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Skipper's pleased to unite with old Iron

PAUL HAYES SPOKE TO NEW MAN GARRY THOMPSON BEFORE HIS MOVE

CONTINUED FROM BACK PAGE.

On occasions when Hooper was injured, the former Morecambe man was pushed up front and Hayes saw enough from Thompson to suggest that he will be a hit for the Chairboys.

"It was great when the gaffer signed Thommo, not only because he's a great lad off the field but on the field he's exactly what we are," said the 31-year-old.

"He's a hard worker, he never gives up and he showed that in a relegated team that he'll score goals. He's got pace, he's got strength, he can score goals and he's a willing runner, so he's got all the attributes we need.

"I was pleased when we signed him because we're good friends, but also because he adds to our attack."

He added: "When we were at Scunthorpe it wasn't me and him up front – he was on the right wing with me and Gary Hooper up front. Whenever Hoops was injured, he played Thommo up front with me for his pace in behind. It was six, seven years ago that we played together but he's still as quick as he was, and he's fortunate to have not lost his pace."

Royals and Swans draw at soaked Adams Park

READING AND SWANSEA DREW IN A PRE-SEASON MATCH AT ADAMS PARK

SWANSEA CITY and Reading played out a 1-1 draw at a sodden Adams Park in a pre-season friendly on Friday night.

The Championship outfit took the lead after a goalless first half when Nick Blackman fired home off the underside of the bar from distance just a minute after the restart.

Steve Clarke's side were ahead for just two minutes, however, as the Premier League team struck back through Kyle Bartley, who turned the ball home from a corner.

Both sides had a number of first-teamers on show at Wanderers' home ground, with a crowd of 1,284 braving the weather to watch.

The game was played as part of the deal which will see Reading's development squad play a number of their Under-21 Premier League matches at Adams Park.

While Wanderers themselves have no home friendlies, they did take a team to Aston Villa for a behind-closed-doors match on Saturday.

Former England international Joe Cole featured for a young Villans side as they ran out 2-1 winners at the club's Bodmoor Heath training ground.

Wanderers cruise to victory against Town

GREG STYLES REPORTS ON BLUES' WIN AT BASINGSTOKE TOWN

A WONDER goal from Ryan Sellers helped Wanderers pick up their second win of pre-season as they outclassed Basingstoke Town 3-1 at the Soccer AM Stadium on Tuesday night.

Blues' total domination of the first 45 minutes could have resulted in three or four goals, but instead they took a one goal lead into the break thanks to a Marcus Bean header.

Anthony Stewart then doubled the lead with a composed finished shortly after the restart before Sellers put them three up with a thunderbolt from long range.

The National League South outfit offered little threat but had something to celebrate when David Ray grabbed a consolation.

"The wins aren't always the focus in pre-season – it's nice to get them but more important is fitness and the performance for the boys," said Wycombe boss Gareth Ainsworth.

"We're getting to the end of pre-season, where you do start to concentrate more on results and what happens in games. I thought, performance-wise, we were superior in the first half, really dominated the game.

"The wind helped but the pressing was great from the boys and we've worked on that this week. We're starting to get into the tactical side of the game and it was pleasing to see the things we do are paying off."

Wanderers dominated a first half of few chances and came close to going ahead when Bean met Joe Jacobson's free-kick on the six-yard line, but could only watch in despair as his effort looped into the hands of Aaron Howe.

However, as the clock ticked past the half hour mark the midfielder did put Blues in front, combining



Ryan Sellers capped off a fine individual display with a stunning goal against Basingstoke on Tuesday evening. The former Bolton man scored Blues' third at the Soccer AM Stadium

once again with Jacobson to head home a corner.

The home side offered precious little, and as the half wore on Wanderers piled even more pressure on their opponents, coming close to adding to their tally on a number of occasions.

Jacobson's set-piece delivery provided further opportunities for Aaron Pierre and Stewart before Sellers struck the post with a header.

Stewart was bought in to replace the departed Alfie Mawson, and he showed signs that he may be able to help replicate the former's goal

tally when he spun smartly on the edge of the box before sending a left-footed shot into the bottom corner.

If the fans inside the ground thought they'd just seen a special goal then they were immediately treated to a strike of the highest calibre from Sellers.

The 20-year-old picked the ball up on the left before driving infield and unleashing a bullet of a shot with his weaker right foot. The ball dipped and swerved before striking the underside of the crossbar and bouncing over the line.

As the game reached the 65th

minute, Basingstoke's first effort on goal found the net as Ray planted a firm header past Matt Ingram at the back post – a goal Ainsworth branded sloppy, but the Blues boss was more than content heading into their final pre-season match against Aldershot tomorrow (Saturday).

He said: "Fitness and injuries are paramount up to this point, and now we start getting into the tactics and the way we want to do things and the Aldershot game will be the first taste of that. The result's not paramount in that game and it's about getting prepared for York."

BLUES Hayes backs young midfielder to shine Sellers can 'blossom' at Wycombe

WANDERERS captain Paul Hayes is hopeful Ryan Sellers will be the next young player to "blossom" under the tutelage of Gareth Ainsworth.

The Wycombe manager, alongside coaches Richard Dobson and Barry Richardson, has developed a reputation for giving unknown young players their break in Football League after success stories such as Alfie Mawson, Paris Cowan-Hall and Josh Scowen in recent seasons.

Ainsworth has put his faith in youth and has had his trust handsomely rewarded by those he has handed opportunities to. Sellers

is one of 11 players in the current Wycombe squad who are under the age of 23.

The midfielder spent the final few weeks of last season training with the club before he was handed a one-year deal after his release from Bolton.

The 20-year-old, who was a regular in the Trotters' Under-21 team last term, is yet to make a professional appearance but that's likely to change as Ainsworth can deploy him at left-back or further forward.

"We're a team that wants to bring young players in, develop them, help them understand men's foot-

ball and see them blossom," said Hayes.

"This is a stepping stone for Ryan Sellers. He's not had a chance to be around men's football and this is going to be his first time.

"He's a great lad, he's willing to learn and he's got a long way to go but he's shown that he's got potential.

"He's in the right place now to learn and understand, and hopefully he'll do well this season."

Wycombe forward Paul Hayes was excited to see another young player in Ryan Sellers join.





Ingram keen to put his injury hell behind him

Blues No1 hopes to forget 'horrible' end to last season

By Greg Styles

ONE word leapt to the forefront of Matt Ingram's mind when asked how it felt to watch on from the Wembley sidelines as his team mates contested the League Two play-off final.

'Horrible' was the adjective which the 21-year-old used to describe the torture of being made to look on helplessly from the stands as South-end crushed Wanderers' dreams of promotion.

After making his professional debut in March 2013, Wycombe's homegrown talent had never missed a match since, racking up 111 consecutive appearances – the last of which saw his incredible run come to an end when he limped off against Northampton in the final league game of last season after a heavy collision with Sam Wood.

The knee injury sustained at Six-fields ruled him out of the play-off

semi-finals against Plymouth, in addition to the final at the national stadium, although Ingram was just thankful it wasn't more serious.

"When I first did it I panicked because I heard something go in there and it wasn't right," he said.

"I tried carrying on but there was obviously something wrong and that's when I had to call it a day."

Ingram even believes it may have taught him a few things, adding that the experience will improve his decision making when those situations arise again.

It was the first time in his fledgling career that the stopper has been sidelined through injury, and he admitted that the club's day out at Wembley had been tarnished by the fact he was donning a suit rather than his No1 shirt.

"It was horrible," said Ingram, on being a spectator for the play-offs.

"I was sat at home watching it or in the stands and it was horrible. I was more nervous watching the lads because I couldn't affect the game than I was making my debut. It was horrible watching the games, but we came so close.

"It was a great day out and it would have been even better if I'd have been on the pitch. It would have been even better if we'd have won, but we can take a lot from it."

After the Hazlemere born 'keeper knew that playing at Wembley was going to prove beyond his reach, he set his sights on getting himself fit and ready for the Chairboys' first game of the upcoming season.

When asked how he coped with being injured, the Blues stopper replied: "It was a new one. It was kind of lucky that it fell during the off season because that's the time when



Matt Ingram played the full 90 minutes as Wanderers played Basingstoke in a pre-season friendly on Tuesday night.

there's no football and I didn't have to go and watch more games.

"I was in a lot over the summer, strengthening my legs, getting back fit and I just need games now.

"I went away for two weeks and then I was straight back in the gym strengthening my legs, doing all sorts to be ready for pre-season."

Ingram is firmly on the comeback trail, a welcome sight for manager Gareth Ainsworth as well as the Adams Park faithful, who will have breathed a sigh of relief to see him come through 90 minutes unscathed against Basingstoke.

The keeper was rarely tested on his return to action and tougher tests lie ahead with the League Two

season and the opening fixture on August 8 looming large – but it's a challenge that Ingram is relishing after his spell on the sidelines.

"My knee's fine, there's no problem there and I want to crack on ready for the season," he said.

"I can still tell there's a little bit of rustiness but these games are to get it out of me ready for York."

Stand-in stopper Alex Lynch performed 'brilliantly' in his three appearances, but Gareth Ainsworth reaffirmed his commitment to having Ingram as his first choice.

The Blues boss said: "Matt Ingram's our number one, he's the best keeper in League Two and I'm glad he's a Wycombe player."

Boss keen to see more of star striker

AARON Amadi-Holloway will be a different proposition in more ways than one in the upcoming season, according to two people who are keen to see the striker build on a promising first year at Adams Park.

Few that saw the burly frontman play last term doubted his skill and ability to be a force in League Two, although his chances of a prolonged run in the Wycombe team were restricted by nagging injuries and a resultant lack of match fitness, meaning he made the majority of his 31 appearances from the bench.

The 22-year-old played a full part in only four matches in the last campaign, although the man who bought him to the club last August, Gareth Ainsworth, is optimistic of seeing more of the striker.

"The big bonus for Aaron is that he's done every session this pre-season. Last pre-season he missed a lot through his injuries and last season was about getting him fit," he said.

"He's a big guy and it takes him that little bit longer to get his fitness, but he's a weapon up front. He's something different, he's a pain for defenders, wins things he has no right to win and he goes on these crazy runs and slips people in."

Chairboys fans will hope to see more of the forward in a Wycombe shirt over the course of the season, and if they do they'll notice the ex-Newport man carrying the name 'Amadi-Holloway' on the back of it.

The striker requested the change but Wycombe captain Paul Hayes believes it won't be the biggest alteration the Welshman makes if he applies himself this season.

"For Aaron himself, he owes it to himself to push on," said Hayes.

"He's of a good age now where he needs to grab the bull by the horns. He's blessed with everything that a professional could want. He's got strength, a good touch and he can score goals.

"He could have a really good career in the game and earn some great money, but it's up to Aaron to decide that."



Matt Ingram had been out with a knee injury since May.

YouTube hit O'Nien left Ainsworth impressed

GARETH AINSWORTH says Wycombe fans need only see a YouTube video of new man Luke O'Nien in order to see some of the qualities which persuaded him to make the midfielder his seventh summer signing.

During his time at previous club Watford, the 20-year-old took up the challenge of seeing how many kick-ups he could do with a tennis ball, and after being set what most would consider to be a respectable target of 39 to beat, he proceeded to leave those watching gobsmacked and amazed.

Four minutes and 22 seconds after starting the ball finally hit the floor, but only after O'Nien had kept up the ball up a mammoth 478 times in front of astonished teammates.

Of course, his skills with a football are of greater importance to the Wanderers manager but the youngster's enthusiasm for any challenge, particularly for carving out a career in the game, has impressed Ainsworth.

"His energy is something else," he said. "If anyone gets to see the YouTube clip of him keeping a tennis ball up – that's him, he's up for any challenge.

"He's a work in progress, but with all the raw attributes to succeed in the game.

"Him and Ryan Sellers have an enthusiasm that is just there. They want it so much, they want to learn – Michael Harriman, Danny Rowe – they're good kids to work with, and Luke just fits in the group well.

"He never gives up, in training he's a great character to have around, but they all are. I'm not singling anyone out. Right from the youngest player, Danny Rowe, right up to the oldest player, Thommo (Garry Thompson), they all fit well, they're all together and that's the way we'll have success this year."

Former Hornets boss Beppe Sannino was known to admire the way the young professional applied himself in games and in training, and after he was released by the club following their promotion to the Premier League last season, he came "highly recommended" to Ainsworth.

After impressing on trial the Blues boss handed O'Nien an initial one-year deal.

The youngster made only one pro-

fessional appearance for Watford, the club he joined at nine-years-old, but Ainsworth can see him contributing for his new club in a variety of positions.

During pre-season games he has played in midfield and as part of the back four – a trait which will make him a valuable member of the playing staff should injuries deplete Wanderers' small squad.

Ainsworth said: "He's a fantastic trainer. His enthusiasm, his desire, his will to win is amazing, and it's frightening what he's prepared to do to succeed in the game.

"That's one half of the battle and the other side is the tactical side and the football side and I hope to improve him on that.

"It's not just him, there's lots of

them at the club now, youngsters that are very hungry for a career in the game and it's great to be able to work with them. They'll listen, they'll do what you say and I can't ask any more than that."

O'Nien arrived as a midfielder primarily, but his displays against US Avranche, Wealdstone and Basingstoke have suggested he'll be comfortable anywhere in the side.

Ainsworth said: "We'll see how he develops. He comes as a midfield player, but he's versatile and he can fit in anywhere.

"He's one of those players that his enthusiasm, his energy, his pace, his ability to win headers – he can fit in anywhere. I do see him as a midfield player at the moment and we'll see where we go from there."



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Internet hit

O'Nien's YouTube video impressed Blues boss P127



Title charge

Wycombe stay in title race with Tring win P123



BLUES Boss labels League Two spending 'mental'

Ainsworth eyes up a few more additions



Wycombe Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth says there's room for one more permanent player in his squad as he bids to have 18 full time players on the club's books before they kick-off the season against York City on August 8.

By Greg Styles

THE spending power of some clubs in League Two has been labelled "mental" by Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth as he admitted that the club's summer recruitment drive is nearly complete.

Ainsworth has looked on with a vested interest as League Two newcomers Yeovil Town and Notts County have made 15 new signings apiece, while Leyton Orient have splashed the cash on nine new recruits.

In an attempt to mount a promotion push, Portsmouth, Cambridge and Luton, sides that all finished below Blues last season, have attempted to bridge the gap by making a series of eye-catching signings.

Luke O'Nien became Wycombe's seventh capture of the window, meaning there's room for one more addition in order to meet Ainsworth's target of having 18 permanent players on the books before the first league game against York on August 8 and he explained that

finances may mean that it would be the last permanent arrival.

"It's almost maximum of what I can have. It's not a minimum, definitely not. I think that 18 was the target, it's still the target; 18 permanents for the first game," he said.

"We've already added Michael Harriman as a loan and I'm sure there will be chances to add again in other positions. I'm not expecting to bring many more than 18 in; we just haven't got the finances for it.

"Last year we were similar and we proved everyone wrong. All the people that didn't think Wycombe would do anything last year may give us a bit more of a chance this year, but I still think we'll be underdogs in the league."

Loan players will be "crucial" to the Chairboys' campaign, like they were last season, and the Blues

boss has previously stated that he expects players to be looking for temporary moves when they find out they're not first choice at their parent clubs.

But, as is the case with signing players on permanent deals, Wycombe will face competition in the loan market from a host of other clubs in their division.

Ainsworth said: "There's so much money being spent by some teams it's mental - the rumours, the stories going round from other teams and what they're able to pay."

"Every player I've gone for this season has had another two or three League Two teams in for them who can pay more than us.

"We'll be up against it, but we were in that position the whole of last year and I felt we dealt with that really well and we're up for a fight."

Despite not being able to compete with the spending power of some of Wycombe's League Two rivals, Ainsworth is "pleased" with the new faces and believes the club have "signed

well" this summer.

Wanderers had one of the smallest squads in the division last season, something which the 42-year-old has become accustomed to as he nears the anniversary of his third year in charge of the Chairboys.

"We can't just go out, cast the net, sign five players and hope that two are ok," he said. "Every single one has got to fit in with what we do and the way we are, and the money we pay them is precious, right down to the last pound.

"There's no way I can be frivolous with the club's money and it's really important that myself and my coaching staff get it right with recruitment.

"So far so good, but it's early days, there's no over confidence here, I know how tough League Two is and we'll be doing all we can in the next few days' training to make sure we've got everything covered and that we've been through everything we want to go through before the first ball is kicked in the league."



Wycombe captain Paul Hayes.

Hayes and Thommo reunited

FOOTBALL: HAYES SEES OLD FRIEND PLAYING A KEY ROLE AT ADAMS PARK

PAUL HAYES believes his good friend Garry Thompson will feel loved at Adams Park - a feeling that the striker was missing at previous club Notts County.

Despite topping the Magpies' scoring charts with 12 goals as they were relegated last season, the Nottinghamshire outfit failed to offer the 34-year-old a new deal, despite promises to the contrary, allowing Gareth Ainsworth to snap him up on a two-year deal.

Thompson revealed earlier this month that he'd spoken to Hayes before signing on at Adams Park, having never lived further south than Leeds, and the Wycombe captain was keen to get his fellow forward on board.

"He spoke to me about the interest from Wycombe and I told him the honest truth about the club," said Hayes.

"It's a great club to play your football at and you've got lovely people to look after you off the field. It's a club that is eventually going to go places. It's a club that's going to help him enjoy his football and that's what Thommo needed.

"I think it's a place that's going to fill him with love and he didn't get that at Notts County. When he came down with his wife I said 'it's going to be a good thing for you to come here'.

"It's hard for anyone to move from the north downwards, but he's going to move down with his wife and his dog and it's going to be good for him."

The pair played alongside one another for two seasons at Scunthorpe between 2008 and 2010, although Thompson was deployed as a winger by Nigel Adkins, who paired Hayes with Gary Hooper up front.

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