 winner with Spain, who has a reported release clause of £51 million, is viewed as a viable option to fill the defensive midfield role.

That is a position which has been in need of strengthening since the departure of Fabinho 12 months ago.

Japan international Wataru Endo was brought in from Stuttgart late in the window last August for £16m.

Cricket legend holds Q&A session at Chalfont bar

WEST Indies cricketer Courtney Walsh was the latest international sporting star to visit Chalfont St Peter for an intimate Q&A at craft beer bar Vinny and Ted's.

He followed in the footsteps of four England cricket captains Mike Atherton, Alex Stewart, Graham Gooch, Mike Gatting, Australian cricket legend Merv Hughes, England rugby Internationals Alex Goode, Alex Lozowski and Cheltenham festival winning racehorse trainer Jamie Snowden.

Matt Pryce the owner and founder of Vinny & Ted's commented "It's quite surreal to have all these sporting stars come to our hidden gem in Chalfont, we're only a little bar but we pack a punch with our guests".

Walsh was a pivotal member of the great West Indian pace attack of the 80's and 90's. He had a chat with the slightly slower and less intimidating former fast bowler.

Vinny & Ted co-owner and ex-England International Angus Fraser, before being open to questions from those who were lucky enough have a ticket for the event. Middlesex cricketing legend and making up the trio of owners Tim Murtagh was pouring the pints on the evening. In a magnificent career Walsh played 337 matches for West Indies and



West Indies legend Courtney Walsh was latest international sports star to visit Chalfont bar. Image: Matt Pryce

took just under 750 wickets. His tally of 519 Test wickets places him 8th in the all-time list of wicket-takers and only four fast bowlers - James Anderson, Stuart Broad and Glenn McGrath - have claimed more victims. Owner Matt continued,

"The evening was a huge success and everyone went away with smiles on their faces, Courtney was great company telling stories of his fascinating career. We sold out of tickets within 24hrs of the event being announced and people want-

ing to hear first about future events should register for our mailing list on the website www.vinnyandted.co.uk As well as sporting Q&A's Vinny & Ted offers a year round event schedule including Wine, Beer and Gin tastings, monthly

quiz nights hosted by Angus Fraser and a recently launched book club which has over 70 local members. With 10 ever changing taps Vinny & Ted showcases the best of the craft beer scene along with local gin, wine and spirits.

CHESHAM UTD An update from the chairman

WITH just over a week now until the new season, and the start of a new chapter in the Chesham United story, I could not be more excited, and pleased with the way preparations are going, writes Chesham United chairman Peter Brown.

We have sold more season tickets than I have ever known since I have been involved at the club and we have matchday tickets on sale via the website for all our home games for the entire season - with over 150 already sold for the Torquay match at the end of the month. It feels like we have had to make a huge step up in the way we operate, and so far everyone has embraced that challenge which is a credit to all involved.

Of course the biggest step up may well come on the pitch, as we are certainly being thrown in the deep end on that front with next Saturday's trip to Eastbourne Borough before welcoming Boreham Wood to Chesham the following week, two clubs that operate with a full-time squad. As I have said before, we do not fear that and cannot wait for the challenge. If you have watched any of our pre-season friendlies I hope you will have been impressed with the way the team has performed and agree that physically we are bigger and stronger than we have been for some years, and all players look comfortable on the ball.

CRICKET Bucks call up teen

DANNY Chapman, a 16-year-old all-rounder from Stoney Stratford, has been included in the Bucks squad to face Bedfordshire in their National Counties Championship Division 1 East game at Flitwick, starting this Sunday.

Chapman, a top-order batter and leg-spin bowler, is the seventh teenager called into the Bucks men's first team in the past two seasons.

Seamer Cameron Parsons, is not available for the encounter.

Bucks, the reigning National Counties Champions, have all to play for, as all the matches in Division 1 East this season have ended in draws, with just two rounds to play.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

EMAIL in your sports stories to james.richings@newsquest.co.uk

BOWLS

Marlow lift the Chesham Challenge Cup

SATURDAY, July 27 saw the return leg of the annual Chesham Challenge Cup.

Marlow had won the first leg in May on four of six rinks and by 21 shots overall.

On this home leg, Marlow won on four of six rinks and by 31 shots, meaning a win over both legs by 52.

Top rink honours went to Jean Bartrop, playing with husband Peter, and Trevor Day.

Earlier in the week, on Wednesday, July 24, Marlow welcomed Amersham for a three rink friendly. Another win for Marlow on two rinks and overall by 14 shots (52-38).

Top rink for Marlow was skipped by Mags Shelley playing with Jo Perry and Annie Mindry.

On Thursday, July 25, Marlow played Flackwell Heath Bowls Club for a friendly triples game over four rinks. Once again each side had two winning rinks, but Marlow won overall by 15 shots (74-59).

Top rink for Marlow was skipped by Martin Timbrell, with Annie Mindry and Peter Butler.



Marlow has been crowned the Chesham Challenge Cup winners

Sport

NON-LEAGUE NEWS

Football volunteers celebrated at awards

FOOTBALL volunteers from across the grassroots game in Berks & Bucks were celebrated recently in an awards ceremony held at Royal Windsor Racecourse.

The County FA organised the annual Grassroots Football Awards Evening, which was hosted by Slough-based Sky Sports presenter, Fadumo Olow.

Grassroots football volunteers within Berks & Bucks were recognised for their extraordinary impact to the sport across fifteen categories spanning various areas of the game

from Club of the Year, Coach of the Year to Impact of Football and Outstanding Contribution.

The Grassroots Football Awards provide an incredible opportunity to celebrate the people who make grassroots football great for everyone. The Awards are a way for the County FA to recognise the exceptional individuals who put their heart and soul into football across the region.

As far as inspiring and emotional nights in football go, this was right up there. Of course, none of it would have been possible without

the amazing individuals in attendance, their dedication and passion for local football and their belief in making the future of our game the best it can be.

Steph Clark, Football Communications Officer at Berks & Bucks FA said: "Events like the annual Grassroots Football Awards are always incredibly special as they provide a wonderful opportunity for us to recognise, thank and celebrate the extraordinary achievements of our dedicated volunteer workforce."



Berks and Bucks FA winners. Image: Neil Graham

FOOTBALL

Wycombe defeated away in final pre-season friendly

WYCOMBE Wanderers concluded their pre-season campaign with a 1-0 defeat against Swindon Town at the County Ground.

Following a 2-2 draw on Wednesday evening against a Chelsea XI, Matt Bloomfield's men looked to finish on a high ahead of next Saturday's trip to Wrexham in the league.

The Chairboys came out of the blocks firing, as string of great chances in the first 10 minutes could've seen the Adams Park team an early lead.

However, goalkeeper Jack Bycroft produced three fine saves first to deny Kieran Sadlier's venomous right-footed drive, tipping the ball onto the post.

The resultant corner was then met by the head of Alex Hartridge, with the keeper reacting quickly to deny the summer signing his first goal for the club.

Moments later, Tyreeq Bakinson picked the ball up in midfield and set Garath McCleary away, before Josh Scowen scuffed the Jamaican's cut-back.

This had Bycroft backpedalling as he was off his line, but he managed to get fingertips to the ball, pushing it over the bar.

The intensity in the opening ten minutes would soon fizzle out, as the hosts began to find their feet.

Aaron Drinan caused the Blues some problems down their left-hand side.

A long ball forward from Will Wright set the Irishman away, he looked to find Ollie Clarke at the far post but Jack Grimmer was alert to see the danger out.

Richard Kone's pressing was causing the League Two side a real nightmare, which saw several misguided passes gobbled up by Bloomfield's side.

The best chance of the half fell to Josh Scowen just before half-time, as

James Richings

james.richings@newsquest.co.uk

the midfielder found himself clean through on goal. He chipped the keeper but his shot just trickled an inch wide.

It was goalless at the break.

Wycombe started the second-half exactly how they started the first, on the front foot.

Wanderers kept their opponents pinned in their own half, as chances came and went for Sadlier, Kone and Bakinson.

Daniel Udoh, Luke Leahy, David Wheeler and Jasper Pattenden were all introduced, which coincided with Swindon breaking the deadlock.

Ollie Clarke found space to squeeze one in off the far post.

It felt like it would just be one of those days, plenty of chances but the ball just wouldn't find the back of the net.

Wheeler fired a header straight at Bycroft just moments later, it was proving to be a frustrating afternoon in front of goal for the Blues.

There was plenty of lively attacking football on show, but Matt Bloomfield's side left Swindon with a defeat and no goal to boot.

It wasn't the result that Wycombe would've wanted but another positive run-out for many key players ahead of Saturday's trip to Wrexham.

Importantly, results in pre-season are meaningless, the minutes in the tank are crucial to get the squad prepared for the upcoming season.

Wanderers certainly look like a well-drilled side, with plenty of cohesion between the squad, they will just be hoping to tuck away the chances they create come Saturday.

Creating chances wasn't the issue, just that cutting edge was missing for the Blues.



Wycombe Wanderers lost 1-0 away to Swindon Town in the club's final pre-season friendly of the summer. Image: PA

CHAIRBOYS

Wycombe chief on pre-season takeaways

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Matt Bloomfield was left 'proud' of his team's pre-season efforts despite losing their final friendly to Swindon Town.

The Chairboys, heading into the League One campaign full of optimism after a strong end to last season and the summer takeover; Wycombe travel to Wrexham on Saturday after enjoying pre-season scalps over Portsmouth and Watford.

"My overriding feeling is pride with the amount of effort and intensity that the boys have put into pre-season," the boss told wwfc.com.

"It's been a really good five-week block of work, and we have one more week until the start of the season.

There has been so much learning and information that has gone into them and the way that they have approached their work and implemented it in training and games. I'm really proud. The performances last week against Portsmouth and Watford were top performances against Championship opposition who have strengths themselves. It's a disappointing way to finish pre-season but I don't think it should take away from the work we have done.

The experienced David Wheeler was also very reflective after defeat at the County Ground.

"We created lots of chances, but we weren't quite as clinical as we were on Tuesday and Wednesday," he stated.

"We had two very good games in the week and didn't quite have the cutting edge today. Sometimes it's good when things don't quite work out in pre-season because you can look at it and fine-tune it for the start of the season."

Former Chairboys in pre-season friendly

FORMER Wycombe Wanderers stars Anthony Stewart, Charlie Owens, Charles Dunne and Anthony Stewart have linked up with the Professional Footballers Association.

Providing players with an elite club pre-season environment, the PFA have organised a new 10-week residential pre-season camp.

Each week-long session will offer players high-intensity, on-pitch training and fixtures led by the PFA's specialist coaching team, alongside strength and conditioning sessions and access to the PFA's range of personal development services.

To help players maximise opportunities to secure new deals for the 2024/25 season, scouts will attend the camps throughout the summer period to meet players and observe the sessions. Friendlies against Manchester United Under-21s and Stratford Town have been arranged for this week.

NON-LEAGUE NEWS

Gareth's son follows in his large footsteps



Gareth Ainsworth spent over a decade at Adams Park as a player and manager. Image: PA

THE son of Wycombe Wanderers legend Gareth Ainsworth- Kane Ainsworth- has followed in his father's footsteps by joining Reading non-league outfit, Woodley United.

51-year-old Ainsworth enjoyed a 25-year professional playing career, which included spells with the likes of Preston North End and Queens Park Rangers, and had a 14-year association with Wycombe as player and manager..

Racking up nearly 150 appearances as a player, his biggest impact came in the dugout when taking over from Gary Waddock, initially on a player-manager basis.

Taking the club into the Championship for the first time ever in 2019/20, he juggled this alongside

non-league appearances for Woodley United and performing in his band around Berkshire.

Departing in 2023 to take charge at QPR, the much-loved former gaffer failed to see out an entire campaign and was sacked at Loftus Road within six months.

Now the teenage Ainsworth has followed in his father's footsteps, moving from Maidenhead United Academy to Woodley United for the 2024/25 campaign.

Playing their matches at Rivermoor, ground-sharing with Reading City, Jordan Blake's side play in Combined Counties League Division One.

The season gets underway at Langley on Saturday (3pm ko).

CHAIRBOYS

Lubala is hopeful of club play-off spot

WYCOMBE Wanderers forward Beryly Lubala believes the Chairboys are capable of pushing for a play-off spot when speaking ahead of tomorrow's opening game at Wrexham.

Scoring twice for Matt Bloomfield side last season after arriving from Burton Albion, the forward contributed heavily to strong form in the closing months of the season.

Now at Adams Park from the start of a campaign, Lubala stated that they're targeting as high as possible, but a play-off spot is not beyond their reach.

"He [Bloomfield] has asked us to put the team first in everything we do and to work hard for the team," Lubala told Sky Sports. "We want to shoot for the stars so we will be aiming as high as possible and if we can get into those play-off positions and push for promotion, that would be great. I think we've got enough in the team to do that."

Title favourites Birmingham City are the first side to visit Hillbottom Road this season, the club where Lubala started his career a decade ago.

"Birmingham was a great place to be and breaking through as a scholar and making my debut was a very proud moment. I'm looking forward to playing them," he added.

CHAIRBOYS

Wycombe Wanderers to pay tribute as much-loved fan passes

WYCOMBE Wanderers are set to pay tribute to a much-loved supporter this month after Aaron Lockyer tragically passed away aged 28.

A club statement read: "Aaron travelled across the country to follow the club over the past few years, becoming a popular figure amongst fellow supporters.

"Through friends, the club have made contact with Aaron's family to express the love and support of everyone at the club, and will make arrangements to pay tribute to Aaron at the forthcoming game against Rotherham United at Adams Park on Saturday, August 24."

●For more sport news go to bucksfreepress.co.uk

WYCOMBE WANDERERS BUILD-UP

Chairboys 'still looking' to do more transfer business

WYCOMBE Wanderers have already made nine signings in the transfer window so far, and whilst manager Matt Bloomfield has expressed his delight with the players he's brought in, he has admitted that there is more to come.

The Chairboys moved quickly in the market this summer, securing their number one target in a multitude of positions before pre-season training began.

"It was a conscious decision made by ourselves to try and get as much done as we could by [the start of] pre-season, because we really felt like we had to get a good block of work into the players."

New signing Alex Hartridge admitted that Bloomfield first spoke to him in the first week of the close season, and Wanderers were quick out of the gate to secure the free signings of Dan Udoh and Tyreeq Bakinson from MK Dons and Sheffield Wednesday respectively.

"There was a big emphasis on getting our plan sorted ahead of

the transfer window. As soon as the window closed in January, and even before that, you always have a plan of what the summer might look like, but it might not always look like that – especially with new ownership."

Despite the good work that has been achieved so far this summer, Bloomfield has warned that his transfer activity is far from finished.

"We're not finished in our transfer business, we'd like to do more."

Bloomfield also made comment on the loanee approach that was so popular last year, admitting that budgets have changed and the Euros throughout the summer means the elite clubs are less likely to agree to early loan deals.

"The big Premier League clubs kept all of their youngsters in for pre-season, and I think you'll probably see a couple of lads start to move around this week. We're still looking to do a couple [of loan moves] but for financial reasons that was the best option last summer."



'We're not done' insists Matt Bloomfield. Credit: PA

Owls sign keeper after local non-league stint

SHEFFIELD Wednesday have signed young goalkeeper Killian Barrett after an impressive spell on the local non-league circuit.

20-year-old Barrett, whose agent is Reading legend Stephen Hunt, moved across from Republic of Ireland in 2020 and has spent recent years with the likes of Woodley United, Hartley Witney and Binfield.

Only joining the Moles in January, Barrett kept six clean sheets

in 21 matches to help keep the side in the South Central Division of the Isthmian League and won Supporters' Player of the Season.

Woodley United boss, Jordan Blake, commented: "A success story that I have had the utmost pleasure of playing a small part in Killian's journey. All of you young aspiring footballers never give up on your dreams you never know it could be you next."

"I'm absolutely delighted, it's

a massive step in the direction I want to go and all my family are delighted," he told the club website.

"I moved over to England just over four years ago and have played non-league football for the previous couple of years.

"Luckily I had a few decent games and got picked up and now I'm here."

Signing a first professional contract with the Owls, the Berks-Bucks connections don't stop

there.

Former Reading goalkeeping coach, Sal Bibbo, is a key member of staff at Hillsborough.

Bibbo was famously on the coaching staff in RG2 as Brian McDermott took Reading into the Premier League in 2012.

On his conversations with Bibbo, Barrett told SWFC.co.uk: "He has been telling me for the next year it is just about getting my head down and go to work."

SPORT

0963-2336



Wycombe announce their new Academy Director



Adams Park. Credit: PA

WYCOMBE Wanderers have appointed former Premier League Support Manager, Jeremy Sauer, as the first Academy Director.

Sauer, who moves to Buckinghamshire from Brighton and Hove Albion, has held prominent positions with West Ham United and AFC Wimbledon.

The Chairboys, who were forced to close their Academy down over a decade ago due to the club's financial situation, have made re-opening a youth system a 'priority' since being taken over by Kazakhstani

billionaire Mikheil Lomtadze.

Taking over the role officially from August 19, it is the latest exciting landmark in the club's new era under Lomtadze, with the League One campaign getting underway on Saturday at Wrexham.

Chief Football Officer and Interim Chair Dan Rice told WW.com:

"Re-launching an academy at Wycombe Wanderers has been an absolute priority for the new owners and Jeremy's appointment is a historic milestone for the future of the football club.

"He has vast experience in leading academies all the way up to Category 1 status, which aligns with the growth plan we have put in place for our academy here at Wycombe, and he will lead on the strategy and implementation of the academy going forward.

"Jeremy's appointment underlines and demonstrates the owners' commitment to building a foundation which will deliver our long-term ambitions and objectives at a higher level than the club has ever operated before."

Sauer added: "I'm delighted to be joining Wycombe Wanderers, a club that I've experienced on many occasions to have a strong community fanbase, history and culture – all which are critical factors as we begin to rebuild our academy again.

"Having met the owners to discuss the project on several occasions, it quickly became clear how central developing a high-performing academy is to them, and their strategy for sustainable success at the club."

Bloomfield 'looking forward' to Wrexham

By George Guttridge

WYCOMBE boss Matt Bloomfield has spoken to the BucksFreePress ahead of this weekend's League One season opener at Wrexham, saying he's "looking forward to the challenge ahead".

Wycombe Wanderers make the journey to Wales to face the newly promoted side on Saturday afternoon, with the Chairboys boss confident in their planning ahead of this game.

"There is a little bit of unknown, but I think we've done loads of research on Wrexham. They've got good continuity from last season, and Phil Parkison is a top manager who's had incredible success – so I think we should be very informed about the opponent we are up against."

The Welsh side have enjoyed back-to-back promotions to League One, following the takeover of the club by Hollywood A-Listers Rob McElheney and Ryan Reynolds, but the Wycombe boss isn't moved about the prospect of a big atmosphere at The Racecourse.

"There's obviously a lot of noise around the occasion, they've been hugely vocal [as a club] in the last few years, but for us it's just about concentrating on the game and executing the game plan, we know we've got some really decent players here."

Wycombe will still be without long-term absentee Brandon Hanlan for this weekend's game, otherwise Matt Bloomfield may well have a fully fit roster to choose from for game one. Wrexham will be without talismanic striker Paul Mullin, who continues to recover from an injury sustained in pre-season."



Wycombe Wanderers boss, Matt Bloomfield, is ready to go for the new season. Credit: PA

Chairboys skipper on Wrexham battle



Wycombe captain Jack Grimmer is as keen as ever.

WANDERERS captain Jack Grimmer is heading into his sixth season with the club, but is still as keen as ever to get stuck into a new league campaign.

Wanderers face a tough August, playing two of the three sides relegated from the Championship last term, following an opening day to media-smitten Wrexham, but Grimmer is adamant the squad won't be distracted by the occasion.

"It is very tough, because you're probably looking at the biggest budgets in the league for our [August] games, and with that comes expectations. But these players are where they are for a reason, take away the documentary cameras and we'll go about it the best way we can."

Wycombe's first three league games all come against sides that a new to the division, and Grimmer says that can present a welcome challenge.

"You don't necessarily know what you're going to get, you just know you're going to have to deal with a lot of energy. It'll be a good test to see if we can deal with a big atmosphere, and I think the next game will be a perfect example of what that could be."