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## SPORT

Duo go out on loan until January



They have left AP until Jan

WYCOMBE Wanderers have confirmed two of their development players have gone out on loan.

Connor Parsons and James Clark, who have played in the EFL Trophy matches against the Aston Villa U21s, Milton Keynes Dons and Burton Albion this season, have moved to Notts County and Beaconsfield Town respectively.

The pair follow in the footsteps of Malachi Linton (King's Lynn), Andre Burley (Maidenhead), Max Ram (Hungerford), Curtis Anderson (Eastbourne) and Tyla Dickinson (Hayes & Yeading), who are all out on loan across non-league.

Creative winger Parsons has impressed for the Blues in three Papa John's Trophy appearances, scoring against Aston Villa U21s and providing an assist at MK Dons, and joins the Magpies in the National League until January 29.

Clark, who was once on Chelsea's books, will be at Beaconsfield until January 3.

## Awards for Ainsworth and Anis

MORE accolades were dished out to representatives of Wycombe Wanderers, after manager Gareth Ainsworth and forward Anis Mehmeti were included in the League One Team of the Week.

After David Stockdale, Ryan Tafazolli and Sam Vokes were named in a previous TOTW following the 1-0 victory over Bolton on November 20, the young Albanian produced a stunning display in the Chairboys' 3-0 win against Plymouth on November 23.

The former Norwich player bagged a brace with both goals being scored in front of the travelling Chairboys fans.

Manager Gareth Ainsworth was also named as the manager of the week, as he masterminded two consecutive wins which saw Wanderers also keep two clean sheets.

# Wednesday draw puts Wanderers joint top

By James Richings

A BRILLIANT Jordan Obita free-kick rescued a point for Wycombe Wanderers, as the Chairboys drew 2-2 away at Sheffield Wednesday.

The left-back's stunning goal midway through the second half not only means Wycombe are now unbeaten in three, but they are now joint top in League One.

The opening 20 minutes was a quiet affair as David Stockdale saved well to deny Florian Kamberi's half-volley from 20-yards, before Bailey Peacock-Farrell clawed away an inswinging Obita corner kick.

Despite the lack of quality, Wednesday's biggest threat was coming from Josh Windass and Kamberi.

The duo combined well to force another important save by Stockdale, as he made himself 'big to deny the latter.

It seemed that with all the possession, it looked like Wednesday were going to get the opening goal, but against the run of play, Wycombe took the lead through Anis Mehmeti.

In what was the first real bit of attacking play for the visitors, it came from an Obita backheel that found McCleary.

McCleary ran down the touchline and laid it off to Mehmeti, who made a yard for himself the box and unleashed a shot that took a deflection past the Wednesday goalkeeper.

Wednesday credited the goal to Sam Vokes, but Mehmeti ran off celebrating, which means if it was scored by the former Norwich player, that's three in two matches for the youngster.

The Wycombe fans were singing, the Wednesday fans went quiet and the tide had swung the Chairboys' way.

However, the atmosphere suddenly changed.

With eight minutes left of the first-half, several Wednesday fans, along with Wycombe's McCarthy, called the attention of referee Darren Drysdale due to an incident in the North Stand.

Medics and stewards ran across the pitch to deal with the commotion, which



Jason McCarthy celebrates with Anis Mehmeti after the latter put Wycombe ahead against Sheffield Wednesday. That's three goals in two games for the Albanian since his return to the starting XI (PA)

led to both sets of players being sent back to the dressing rooms. It was later revealed to be a 'crowd disturbance' rather than a medical situation, and the game resumed around 10 minutes later.

And this new lease of life saw the Owls get their equaliser on the stroke of half-time, when Lee Gregory rounded Stockdale, before he passed it to Shodipo who tapped in from close range.

Shodipo again caused the Wycombe backline headaches in the second half, and on 49 minutes, he found Windass who scored with powerful drive from yards. It was his second goal in two league games this season.

However, Wanderers didn't panic, and it was the left-back in Obita who rescued a point, as he curled in a wonderful free-kick with 25 minutes remaining. It was a

brilliant way to score your first goal for the club.

Wednesday pushed to find the winner but Stockdale was on hand to catch any crosses that flew into his box.

The result means Wanderers are now on 38 points for the season and despite dropping down to third following the draw, they are now joint top with Rotherham and Wigan.



Wycombe Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth at Hillsborough (PA)

## Ainsworth's analysis after an away draw

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth has admitted that he would have taken a point against Sheffield Wednesday before kick-off.

The two sides drew 2-2 at Hillsborough with Jordan Obita scoring a stunning second half free-kick to rescue a point for the Chairboys, which has put them joint top of League One.

Anis Mehmeti's deflected effort gave Ainsworth's men the lead in the first-half before Olamide Shodipo equalised on the stroke of half-time.

Josh Windass' low drive gave the Owls a 2-1 lead in the second period, before Obita's brilliant goal levelled the scoring.

The result means Wycombe are unbeaten in three following their wins against Bolton and Plymouth, before they travelled to Hillsborough on November 27.

Speaking after the match, Ainsworth said: "The game was nearly called off, the pitch was horrendous, and the conditions were terrible. And if I'm honest, Sheffield Wednesday took the

spoils in the second half, not arguing about that, but, my fans never stopped singing, David Stockdale never stopped saving and we take a point home. It's been a fantastic week with the seven points we've taken is brilliant. Some people may have short memories and may think we weren't as good as we were against Plymouth today [Nov 27], but, a sign of a team that could achieve are when they get something when they are not at their best. They gave me everything but it was another tough away trip."



Sheffield Wednesday's Florian Kamperi and Wycombe Wanderers' Anthony Stewart battle for the ball at a snowy Sheffield Wednesday (PA)

# Boss on the away draw

GARETH Ainsworth has admitted that there was a 'momentum change' in his side's 2-2 draw away at Sheffield Wednesday.

On 37 minutes, the game was halted and the players were ushered to the dressing rooms after a commotion broke out in the north stand at Hillsborough.

It was first feared that it was a medical emergency, but it was later revealed to be a crowd disturbance.

This 10-minute break seem to gather the Sheff W players together, as they came back from the tunnel in the faces of Wycombe, and ultimately took a 2-1 lead before Jordan Obita levelled the game with a free-kick.

He said: "There was a momentum change and, we were definitely on

the ascendancy,

"We were playing some fantastic stuff on the edge of the box, but after the break, we seemed to lose it a little bit.

"It was one of those things, but we dealt with that and Wednesday came out and looked good, with their goal on half-time being very disappointing for us.

"But to come back the way we did was fantastic, and what a great goal by Jordan.

"He's got a brilliant left foot and he and Joe Jacobson are competing for that left-back position, and it's great to see that fight.

"I would have taken a point before today and the fans were brilliant."

Wycombe are winless in four away matches at Hillsborough.

# New three-year deal for Anis Mehmeti



Anis Mehmeti (PA)

CHRISTMAS has come early for Wycombe Wanderers fans as the Chairboys have confirmed that Anis Mehmeti has signed a new deal with the club.

The 20-year-old, who is in his second season with the Adams Park outfit, has penned a new deal until June 2024.

The attacking midfielder signed for the club last September for the development side, but after impressing Gareth Ainsworth, he was promoted to the first team, where he made his first professional appearance in the 2-1 home defeat to Millwall in October 2020.

He eventually played 29 games in his breakthrough season, scoring three times. So far this campaign, he has represented Wanderers on 18 occasions and has bagged three goals.

Those three goals have come in his last two matches.

His performances since then have made him one of the most talked about youngsters in the EFL.

Boss Gareth Ainsworth said: "Anis is a special player with massive potential, and we're delighted that he'll be continuing to develop his game with us here at Wycombe Wanderers.

"When Rob, Missy and Pete Couhig backed us to launch a development squad programme just over a year ago, it was an ideal platform for us to scout players like Anis, who'd lost his way a little bit after leaving Norwich's academy and falling into non-league, and bring them here to do everything we can to get the best out of them.

"We feel like we're achieving that with Anis, and a great deal of credit has to go to Sam Grace, the rest of my staff, our senior players for mentoring him along the way, but also to Anis himself, for getting his head down, working hard and earning the right to launch what we believe will be a really successful career in the EFL.

"I know the fans will be excited by this news and it's another statement of our intent to build - and keep - the strongest squad possible to achieve our aim of returning to the Championship and staying there."

Pete Couhig, Chief Financial Officer, said: "Watching Anis develop into an integral part of our squad in just 12 months has been a perfect embodiment of everything we're trying to achieve with the development squad."

# Wednesday boss on Wycombe's set up



Sheffield Wednesday boss Darren Moore acknowledged Wycombe's set up following the 2-2 draw at Hillsborough on Saturday, November 27 (PA)

SHEFFIELD Wednesday boss Darren Moore has praised Wycombe Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth following the 2-2 draw at Hillsborough on November 27.

After Anis Mehmeti had given the away side the lead, strikes from Olamide Shodipo and Josh Windass put the Owls 2-1 up, before a brilliant free-kick by Jordan Obita rescued a point for the Chairboys.

Going into the match, Wanderers made one change from the 3-0 away win at Plymouth on Tuesday, with Joe Jacobson being dropped for Garath McCleary, as the Chairboys went for a 3-4-1-2 formation.

The Wednesday manager told Yorkshire Live: "It was really brave of them to leave three high on the pitch. "Fair play to Gareth [Ainsworth].

"I thought to myself 'my goodness, it is a real gamble.'

"If we could have got the ball to the other side of them and with our quality, we will create chances and

By James Richings

that's what we did."

On the free-kick that Obita scored to make it 2-2, Moore said: "It was a needless free-kick to give away.

"A lot of their goals from set pieces so you don't want to give a set play away.

"Peacock-Farrell has gone for it that side of the corner.

"I will have a look back at it again and see the position Bailey was in.

"He looked that side. "The goal was avoidable and that is what I am a little grouchy with now.

"It was avoidable. "It looked like we were going to go and get a third goal to kill the game but they managed to stay in it and got their goal.

"They marked us man for man and saw the game out.

"Even then we had a couple of chances but we didn't capitalise on them."

The two sides will meet again in April, which will be Wycombe's final home game of the season.

# SPORT



## A week off for the 'tired' Chairboys



### TV date booked for Wycombe

WYCOMBE Wanderers' home match against Sunderland on January 8 has been scheduled to be broadcast live on TV.

The Chairboys take on the Black Cats on the weekend of the FA Cup third round, with both sides being knocked out of the competition at the first hurdle.

Gareth Ainsworth's men lost at home to Hartlepool United 1-0 in a replay, while the former Premier League outfit were knocked out by League Two Mansfield by a goal to nil at the Stadium of Light.

The match between Wycombe and Sunderland will kick off at 12.30pm.

Two sides have met each five times in all competitions with the north east team being unbeaten in four of those matches (two wins and two draws).

Wanderers' only win against the Black Cats was in October 2019 when Darius Charles scored the winner in a 1-0 victory for the Chairboys at Adams Park.

This season, Sunderland defeated Wycombe 3-1 at the SoL in August.

### The boy wonder is here to stay

WYCOMBE youngster Anis Mehmeti has revealed he is 'delighted' to sign a new contract with the club.

The 20-year-old has penned a new three-year deal with the Chairboys which will keep him at Adams Park until the summer of 2024.

He said: "I'm delighted to get this done.

"It's been a long journey but it's done and I'm here to stay.

"Right from the beginning I was so happy to be here. It was the right club for me. I always had a vision that I was going to break through and I worked so hard last season. I learned a lot and I can't thank the staff enough for what they've taught me.

"Sam brought me in and believed in my ability, and the gaffer and Dobbo gave me my Championship debut and put their faith in me.

"This club is a perfect match for me and I want to show everyone what I'm about, and help this club get back to where we want to be."

To read more on Mehmeti's new contract along with what Gareth Ainsworth and Pete Couhig had to say, go to page 71.



Jordan Obita (second right) celebrates scoring his first goal for Wycombe in the 2-2 draw away at Sheffield Wednesday on November 27 (PA)

#### By James Richings

WYCOMBE boss Gareth Ainsworth has revealed that next weekend's break has 'come at the right time'.

Due to the Chairboys being knocked out of the FA Cup to League Two Hartlepool United on November 16, a potential second-round trip to the boss's former club in Lincoln City was wiped off the table.

This means Wycombe will have a free weekend for the first time in three months, giving the players a chance to rest up following long away trips to Doncaster Rovers, Rotherham United, Sheffield

Wednesday, Fleetwood Town, Plymouth Argyle and Hartlepool United in recent weeks.

It will also give the likes of Josh Scowen and Curtis Thompson a chance to regain full fitness.

Scowen hasn't played since the defeat against the Pools in the middle of November while Thompson played in the 2-2 draw away at Wednesday with a knock.

Olly Pendlebury also missed the fixture at Hillsborough after picking up an injury in the warm up.

He said: "It has come for us at the right time but it's not like we didn't try and get through in the FA Cup with the amount of chances we had

against Hartlepool, but every cloud - and the silver lining is that we're able to get a weekend off.

"It's a time to try and get a few players back like Josh Scowen who has been huge for us this season and there were a few painkillers and anti-inflammatories knocking about before the game today as the boys are banged up, but they give me everything.

"We didn't create as much as we would have liked [against Sheffield Wednesday], and I actually thought we had a few tired legs due to the effort that they give me.

"And I think the energy they have given me over the last three games

has taken its toll, with Josh Scowen being injured and Curtis Thompson playing through with a knock, so there are a few legs that need rest.

"Olly Pendlebury pulled up before the game and was honest as he said, 'gaffer, I don't want to let the boys down'.

"It's brilliant what we've got here and it shows the maturity of the team.

"I've given the lads one or two days off and I'm looking forward to getting back again as they deserve it. The rest will do us good next week."

Next up for Wycombe is a home match against Burton Albion on December 7.