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FULL STORY: Page 7



REVEALED

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Page 9

NEWS

Duo's bid for festive No1



Page 3

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SPORT

Boss on momentum after break



Gareth Ainsworth (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth has admitted that he was 'worried' that his side's momentum would drop before their 2-1 win over Burton Albion on December 7.

The Chairboys had the previous weekend (December 4/5) off following their elimination from this season's FA Cup.

This meant that after their 2-2 draw against Sheffield Wednesday on November 27, Wanderers didn't play for 10 days.

However, after defeating the Brewers, Wycombe are now in the automatic promotion places in League One.

Ainsworth said: "You always worry after a 10 day break, and I won't lie, I think the lads had a bit of a Christmas drink after the Sheffield Wednesday game, so you always worry after that."

"However, there is a huge difference in the Christmas parties to now from when I was a player, and the boys are all professional athletes. They know what they need to do and they know what they need to be."

Another accolade for Anis

WYCOMBE Wanderers forward Anis Mehmeti has recently won the club's Player of the Month award for November.

The Albanian youngster played seven times in the penultimate month of the year, where he scored three goals in the final two games.

Mehmeti bagged a brilliant brace in the fantastic 3-0 away win at promotion-rivals Plymouth Argyle on November 23, before scoring a deflected effort in the 2-2 draw at Hillsborough against Sheffield Wednesday four days later.

He has scored six times in 47 matches for the club since joining last summer, but he did miss all of the Chairboys' games in September.

However, since his return, Mehmeti has played a key role in Wanderers' form, and he has started the last five league matches.

Centre backs miss midweek fixture

By James Richings

WYCOMBE boss Gareth Ainsworth has revealed why centre back Anthony Stewart missed the 2-1 win over Burton Albion on December 7.

The 29-year-old wasn't included in the matchday squad despite playing 22 matches in all competitions this season.

His defensive partner, Ryan Tafazolli, also didn't start in the victory against the Brewers, as he was an unused sub at Adams Park.

Ainsworth said: "Ryan Tafazolli and Anthony Stewart have been ill."

"Ryan recovered enough to be on the bench, but Anthony didn't recover in time so we're going to make sure that he will be fit and well to return."

"Illnesses at this time of year, and not just the pandemic, but illnesses in general, can weaken you and in recent years, we would have had to play them."

"However, we put Chris Forino in and some might say it was a brave decision but not when you work with Chris every day and not when you can see what he can give you."

"I'm proud of him and we have got a wealth of players that are ready to come in when needed."

On the match, the boss also revealed that while he was happy with the win, he wants his side to score more goals and take their chances.

The win has seen Wycombe move into the automatic promotion spots of the League One table as they are joint top with Rotherham United – one of the clubs that were promoted with Wanderers in 2020, and one of the clubs that went down with the Chairboys in May.

The two are level on 41 points for the season, but the Millers are currently sitting in first place on



Anthony Stewart (pictured) missed the midweek match against Burton Albion due to illness (PA)

goal difference, with the Yorkshire side having scored five more goals than the Chairboys, whilst also conceding 10 less.

Ainsworth continued: "You need to take your chances when you're on top."

"How many times have we seen this?"

"Game after game and you know

that when you have these spells, you must take them [your chances] and in the past, this club has been guilty of playing well and not taking those chances."

"But we have got some clinical finishers now with Sam Vokes, Brandon Hanlan, Garath McCleary and I'd like to get a few more [goals] in other areas and

we're working on that, but, it was great to go in at half-time 2-0 up, even though it's a dodgy scoreline as you're worried about how teams come at you, but we saw the game out really well."

"We could have had more but I will take the three points and now we move onto Wimbledon on Saturday."



Arthur Labinjo-Hughes was killed at the age of six by Emma Tustin in June 2020

Applause for little Arthur at Adams Park

PLAYERS, staff, fans a members of the press who attended Wycombe's match against Burton on December 7, took part in a minutes of applause in memory of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes.

The gesture took place in the sixth minute of the match at Adams Park, to commemorate the age of the youngster's death last summer.

Arthur, who was a Birmingham City fan and had aspirations of becoming a professional footballer, was brutally tortured by his father, Thomas Hughes, and his stepmother, Emma

Tustin, during the first few months of 2020.

Abuse included making the child stand for up to 35 hours across a three-day period for his supposed misbehaviour, having his meals laced with salt, being forced to sleep on the floor, not having any water during that summer's heatwave, whilst also being beaten.

He was also not allowed to partake in any leisure activities which involved Hughes, Tustin and his stepsiblings.

Tustin eventually killed the innocent

six-year-old in June 2020, and despite claiming innocence, she was eventually found guilty of Arthur's murder this month [December 2021].

She was sentenced to life behind bars with a minimum term of 29 years, whilst Hughes was convicted of manslaughter, and was jailed for at least 21 years. Following the conviction, football fixtures from all across the country have conducted a minutes of applause for Arthur, whilst a vigil took place at the house where he was brutally tortured and killed.

Rainbow is the colour

WYCOMBE Wanderers have released a special edition shirt to support the Rainbow Laces campaign.

The campaign is to help members of the LGBTQI+ community who are also football fans, in making stadiums and the atmosphere of matches a safe space for those who attend.

Manager Gareth Ainsworth said: "Here at Wycombe Wanderers, we're fully committed to making sure that everyone can be themselves and feels welcome and part of who we are. The Rainbow Laces campaign is hugely important for stamping out homophobia and raising awareness around how it's not okay to discriminate against anyone

because of their sexuality. We were the first club to sign the Government Charter for Action against Homophobia in Football in 2011 and are proud to once again support Rainbow Laces this year."

A spokesperson for the club said: "The club has always strived to be an inclusive and welcoming place, with the newly formed All Quarters Club aiming to enhance that further. The All Quarters project is a consultative fan group that seeks to gather views on how the club can move forward in its inclusivity, with input from four traditionally under-represented groups; those with disabilities, people from minority ethnicity backgrounds, women & girls, and those from the LGBTQI+ community."



The kit was released just before Wycombe Wanderers took on Burton Albion at Adams Park on Tuesday, December 7 (PA)

Journeyman and former Rams striker dies aged 38



Holloways Park

BEACONSFIELD Town FC along with several members of the Wycombe Wanderers first team have paid tribute to the former footballer, Marvin Morgan, who has died aged 38.

Morgan, who played for the Rams in the 2018/19 season, passed away at the age of 38 on December 6, with the cause of death being undisclosed.

The striker represented 18 different clubs across his playing career where he scored 102 goals in 408 appearances, before hanging up his boots last summer.

However, the journey-man forward is best known for launching the clothing business, Fresh Ego Kid, which has been a booming success.

A statement on Twitter from Beaconsfield Town FC reads: "The club is shocked and saddened to hear of the passing of former player Marvin Morgan.

"Marvin was highly respected amongst his peers and throughout the football leagues and our thoughts go out to Marvin's family, friends and all who knew him at this extremely difficult time."

Boss' thoughts after the Burton fixture



Brandon Hanlan scored the first goal in the win against Burton on December 7. It was his fifth of the campaign (PA)

WYCOMBE boss Gareth Ainsworth has shared his thoughts after his side defeated Burton Albion 2-1 at Adams Park.

First-half goals from Brandon Hanlan and Garath McCleary have put Wanderers joint top of the League One table with Rotherham United, as they continue to push towards promotion to the Championship.

The second-half saw the away side have large amounts of possession which eventually saw them pull a goal back through Conor Shaughnessy, but the Chairboys held on to secure their third win in four matches.

Speaking after the match, Ainsworth said: "I'm really pleased with the performance.

"Burton were always going to have a spell as they are a good side, but I thought we were super dominant in the first half as that was some of the best football we have played.

"We did really well and if you watch some of that play in the first half, it was fantastic.

"I don't think we put in one hopeful ball into the box as I thought they were all purposeful and there were plenty of chances, but I'm disappointed that we didn't score more goals if I'm honest.

"They defended well and their goalkeeper made some cracking saves, but some of the stuff we have been working on came to fruition and at half-time, we knew that someone like Jimmy, who I have a lot of respect for, would get his team right up for it in the second half and we knew there was going to be

By James Richings

an onslaught.

"All teams will have a five/10 minute spell and it's about riding the storm and changing the momentum and we did that really well.

"We defended well along with the running and the work rate of the two strikers kept releasing us forward and kept getting us up the pitch.

"Garath McCleary and Anis Mhmeti, you know what you're going to get from those players as they are dangerous players, but I thought one of the most pivotal moments was when David Wheeler came on and changed the midfield.

"Burton started to dominate but when he came on, he was aggressive and physical and I thought he was outstanding.

"There were so many great performances.

"Chris Forino on his league debut was outstanding and I am really pleased for him, and he has got a wealth of experience around him with Curtis Thompson, Jack Grimmer, Joe Jacobson, and David Stockdale...I would have loved to have made my league debut with those four surrounding me.

"It was an awesome performance from me, but he'll be saying 'it's all about the team' and I feel for the boys that didn't get on as you want to be part of it, but believe me, we've got a heck of a schedule coming up."

Up next is AFC Wimbledon at home on December 11.

G-Mac has got more to offer at Wycombe

GARETH Ainsworth has insisted that Garath McCleary 'has got plenty left' following his goal against Burton on Tuesday night.

The 34-year-old has now scored 10 goals in 50 matches for the club, following his arrival from Reading last season.

Ainsworth said: "Garath McCleary is evergreen and he's got plenty left.

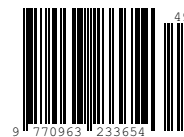
"I wasn't even at Wycombe at 34 - I signed aged 36, so for me, that 35 mark now is something from the past.

"If you look after yourself you can go for a lot longer, especially in the bottom two divisions and Garath is proof that the age thing is a myth."

All of McCleary's six goals so far this season have been scored at Adams Park. Coincidentally, all of his goals in the previous campaign were scored away from home.

SPORT

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Wycombe second after Burton victory



Gareth Ainsworth (PA)

Gaffer has no plans for leaving

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth has revealed that he 'loves' being at the club amid rumours linking him with the vacant Preston North End job.

North End parted ways with boss Frankie McAvoy on December 6 after nine months in charge, and there has been speculation that the former Preston hero could be re-joining the Deepdale outfit in the managerial hotseat.

Speaking to the Late Kick Off podcast, Ainsworth said: "I'm really, really happy.

"There are a couple of clubs that are close to my heart like Blackburn and QPR, but I don't think Wycombe are a million miles away from sharing a level with those clubs at the moment. I really don't. I don't want to do what we have done at this club then leave or be forced out, and I need to keep getting results otherwise I'll be forced to leave. But, I wouldn't get up and leave just because something better has come along.

"I love being at Wycombe Wanderers."

Friends on the Bucks touchline

WYCOMBE boss Gareth Ainsworth has praised his opposite number in Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink following Wanderers' 2-1 win over Burton Albion at Adams Park on December 7.

The two managers shared a laugh prior to kick-off, with this being the second time in 28 days that the former Chelsea and Charlton man has taken the Brewers to Buckinghamshire.

The two sides met in the EFL Trophy in November where they smashed Wanderers 5-0.

Ainsworth said: "I have huge respect for Jimmy. I was lucky enough to play against him in the same league and he was a fabulous goal scorer. He is a great motivator and he has got a good team. They work their socks off for him, but, I'm really proud that we have got the win."



The win over Burton means Wanderers have picked up 10 points from their last 12 available. Up next for the Chairboys is AFC Wimbledon (PA)

By James Richings

FIRST-HALF goals from Brandon Hanlan and Garath McCleary gave Wycombe their third win in four matches as they defeated Burton Albion 2-1 at Adams Park.

The 5-0 thrashing on 28 days ago was a distant memory as Wanderers dominated the first-half, with the home side's first big chance of the match falling to McCleary after 13 minutes.

The former Reading man was found via a Chris Forino flick on, and the Jamaican international unleashed a cracking first-time shot that stung the palms of Ben Garratt. The keeper did well to deny McCleary, with the rebound by Jordan Obita going just wide.

Wycombe bossed the ball around and tired out Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink's men by stretching the

play as Jason McCarthy and Obita pulled the Albion midfield apart.

And this patient build-up play eventually paid off as the Chairboys took a deserved lead through Hanlan.

The striker got the ball on the left-hand touchline and ran past three members of the Brewers' backline before bending in a beautiful shot from 20-yards to give the Blues the lead.

It was his third of the league season, his fifth overall, and Wycombe were ahead.

The goal was the least Wanderers deserved as they continued to penetrate the visitors.

Obita's acrobatic effort was blocked off the line, McCleary's long-range shot was saved by Garratt, Forino scooped over and scuffed attempts from Jack Grimmer and Jason McCarthy went begging for the home side.

It was all Wycombe.

Hanlan nearly got a second but his thunderous half-volley flew over while a Sam Vokes header went wide.

Gareth Ainsworth's men eventually sat back which allowed Burton to have the ball, but nothing came of their attacks as Cameron Borthwick-Jackson saw his effort blocked, while ex-Wanderer Aaron Amadi-Holloway forced David Stockdale into an easy save. Amadi-Holloway scored a hat-trick when the two sides last met in November.

And those missed chances for Albion were vital, as Wycombe doubled their lead through McCleary on the stroke of half-time.

After being put through by his former Reading team mate in Obita, McCleary cracked a left-foot shot past Garratt in front of the travelling fans.

It was his sixth of the season,

with all of his goals so far this campaign coming at Adams Park.

Half-time came at the right time for Burton as it gave the Brewers a chance to regroup - and this is exactly what happened at the start of the second-half.

Albion had the ball, caused problems and got a goal from out of nowhere on 53 minutes.

With nothing on, Conor Shaughnessy tried his luck from inside the box and after it took a deflection, it looped beyond Stockdale to give Hasselbaink's men a glimmer of hope.

This stunned Adams Park into silence as the goal, overall, came against the run of play but it gave the away side a chance in a match that they were second best in.

But Wanderers held on to move onto 41 points for the season, which has put them joint top in the League One table.