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*E Telmer Oct 2021 (4 weeks in print & online)

Bucks Free Press

Friday, August 25, 2023

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SPORT

Thriller in South Bucks

THE visitors took the lead after just two minutes with an unmarked header before they doubled their lead on 15 minutes with a close-range finish.

Burnham started to get a bit of a foothold in the game after a terrible start but went into the break two goals down.

Manager Ben Murray made several changes at half time with Ollie Bishop and Aitor Pasantes coming off and Fran Naut and Anas Igozouln coming on.

This switched the shape of the game as Burnham took control as on Leo Decabo pulled on back from 12-yards.

Four minutes later, it was all square as Firas Chinba smashed home from the edge of the box.

The acenency was with the Buckinghamshire team and with three minutes remaining, Chinba was tripped in the penalty box.

Decabo stepped up and slotted it away as Burnham turned this around and held into the win.

Up next is an away trip to Daventry Town in the FA Vase on August 26.

Horrid start for Holmer

IT has been a torrid start to the season for Holmer Green as they conceded 10 goals in their last two matches.

The Watchet Lane side were first smashed 6-0 by Berks County on August 15 before getting thumped 4-0 four days later against Molesey.

This comes off the back of a terrible pre-season in which they were again thrashed in several of their matches, which included an 8-0 loss against Risborough Rangers and a 13-1 demolition versus Flackwell Heath.

Amongst these fixtures, the club also hired a new development management team.

In a statement, they said "We are very pleased to welcome Ian Plumridge, Martin Hearn and Andy West to Holmer Green FC to manage our development team.

"They bring extensive experience of local football to the Club and provide continuity with the existing players and hopefully encourage growth with new recruitment. They will be working closely with the management teams of the Allied and First Teams."

Championship play-offs in sight



Buckinghamshire as in a for a shout for a play-off place this summer following some positive results (Pixabay/Stock photo)

BUCKS are in with a great chance of reaching the National Counties Championship play-off after a convincing eight-wicket victory over Staffordshire at West Bromwich Dartmouth on Tuesday.

The county's second success in two matches puts them 18 points clear at the top of the Eastern Division 1 table with two games to play.

One highlight in the game was the performance of the wicket-keeper Ross Richardson, whose seven catches in the first innings equalled the Bucks record set by Colin Tungate against Wales MC at Bletchley in 1988.

Another Bucks star was High Wycombe left-arm spinner Conner Haddow, who followed his ten wickets in the victory over Norfolk with another nine here.

Staffordshire, put in to bat on the first day, got off to a flying start, but slipped from 77-0 to 208 all out in 56.3 overs. The main damage was done by seamer AJ Woodland, who took 4-21 in 14 overs, and Haddow, who claimed 3-0 in 15 balls. Both were, of course, assisted by Richardson's amazing haul.

On the second day, the start of which was delayed by rain, Bucks amassed 330-8 dec from 88.2 overs to take charge of the game.

Michael Payne led the way with 86 from 157 balls with ten fours, sharing a fourth-wicket stand of 137 with Woodland, who made 65. Other useful contributions came from Alexei Kervezee (47 in 39 balls), Richardson (42) and Ed

By Michael Knox

Bragg (33).

Facing a first-innings deficit of 122, Staffs seemed in big trouble at 78-5 in their second knock. But a fluent 70 by Derbyshire player Nils Priestley restored the innings, while Liam Hurt's late 52 enabled the last wicket to add 43 before they were 232 all out, Haddow taking 6-97 from 33.3 overs.

Set 111 for victory, Bucks raced home in 24 overs thanks to a sparkling 59 from 37 balls from Kervezee, who hit five fours and four sixes, and an unbeaten 35 from Ewan Cox.

Bucks took a maximum 24 points from the game and are now 18 points clear of Staffordshire at the top.

Going back to last season, this was Bucks's sixth Championship win in a row. They will be attempting to extend that run when they entertain Lincolnshire at Chesham from August 6th-8th.

Next Tuesday, Bucks will be playing their showpiece game against Sussex at Hove. It's the first time Bucks have played there.

The 50-over game starts at 11am.

Bucks squad v Sussex: T Hampton (High Wycombe) capt, A Woodland (High Wycombe), E Cox (Buckingham), C Marrow (Gerrards Cross), Kervezee (Halesowen), J Tarling (Buckingham), R Richardson (Blackheath), A Sharma (Great Brickhill), E Bragg (Halesowen), C Parsons (High Wycombe), S Croft (Harefield), T Weymes (Tring Park).



Peter Taylor (pictured celebrating Wycombe Wanderers' promotion to League One in May 2009) has left his job at a Non League side (PA)

Ex-Chairboys boss exits Non League outfit

FORMER Wycombe Wanderers manager Peter Taylor has left his role as manager at a Non League Club.

The 70-year-old, who helped the Chairboys earn promotion to League One during the 2008/09 season, had been in charge of Maldon and Tiptree of the Isthmian League North Division, until his departure on August 20.

His exit comes just two weeks into the new season following his arrival at the Essex-based team in December 2022.

Mitchell Cowling, who is the club's general manager, said: "Making this decision so early into a season was not an easy one.

"I had a lengthy conversation with

Peter and expressed my apologies for the need to implement changes to the club's structure.

"I want to clarify that this decision is not based on results or performance, but rather a strategic direction I believe is necessary.

"I value Peter's dedication and hard work.

"I will be wishing him success and rooting for him in his future endeavours."

Taylor joined Wanderers, then of League Two, in May 2008 and masterminded Wycombe's promotion to League One that season.

However, he was fired in October 2009 following a poor run of results.



The draw between Wycombe and Burton at Adams Park was the first between the two sides in the league (PA)

A valiant point at AP

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Matt Bloomfield believes the point gained in the 0-0 draw against Burton is something to be respected.

The stalemate means the Chairboys have secured their first clean sheet of the league season and are now unbeaten in their last two games.

The shutout was also the club's first since April, a run that lasted nine matches.

He said: "It's another point to our total so we must respect that and be pleased with it as we have no divine right to win matches.

"In the first half, I thought we were in the ascendancy as we played the game that we wanted to.

"We hit them early and had many chances, but Burton got better in the second half as let's be honest, no half of football is ever the same.

"There were parts of the game which were very disjointed due to the breaks of play.

"We need to be balanced in our opinions in how we're doing as we need to look at the facts in front of us.

"I'm proud of the way we took it to them and we should have won it but I'm pleased with the way we conducted ourselves.

"We had about 25 minutes of sustained pressure where we banged on their door but they didn't open.

"That happens and we move on to the next one."

Alan Parry's Previews: Rovers are the enemy?



The Memorial Stadium (PA)

WYCOMBE'S stuttering start to the season must be a concern to manager Matt Bloomfield ahead of their next challenge, the visit to Bristol Rovers on Saturday, August 26.

The new look Wanderers team has struggled to find consistency in their opening four games in league and cup which have been a classic case of taking one step forward followed by one step backwards.

They followed victory against Leyton Orient with an impressive start against bottom of the table Burton Albion last week, but their second half performance was disappointing against a team who had lost their first three games.

An improvement will be needed to take anything from the trip to Bristol Rovers who are notoriously difficult to beat at home.

Although near neighbours Oxford United and MK Dons are the closest Wycombe get to local derbies, Wanderers fans are more passionate about rivalries with clubs based many miles from the town.

Colchester United were regarded as the main foes in the early 1990s when the clubs were neck-and-neck in the race to win a place in the Football League.

In recent years Peterborough United took over as public enemy number one after their criticism of how Wycombe won a play-off place ahead of them in the lockdown season of 2019/20.

We can now add Bristol Rovers to the list, mainly because of the comments of their manager Joey Barton.

When Wanderers beat his team 2-1 at Adams Park on Boxing Day last year, Barton made derogatory comments about the home team's style of play and even criticised Gareth Ainsworth's dress sense.

He claimed that Rovers were fitter, better footballers and that he wouldn't swap any of his players for any of Wycombe's.

Fast forward to March of this year and more sour grapes from Barton after Wanderers deservedly earned a 2-0 win at the Memorial Stadium and went on to finish nine places and 16 points above his 'fitter, better footballing team.'

If Wycombe win at Rovers on Saturday, August 26, we can no doubt look forward to more gems from Mr Barton as he has now completed a stadium ban for his behaviour after losing at home to Sheffield Wednesday last season.

Jason McCarthy on his love for Christ



Jason McCarthy (pictured in March 2022), spoke to the Free Press about how he find the Lord during the 2027/18 season (PA)

ALL it takes is one moment to change your perspective on everything that is around you.

This is what happened to Wycombe Wanderers right-back Jason McCarthy, who has exclusively revealed to the Free Press how he came to faith after suffering a 'tough year' at Barnsley.

This led the ex-Southampton man to try and find a 'deeper purpose' in life away from football.

In his only season with the Tykes during the 2017/18 campaign, the wing-back played 24 times and was an ever-present member of the team until March.

However, the Yorkshire outfit were struggling near the foot of the Championship table and were eventually relegated back to League One after just two years in England's second tier.

McCarthy reflected: "My path to faith came in what was a tough year in football.

"I was up north away from home and for the first time, I realised that all of my happiness was solely based on football.

"The truth is that football is incredibly unpredictable as there are moments that you can't control.

"You're in the team one week but you're out of the team the next, you get injuries, you have dips in form, fans will not be shy in telling you what they think so you need to have a thick skin.

"And I'm alright in saying that it hit me and that it was tough.

"I'm vulnerable enough to say that and this stirred up some questions within me that there needs to be more life than this."

A move back to Wanderers took place in the summer of 2018 which is where he would meet 'his best friend' in Alex Samuel.

Exclusive by James Richings

The two were acquired by Gareth Ainsworth that summer and it was Samuel's advice and guidance that helped McCarthy to have 'very deep conversations in the dressing room' which would go on to change his mindset.

He added: "I didn't grow up in a Christian home. I had a great upbringing as my dad had a great job which allowed my mum not to work, so there was no real need for me to go into faith, but we all have these big questions.

"That summer, I was back at Wycombe and found myself hanging with Alex Samuel.

"I started to be around guys who shared the same faith in Christ, and it hit me that they all had something that I wanted to be a part of, and that joy is way bigger than football.

"I knew there was something and one day, I had a real encounter with Jesus which changed my life.

"This has helped me and my perspective on life changed.

"I know that God has got a plan for us all."

He concluded: "I know some people will struggle to read the Bible, me included, but I try and read it every day and that has completely changed my life.

There is one verse, Jeremiah 29:11 which reads: 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'

"I believe that we all go through dark times as I know I have, but what God is telling us through his word is that when you have faith, it completely changes your outlook."

SPORT



Uche Ikpeazu (third in from left) celebrates (PA)

Will fan favourite Uche Ikpeazu return to the club this summer?

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield has not ruled out a move for striker Uche Ikpeazu.

The one-time Chairboys forward is currently a free agent following his exit from the Turkish club Konyaspor in which he failed to score in any of his 14 appearances.

The 29-year-old is also being monitored by the likes of

Queens Park Rangers, Sheffield Wednesday and Huddersfield Town as a move back to England looks likely.

However, a reunion at Adams Park looks somewhat slim amid interest from the three Championship sides.

Ikpeazu spent the 2020/21 season with Wycombe where he scored six times in 33 appearances in all competitions.

Bloomfield said: "I don't want to talk about any individuals specifically as I believe it's right to keep what we're trying to do behind closed doors."

"We don't want to be too open about who we may or may not be targeting but we do have targets in mind."

"We're always evaluating the group to see where we need to strengthen."

"Uche was a big player for us a few years ago and we'll see what will happen."

"There is a long time between the transfer window ending to the next one opening so we need to make sure we're covered in all areas. We've been very proactive this window, but the final week is where you need to be somewhat reactive due to certain elements."

Grimmer to be out for some time

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield has provided an injury update on right-back, Jack Grimmer.

The 29-year-old Scotsman was stretched off in the Chairboys' 0-0 draw against Burton Albion last weekend and was visibly distressed when leaving the Adams Park pitch.

Prior to his injury, he had started all of Wanderers' five games this season, captaining the club on four occasions.

But Bloomfield confirmed that the ex-Fulham man will be absent for an unspecified amount of time.

He told the Free Press: "We're going to lose Jack for a little while as he has picked up a calf injury which is very disappointing."

"He's a huge part of the group as he's a real leader in the way that he conducts himself in the dressing room."

"However, as one door closes another opens so there'll be an opportunity for someone else to play."

"We tried to be as intelligent as we can in pre-season with the bodies that we've got and in the first few weeks, I knew it was important to share the minutes around because to have five competitive games straight away with a lot more added on time, it was going to be tough for everyone to battle that."

"And it's really disappointing to lose Jack."

"We wish him well."

The timing of Grimmer's injury comes in the same week

By James Richings

as fellow right-back Jason McCarthy took part in full training for the first time this season, along with utility player David Wheeler.

The two have been absent since May and Bloomfield hopes we'll see them both in the light and dark blue quarters very soon.

He continued: "There is no time frame on Jack's injury, but we've got good competition all round."

"David Wheeler and Jason McCarthy are out on the grass, but this weekend might be a bit too soon for them as they have just come back, so we need to see how they level up in the next few days."

"They've been able to do a return-to-play protocol with the sports science guys which is good, and we'll welcome them back as soon as possible."

Finally, when asked if the club would be going into the market following Grimmer's latest setback, the manager responded with: "We won't probably go into the market for that area as we've got good cover in Jason McCarthy, Kane Vincent-Young, Chris Forino along with Joe Low."

"We've got good competition in that area, so we don't want to overload the squad with too many players."

Up next is Bristol Rovers away for Wycombe Wanderers.



Jack Grimmer will be out for some time with a calf injury (PA)



Wycombe take on Bristol R (PA)

Bloomfield praises Barton

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield insists this weekend's trip to Bristol Rovers will be a 'tough test' as he aims to secure the club's first away league win of the season.

It has been an inconsistent start to the campaign for the Chairboys with four points from the opening four matches, but the club are unbeaten in their last two.

Additionally, Wycombe have a respectable record at the home of the Pirates with six wins from their last 10 league trips, losing just three times.

Bloomfield said: "Bristol Rovers have done an excellent job in terms of their recruitment as they've got a few younger boys in on loan along with a few senior bodies too."

"They're trying to improve and we're aware of their goal threat too as they're a team with good legs about them."

"It'll be tough as Joey Barton has done a great job there."

Wanderers won the most previous encounter 2-0 in March, with Brandon Hanlan and Chem Campbell getting the goals.

Bloomfield added: "We are pleased with how we conduct ourselves as we conduct our business."

"We are proud of the group we've got together this summer and I was proud of the team I took back in March as we got a very good win."

The match will start at 3pm with around 500 away fans travelling to the fixture.