

# WYCOMBE'S WEMBLEY MOMENT

The result didn't go their way, but the Chairboys did us all proud with their third Wembley visit in five seasons. Now relive the big day with eight pages of pictures, reports and match analysis . . .

THOUSANDS of fans got behind Wycombe Wanderers last weekend as the Chairboys headed to Wembley for their hotly-anticipated clash with Peterborough United.

For the fourth time in 10 years, Wanderers went to Wembley to see if they could find glory under the famous arch.

Sadly, it wasn't meant to be as

Peterborough beat Wycombe 2-1 in the EFL Trophy final thanks to a very late Harrison Burrows brace.

On another day, the light and dark blue ribbons would have hung proudly on the trophy. In the supplement, read what both managers had to say as well as enjoy a selection of pictures before, during, and after the showpiece in North London.



## HOW THINGS PANNED OUT AT WEMBLEY FOR WYCOMBE

# Heartbreak at the death

By James Richings

WYCOMBE Wanderers lost their first-ever EFL Trophy final appearance after they fell to an incredibly narrow 2-1 defeat against Peterborough United.

In a tight contest, the game looked to be heading to a goalless draw in 90 minutes, before three goals in the final five minutes caused Wembley to go into chaos.

The Chairboys, who were wearing their green away kit, started the better and had a chance to take an early lead, but Kieran Sadlier's shot on eight minutes was brilliantly blocked by Jadel Katongo.

The opening period predominantly belonged to Matt Bloomfield's side as they continued to pepper Jed Steer in the Posh goal.

Matt Butcher fired wide after some brilliant link-up play with Richard Kone and Garath McCleary, whilst Josh Scowen smashed wide.

The London Road team weathered the storm and had chances of their own, as Kwame Poku bent his attempt over, Hector Kyprianou headed wide, and Chris Forino produced a fantastic tackle to deny Ricky-Jade Jones, with Franco Ravizzoli pushing away a Katono fizzer.

For Wycombe, they allowed Peterborough to have the ball before pouncing on them with



Harrison Burrows scored twice in the last five minutes as Peterborough defeated Wycombe 2-1 at Wembley Stadium (PA)

counter attacks.

Firstly, a Freddie Potts ball was flicked on towards goal by McCleary who was denied by Jed Steer in the Posh goal, before Kone had several attempts blocked.

It was an end-to-end first half, which Wycombe just edged.

The second period began with the same intensity as the first, as Kone's lob just 11 seconds in nearly gave Wycombe the lead.

The tempo grew with the contest starting to feel like a basketball encounter due to the frequent number of attacks.

Sadlier nearly gave Wanderers the lead after a stray pass from Steer was caught out, but his shot from on the edge of the box just went over.

McCleary and Butcher also went close but to no avail.

For the Posh, Ravizzoli made himself big to gather a Jones attempt, whilst he was on hand to thwart a Harrison Burrows cross-shot.

Then, in a crazy last five minutes under the arch, Harrison Burrows' fierce drive beat Ravizzoli to give the Posh the lead.

However, moments later, Dale Taylor bagged his ninth goal of the



The boss lead the team out in a suit and tie before going to a tracksuit (PA)

campaign with a snapshot from outside the box in the final minute of the contest.

It was his first touch since coming on as a substitute moments before.

The Wanderers end went into raptures as it seemed extra-time was beckoning.

But in a cruel twist of fate,

Burrows' cross/shot in five minutes of injury-time secured the trophy for Peterborough, and their first in the competition for 10 years.

It wasn't Wycombe's day, but the performance is something they can be proud of.

Up next for the Chairboys is a league outing against Derby County on April 10 at Adams Park.



Richard Kone had a couple of chances to under the arch on April 7 (PA)

## Boss backs Ravizzoli after fluke winner

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield has praised goalkeeper Franco Ravizzoli after his unfortunate error in the club's EFL Trophy final defeat against Peterborough United.

The Argentine conceded two goals from Posh fan-favourite Harrison Burrows, with the shot-stopper getting a huge hand onto his first attempt but failed to get it clear.

This was on 85 minutes to put Boro 1-0 up.

Dale Taylor equalised with a minute to go before Burrows bagged his second in injury time after his cross completely flew over Ravizzoli and into the net.

The defeat means Wycombe have now lost three of their last four cup finals at Wembley.

Bloomfield said: "He's OK but he's tough.

"It's the life of a goalkeeper as it's tough one [to take].

"Fair play to those guys who put themselves in that

position as it's a tough life to live, and it's a cruel moment for us.

"But Franco has been excellent for us this season, as well as Max [Stryjek]."

On the remaining games this season, he concluded: "We're trying to play in a certain way as we want to conduct ourselves in the way that we believe and we know that it'll take time.

"They'll be bumps along the way.

"It's been full one since the

start of the year but we've been in good form."

Since joining Wycombe last summer from Milton Keynes on a free, Ravizzoli has played 15 times and has kept seven clean sheets in that time.

He played in each of the club's three group stage matches against the Crystal Palace U21s, Stevenage and Wimbledon in the competition, where he kept three clean sheets.

He became the club's number one in February.



Franco Ravizzoli (PA)

## WYCOMBE AT WEMBLEY

# Reflecting after the loss

By James Richings

MATT Bloomfield has revealed why he chose Richard Kone to start in Wycombe Wanderers' EFL Trophy final 2-1 defeat against Peterborough United.

The young Ivorian played 75 minutes at Wembley Stadium as the Chairboys conceded two goals in the final five minutes in between equalising to miss out on winning the cup for the first time in their history.

In an end-to-end encounter, both sides had chances to score, which included Kone going close on a handful of occasions.

This included producing a cheeky chip inside the opening 10 seconds of the second period that just went over the crossbar.

Bloomfield said: "We were missing Bez Lubala with him being cup-tied and we played Richard against Portsmouth to get his minutes up [on Good Friday]."

"He's been in the building since pre-season but full-time since January, and we believe he's going to have a big future."

"He's made the jump up from step seven and a couple of months into full-time training, it looked like he had hit a



Kieran Sadlier closes down Jadel Katongo (PA)

brick wall as his energy levels were down.

"There's a lot to adapt to when you make the jump up from step seven to senior football."

"We had to take him out of the firing line and bring him in again."

"We wanted to have a pressing strategy and I

thought Richard would be that guy to cause Peterborough problems which he did.

"But he ran out of legs so we made a change to keep it fresh at the top."

Going into the contest, Bloomfield admitted he wanted to have 'selection headaches' in all areas of the pitch.

This included deciding what centre back partnership he would go for with Chris Forino, Nigel Lonwijk, Ryan Tafazolli and Joe Low all being fit.

He chose Forino and Lonwijk who both put in a brilliant showing, despite only playing one match together this season.

This was in the 2-0 win over Northampton Town on March 16.

Bloomfield explained: "I thought the way Dale Taylor took his goal was brilliant, and with Freddie Potts and Nigel Lonwijk this season, we've had to use the loan market a lot

and they were excellent today too."

"Chris Forino who also returned was excellent too, as I had to make several big decisions at centre half."

"Joe Low and Ryan Tafazolli have been brilliant for us since the start of this year [January 2024], but we felt it was right to go with the mobility with those two [Forino and Lonwijk], and they were excellent."

"There's a lot to take away and it'll take some time to digest it, but we haven't got much time as we've got another big game against Derby on Wednesday."



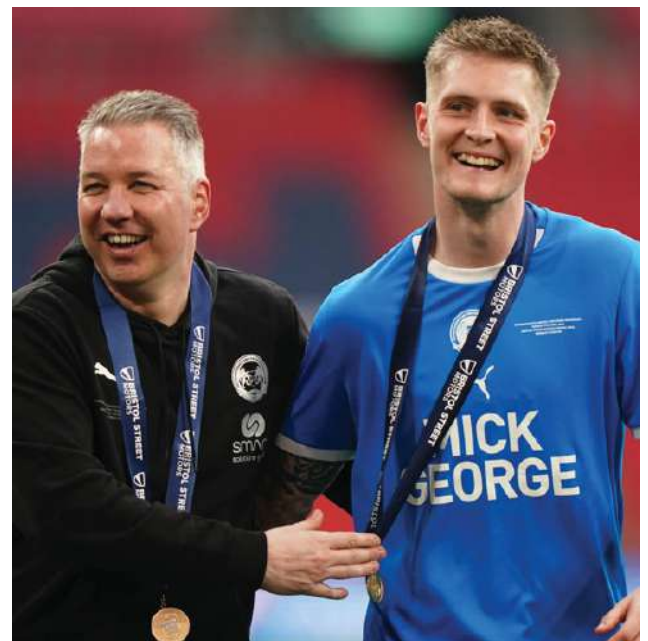
Dale Taylor scored his ninth goal of the season (PA)



The Wycombe players applaud the fans ahead of kick-off (PA)



Wycombe chairman Rob Couhig (left) during the EFL Trophy final (PA)



Ex-Wycombe man Josh Knight with P'boro boss Darren Ferguson (PA)

# MAKING NOISE FOR THE WYCOMBE BOYS ON CUP FINAL DAY

## A sea of blue and green

FROM the 42,000 that visited Wembley Stadium to watch the EFL Trophy final between Peterborough United and Wycombe Wanderers, roughly 15,000 attended to get behind the Chairboys.

It was the Adams Park side's third visit to the home of football in five seasons, and although it wasn't meant to be for the Light and Dark Blue Army under the arch, many left North London feeling optimistic for the future.

So enjoy this spread of pics of the fans that attended the showpiece on April 7 - you may even see yourself!

To read the latest news surrounding the Chairboys, go to James Richings' X account (@James\_BFP).



The Aylesbury Blues were loud and proud



New and old shirts were on display



Around 15,000 Chairboys attended the game



Amersham station was a sea of blue and green



Everyone was up for the cup



Several fans made their way to the game via the tube



Getting the drinks in ahead of kick-off



The matchday programme for those who attended (PA)



Posing for a picture ahead of the clash against the Posh



Making their way towards the arch



Making their way down Wembley Way (PA)



The moment when Dale Taylor levelled things up (PA)

## WYCOMBE AT WEMBLEY

# What the bosses had to say

By James Richings

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield has reflected on his side's EFL Trophy final defeat against Peterborough United.

The Chairboys lost to the Posh 2-1 at Wembley Stadium with the three goals all coming in the last five minutes of the contest.

After a brilliant end-to-end encounter, Harrison Burrows fired Peterborough ahead on 85 minutes after his rasping left-foot attempt beat Franco Ravizzoli who managed to get a touch of the ball.

However, four minutes later, Dale Taylor, who had only been on the pitch for a matter of moments, scored a fantastic volley from range to send the Wanderers end of Wembley into chaotic joy.

The snapshot took everyone by surprise and it looked like the showpiece was heading to extra time.

But in the first of five additional minutes, Burrows bagged his brace as a 35-yard cross/shot flew over Ravizzoli and into the net.

It was a cruel way to lose a final that Wycombe had played very well in.

Here is what Matt Bloomfield



Wycombe Wanderers manager

has had to say about the contest "I'm disappointed but proud of how the team played.

"We put on a spectacle against another League One team as we both tried and played our way.

"I'm very disappointed for our players and supporters as I thought we deserved something from the day, but we got nothing.

"First of all, congratulations to Darren and his team.

"They were excellent and they've got that will probably get sold for multimillion pounds so congratulations to them.

"When we got it back to 1-1, you think that the day could be yours but it's cruel to lose the way we



Peterborough United manager Darren Ferguson celebrates his side's victory in the Bristol Street Motors Trophy

did.

"When you concede a goal in that manner, it may be a sign that the day wasn't meant to be yours.

"I'm proud of our club and we're trying to create a new Wycombe.

"We had a manager who I think extremely highly of and I want to try and build something new.

"I'm proud of the players in

terms of how they've taken on the tactical information this week, and my staff have worked tirelessly as we're creating something new."

Posh boss, Darren Ferguson, said: "The first 20 minutes, I wasn't happy and I had to tweak something tactically because we couldn't get any rhythm to our game. In a game when it's 0-0 in

a cup final, you just have to hold your nerve and anything can change the game so quickly.

"I felt in the second half, we played well and I thought we were the better team but we couldn't find that goal and it was a hell of a finish to the game.

"We managed to get a bit of luck and whether it's a cross or shot, it doesn't really matter."

## Wycombe 'excellent' despite loss

By James Richings

MATT Bloomfield has admitted that the way Peterborough United scored their last-minute winner in the EFL Trophy was 'tough to take'.

The Adams Park side had performed admirably during the contest, as Dale Taylor equalised in the 89th minute of the contest, four minutes after Harrison Burrows gave the Posh the lead.

But in injury-time, a deep cross by Burrows flew over

Franco Ravizzoli in the Wanderers goal, as Darren Ferguson's team won the competition for the second time in their history.

It was also their first triumph in the cup since 2014, as they kept up their unbeaten record at Wembley with four wins from four.

He told BBC 3 Counties Radio: "After equalising through an unbelievable goal from Dale, I felt we could have gone on and won but there was hardly any time between the goals - it happened all so quickly and we're very disappointed.

"The manner of how they got their winning goal is tough to take.

"It was a very tactical game and we know they're good as we studied them during the week.

"In the two games against Peterborough, I thought we were tactically excellent as well today [April 7].

"Both London Road and Adams Park have tighter pitches which allows more pressing in higher areas due to the distances that need to be covered.

"We knew it was going to be different today because of the size of the pitch, and I thought the lads were excellent tactically."

The introduction of Taylor within the last five minutes seemed to masterstroke by Bloomfield as the Northern Irishman scored with his first touch of the game.

The arrivals of Sam Vokes also helped with Wanderers attacking threat, but Burrows' miss-hit cross in the dying embers provided the Posh with another Wembley win.

On Taylor's performance, he said: "I think it was a big call to leave Dale out today because



Kieran Sadlier went very close to giving Wycombe the lead in the final on

he's a player with a lot of ability with his feet and we'll have a massive future.

"But with Josh Scowen being fit, I believed we needed to be solid in the middle of the park.

"Dale came on and scored with his first touch, but we were mulling over when we can get them both on as a pair as they worked well together."

Finally, on the centre back pairing of Chris Forino and Nigel Lonwijk, he said: "Joe

Low and Ryan Tafazolli have been fantastic for us since Christmas when we went to four at the back.

"And the decision [to leave them out], was made with a heavy heart as I think a lot of them.

"Chris was very good on Monday [against Blackpool], and I thought that he and Nigel [Lonwijk], provided us with the centre back partnership that we felt we needed."



Franco Ravizzoli does brilliantly to deny Joel Randall to keep the scores 0-0

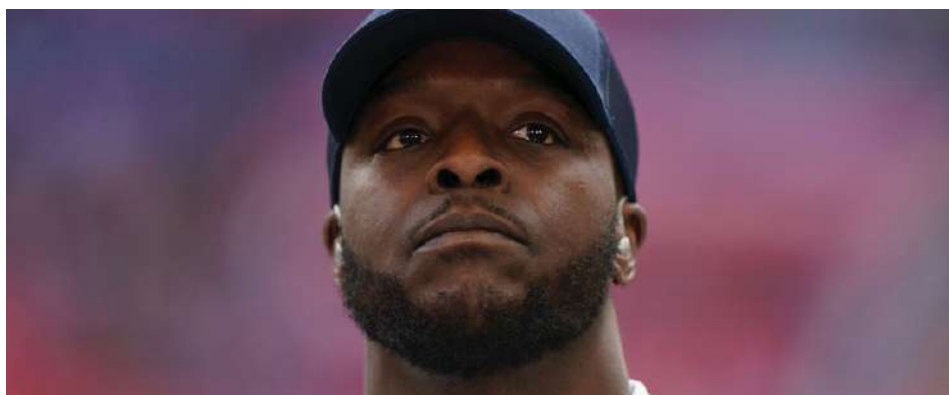
# GALLERY: OUR FAVOURITE PICS FROM THE EFL TROPHY FINAL



David Wheeler during the warm up at Wembley, The utility man played the final 15 minutes where he replaced Richard Kone (PA)



Ex-Chairboys manager Gareth Ainsworth was part of the Sky Sports panel that covered the game live on TV. One of his last matches in charges at Wanderers was a 3-0 away win over Peterborough in January 2023 (PA)



Wanderers legend Adebayo Akinfenwa was at Wembley to get behind Wycombe. He won the competition with Swansea City when he scored the winner against Carlisle United in the 2006 final at the Millennium Stadium (PA)



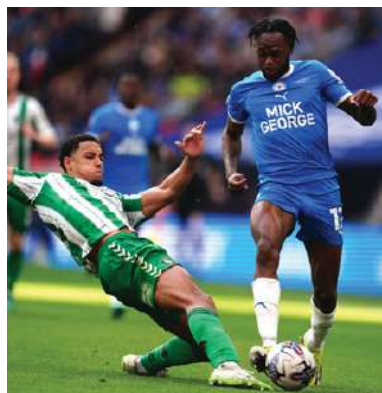
Garath McCleary launches a cross into the box as large parts of the encounter were cagey and nervy between Wycombe and Peterborough (PA)



Franco Ravizzoli in the Wycombe goal watches on as Peterborough nearly take the lead in the first-half. He was on hand to make several big saves in the contest (PA)



Chris Forino chases down Ricky-Jade Jones during the contest...(PA)



...despite being behind the forward, the Saint Lucian defender manages to catch up...(PA)



...and wins the ball causing a huge roar to come from the Wycombe end (PA)

## WYCOMBE AT WEMBLEY

# A cup run to remember



Freddie Potts beats Joel Randall to a header in the first-half of last week's final. The 20-year-old played in four of Wycombe's eight games in this year's competition which includes putting in a brilliant display in the quarter-finals against the Brighton & Hove Albion U21s back in January. The Chairboys won 4-1 at Adams Park (PA)

FOR the third time in five years, Wycombe Wanderers found themselves playing under the arch at Wembley Stadium.

And although those connected to the Chairboys left North London disappointed as Peterborough United defeated Matt Bloomfield's side 2-1 on April 7, there was a lot to be happy with.

A strong defensive display, numerous chances to score and that willingness to continue fighting despite going a goal down so late on.

Wycombe have come a long way since the start of the season, which included a run of no wins in 12 league matches.

But this season's EFL Trophy final as brought memories to last a lifetime.

Away to Bradford in the semi-finals being the standout memory.

So whilst it wasn't meant to be, let us look back at some brilliant snaps that were taken on the day which captured each moment.



The trophy that Wycombe were hoping to win (PA)



Jack Grimmer has been involved in three Wembley finals with Wycombe since moving to the club in the summer of 2019. He also won the League Two play-off final with Coventry City under the arch in 2018 (PA)



David Wheeler beats Ronnie Edwards by the touchline (PA)



Luke Leahy is surrounded by three Posh players as Wycombe battled with their League One opponents in the Wembley showpiece. Since moving from Shrewsbury last summer, he has played 48 times for Wanderers (PA)



A brilliant goal from Taylor which made it 1-1 (PA)

# GALLERY: OUR FAVOURITE PICS FROM THE EFL TROPHY FINAL



Centre back Nigel Lonwijk, who joined Wycombe on loan from Wolverhampton in January, played the entire match for the Chairboys against the Posh. He was partnered with Chris Forino at the heart of the defence, which was the first time the two had started a match together this season. Both put in positive displays which included several strong challenges (PA)



Josh Scowen was a fitness doubt going into the showpiece but started the final on April 7 (PA)



The Wanderers fans went crazy after Wycombe levelled four minutes after going 1-0 down at Wembley. The strike came in the 89th minute of the contest and it looked like it was going into extra time (PA)



Dale Taylor is mobbed by his teammates after scoring a stunning equaliser with his first touch (PA)



Harrison Burrows celebrates scoring his second with a fluke cross in stoppage-time (PA)



Dale is dejected as his equaliser was cancelled out just moments later as P'boro won the cup (PA)