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Football fever sweeps through Bucks as roundabouts painted - Page 7



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SPORT: Familiar faces find new clubs this summer



Ryan Allsop has been spotted training with Derby County following his release from Wycombe this summer (Prime Media)

Who has left Wanderers?

GOALKEEPER Ryan Allsop has been spotted training with Derby County after being released by Wycombe Wanderers.

The 29-year-old was seen on RamsTV earlier in the week, but it is not known if the former Bournemouth shot-stopper will sign a deal with Wayne Rooney's men.

He enjoyed two spells with the club and made a total of 129 appearances for the Chairboys.

Coincidentally, Allsop's last match for Wycombe was against Derby, where the Rams won 2-1 at Adams Park thanks to an injury-time winner from Andre Wisdom.

Prior to this match, Allsop had been ever present for Wanderers but never played again following the late loss on February 16.

Other players who have found new clubs in the last week include Darius Charles and Josh Knight.

Charles, who joined Wycombe in 2018, only played 43 times across three seasons for the Chairboys but was a huge figure in Wanderers'

promotion to the Championship last summer.

He was released in July but has since returned to AFC Wimbledon - the club he left to join Wycombe.

Wimbledon head coach Mark Robinson told the club's website: "He's [Charles] very capable of playing, but I'm quite happy with the centre-back options that we've got."

"Darius will be there if we need him to play, but he's also there to implement everything we want around the changing room and the environment."

Finally, another player that has secured a permanent move away from the club is Josh Knight.

The 23-year-old, who was on loan at the Adams Park outfit last season from Leicester City, has joined one of his former clubs in Peterborough United.

He had two loans spells with the Posh in 2018/19 and 2019/20

respectively, and scored against Wanderers for Peterborough in a 3-3 draw at Adams Park in October 2019.

Who can replace Uche?

WANDERERS FAN JAMIE CAMERON ON REPLACING THE TALISMAN

UCHE Ikpeazu's departure to Middlesbrough had been coming, but it was still a bitter pill to swallow for Wanderers fans.

After an injury-hit start to his Adams Park career, Ikpeazu soon established himself as one of Wycombe's key players and enjoyed an excellent end to the season.

His first goal for the club came against 'Boro' at the turn of the year, and the Ugandan played in every game from there on in, notching six goals in total.

He hit memorable strikes against Brentford and Bournemouth, and also played a significant part in the convincing final-day victory over his new club.

All that put Ikpeazu in the shop window for potential suitors, and after the Chairboys' relegation was eventually confirmed, it always seemed likely that he would return to the Championship.

The 26-year-old said it had been his ambition to play in the second tier, so perhaps it's understandable that he wanted to stay there after making 31 appearances for Wycombe.

The front man was linked with moves to a host of Championship clubs, including Nottingham Forest, but it was Neil Warnock's Middlesbrough that got the deal over the line for a large fee.

He certainly fits into Warnock's style of play, and after the departure of Britt Assombalonga and Ashley Fletcher, Ikpeazu may well be first-choice for the north-east club next season.

With the likes of Sammy Ameobi and Marcus Browne to supply the ammunition for Ikpeazu, he could prove to be another success story after leaving Wycombe.

However, that puts the Chairboys in a difficult situation, with that area of the pitch surely now the number one target for an incoming signing.

Of the current options in the squad, Scott Kashket and Alex Samuel are the only strikers under contract in the first-team, and although both are definitely capable, they may lack the firepower to be Wanderers' main goalscorer in a League One promotion bid.

Development Squad player Malachi Linton is highly-rated, but is unlikely to be ready for first-team football yet.

There's no doubt that the departure of Ikpeazu is a blow for Wycombe, but if the management staff act quickly, then there are plenty of accomplished replacements out there.

FOOTBALL: Adebayo Akinfenwa signs one-year deal

The Beast is back for one more campaign in Bucks



Wycombe Wanderers have confirmed Akinfenwa has signed a new deal with the club. He joined the Chairboys in the summer of 2016 (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers have confirmed that Adebayo Akinfenwa has signed a new deal with the club.

The 39-year-old, who joined the club in the summer of 2016, has penned a one-year-contract extension which will see him back at Adams Park next season.

Bayo, who has helped Wanderers achieve promotion to League One and the Championship in 2018 and 2020, is the club's record goalscorer in their EFL era (2004-).

His new deal comes as a huge boost for the Chairboys, following Uche Ikpeazu's departure on July 2 to Middlesbrough.

Manager Gareth Ainsworth said: "Bayo has been one of this club's greatest all-time players and he offers so much on and off the pitch, which is why we're delighted he's agreed to stay and be part of our efforts to get back into the Championship."

"Bayo and I have a really close working relationship and we both understand his situation in terms of what he's able to contribute, alongside his other commitments which we're fully supportive of as a club."

"The boys love having him around, he's hugely popular with our supporters and he's coming back to us fit, sharp and ready to cause headaches to defenders again, like he always does!"

By James Richings

Following his arrival at Adams Park five years ago, the Beast has played 211 times for the Chairboys, and has scored 55 times.

He only managed one goal in the Championship last season, but his solo strike came with much importance, as it was an injury-time winner from the penalty spot against Bristol City in April.

With that goal, not only did it end a run of 37 matches without scoring, but the fan favourite became one of the oldest goal scorers in Championship history, since the EFL was rebranded in the summer of 2004, at the age of 38 years, 11 months, 11 days.

The oldest goal scorer in the league is Teddy Sheringham as he bagged a strike for Colchester United against Sheffield Wednesday on December 1, 2007, at the age of 41 years, seven months, and 29 days.

After starting his career as a youth team player at Watford in the 2000/01 season, Akinfenwa became a journey man as he played for seven teams in the space of three years, which included spells with sides in Wales and Lithuania.

In all, Bayo has represented 14 different teams in his career, and has scored an impressive 227 goals.

SPORT

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SPORT: Fan favourite departs for the Riverside Uche Ikpeazu leaves for Middlesbrough



Uche Ikpeazu and Gareth Ainsworth pictured following the 1-0 loss against Bournemouth in December 2020. The striker leaves Wycombe after one season to join Neil Warnock's Middlesbrough for an undisclosed fee. He scored six goals in 33 matches for the Chairboys. (Prime Media)

WYCOMBE Wanderers have confirmed that striker Uche Ikpeazu will leave the club to join Middlesbrough.

The 26-year-old Ugandan striker joined the Chairboys last summer from Hearts and played 33 times in his first and only season with the club, scoring six goals.

He missed large chunks at the start of the season but became an important player in Gareth Ainsworth's starting 11 at the end of December.

As the season went along and the goals were scored, many clubs were reportedly enquiring about his services following Wycombe's relegation to League One from the Championship.

Coincidentally, his first goal and last appearances for Wanderers were against Middlesbrough.

In a brief statement, Wanderers said: "Wycombe Wanderers have agreed a deal with Middlesbrough for the transfer of Uche Ikpeazu for an undisclosed fee.

By James Richings & Rob Folker

"The striker arrived at Adams Park last summer and scored six times for the Chairboys, including goal-of-the-season contenders against Middlesbrough, Brentford and Bournemouth."

He becomes the eighth player to leave Wycombe this summer.

Following the end of the season, Ikpeazu was heavily linked with the Riverside club and eventually penned a deal with Boro on Friday, July 2, for an undisclosed fee which is reportedly around £500,000.

His departure comes as a huge blow for Gareth Ainsworth as the forward proved to be a real handful for opposition defenders in the Championship - despite their eventual relegation.

However, the manager insists that Ikpeazu will go down in 'Wycombe folklore' following his performances last campaign.

In the immediate aftermath of

his departure, the 26-year-old wrote an emotional post to the Wanderers fans.

It read: "I didn't expect to be saying bye so soon but sometimes in life opportunities come you just can't turn down.

"I just want to say a big thank you to Wycombe Wanderers FC.

"I appreciate the opportunity you gave me.

"People say Wycombe is such a unique club and so I wondered what it would be like to play for them.

"I now understand why and feel really blessed and privileged to have been a part of such a special club.

"I also want to thank all the staff and everyone connected to the club, especially the gaffer, Gareth Ainsworth, who has played an integral part in my development on and off the field.

"The amount of faith he has shown in me, bringing me to the Championship and having the belief in me throughout is something I'll never forget.

"Last but not least, I would like to thank my teammates who have played a key role in my progress both as a footballer and person in such a short space of time.

"I'm grateful for every single one of you and you are genuinely the best group of people I have shared a dressing room with.

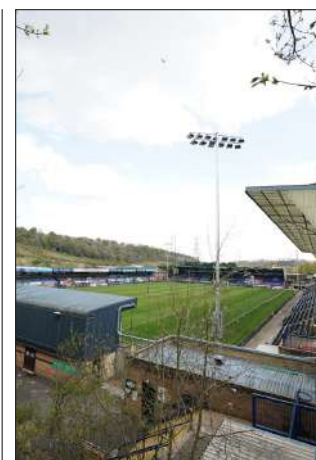
"I wish the club the very best for the future and I will be watching and praying they get back to where they belong!

"You've gained a fan in me. "Thank you, UI."

Boro manager Neil Warnock said: "I've always liked Uche back to when he was at Hearts and I watched him a few times.

"He looks raw at times but he's so keen and dedicated wherever he plays and I think the fans will really get behind him because he's such a 100 per cent player.

"I was really impressed in my meetings with him with his dedication and desire to do well for Middlesbrough."



Adams Park (PA Media)

League for 21/22 is confirmed

DERBY AND WYCOMBE RECEIVE CLARITY OVER LEAGUE PLACES

WYCOMBE Wanderers will play in League One next season after the EFL announced that they will not appeal the sanction imposed on Derby County by the Independent Disciplinary Commission.

The footballing body released an interchangeable fixture list in June, which left both the Rams and the Chairboys uncertain about what leagues they would play in for the 2021/22 season.

This also gave Wanderers a glimmer of hope of a second consecutive season of Championship football following their relegation in May.

However, it was confirmed on July 2 that following a £100,000 fine for Wayne Rooney's men, Derby would stay as a second tier club with Wycombe playing in League One.

The fine and potential demotion out of the Championship for Derby came about after the Rams were penalised for filing accounts that did not comply with an amortisation ruling between 2016 and 2018.

In a statement, the EFL said: "While the EFL does not agree that those sanctions are commensurate to the breaches found, following consultation with our legal advisors, the EFL Board has regrettably determined that there are insufficient grounds to appeal the sanction imposed by the Independent Disciplinary Commission.

"Alongside a financial penalty, the club received a reprimand as to its future conduct."

This will mean that the saga can be put to bed, and that the Chairboys can now prepare for life in League One.

Their first match of the new season is against Accrington Stanley at Adams Park on Saturday, August 7, before they have three away matches.