

SPORT

Bucks Free Press
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GRAHAMAinsworth
confident
of Muller
progressBOSS HOPING NEW RECRUIT PROVES
TO BE ANOTHER SUCCESS STORY

WYCOMBE Wanderers have added German defender Max Muller to their squad on a short-term contract.

The 22-year-old impressed during a trial period with the Blues before sustaining a hamstring injury in the 1-1 draw against Le Havre in July.

The former Salzburg man is currently receiving treatment for the injury, but Gareth Ainsworth was keen to give him the chance to recover his fitness and develop at Adams Park.

He said: "Max did really well and I saw enough to convince me.

"He's a big lad, he's good on the ball and can play in a number of positions across the backline or even in midfield, so I'm confident he can be a useful member of the squad.

"We seem to have a good track record when it comes to developing central defenders, such as Aaron Pierre, Alfie Mawson, Jason McCarthy and Anthony Stewart.

"We will have to be patient to see the best of Max – and that goes for me, the staff and the fans as well.

"But with hard work and dedication in the care of our medical team, we believe Max has the potential to be another success story."

Squad for
campaignAKINFENWA TAKES NUMBER 20 SHIRT
AS TEAM'S NUMBERS ARE REVEALED

BLUES have released their squad numbers for the 2016/17 season.

Star signing Adebayo Akinfenwa takes the number 20 shirt worn by Luke O'Nien last year, with the midfielder moving to the 17 vacated by Max Kretzschmar.

Scott Brown is handed the number one, while 46-year-old Barry Richardson, who will deputise for the former Aberdeen man, wears 13.

Paris Cowan-Hall and Dayle Southwell take 12 and 15 respectively and winger Myles Weston is handed the number 19.

A trio of new signings complete the Blues roster with Max Muller (21), Nick Freeman (22) and Will De Havilland (23) being handed shirt numbers.

The full list of squad numbers is: 1. Scott Brown, 2. Sido Jombati, 3. Joe Jacobson, 4. Stephen McGinn, 5. Anthony Stewart, 6. Aaron Pierre, 7. Garry Thompson, 8. Marcus Bean, 9. Paul Hayes, 10. Matt Bloomfield, 11. Sam Wood, 12. Paris Cowan-Hall, 13. Barry Richardson, 15. Dayle Southwell, 16. Michael Harriman, 17. Luke O'Nien, 18. Danny Rowe, 19. Myles Weston, 20. Adebayo Akinfenwa, 21. Max Müller, 22. Nick Freeman, 23. Will De Havilland, 43. Gareth Ainsworth.

Thompson is hoping
he has done enoughSTRIKER BELIEVES PRE-SEASON HAS
BOOSTED HIS FIRST-DAY PROSPECTS

GARRY Thompson believes he has every chance of starting against Crawley Town tomorrow after netting in Wycombe Wanderers' final pre-season game.

Chairboys manager Gareth Ainsworth goes into the first game of the new League Two season with a plethora of options in attack.

Dayle Southwell, Adebayo Akinfenwa, Paris Cowan-Hall and Myles Weston have added to Paul Hayes and Thompson as players who can operate up front.

The competition for a starting berth may have intensified, but Thompson is confident he will feature highly in his manager's thinking at Broadfield Stadium.

"It is not my decision at the end of the day and it is down to the gaffer. I feel I have done myself no harm by the way I have played and trained in pre-season," Thompson said after scoring in the 4-1 win at Maidenhead.

"It is the gaffer's job to pick the team and we have a great squad of lads to pick from. I would like to think I have done everything I can to be in and around that starting XI.

"It is all about competition and making sure you print on the gaffer's mind that you want to play on Saturday."

A brief glance at last season's League Two table is enough to show Wanderers lacked in the goal department.

Thompson was the club's top-scoring striker with eight, and the Blues will surely need a more prolific output if they are to prosper in 2016/17.

The glut of new additions should help facilitate this and Thompson has been impressed by the options at Wycombe's disposal.

"Dayle [Southwell] has been very



'The gaffer will have a headache picking his team': Garry Thompson is one of several attacking options at Gareth Ainsworth's disposal.
Picture: ANITA ROSS MARSHALL

good, with Bayo coming in, and Paris and Westy can play up there as well, so there is lots of competition," he said.

"It will be good going into the season knowing the gaffer will have a headache picking his team.

"It is all building up and we have a great squad. Like the gaffer said, it is stronger than we had last season.

"This year, with the squad we have got, we will have a strong bench and hopefully we can mount a good

challenge."

That challenge starts with the trip to Crawley Town where Wanderers will come up against a side looking to improve on a poor showing last season.

The teams played out a dull 0-0 draw when Wanderers last travelled to Crawley with a superb late save from Matt Ingram being the main highlight.

However, Thompson feels Crawley will offer a different proposition to

the team who struggled to a 20th-place finish last season and says Wycombe are suitably prepared.

He explained: "They are an unknown quantity. They have brought in a lot of players and they will have a bigger squad than us to choose from, but it is about what we do.

"We are fresh for the first game. You don't win anything in pre-season apart from getting fit, but we have had some good games and some tough games."

Blues round off pre-season in style

IT'S been a long time coming but Wycombe Wanderers fans were finally treated to a glut of goals on Saturday as the Blues beat Maidenhead United 4-1.

The club's first win of their pre-season campaign looked a long way off when Dave Tarpey fired the hosts ahead in the 10th minute.

Wycombe recovered well though, and goals from Garry Thompson, Luke O'Nien (2) and a Sam Wood wonder strike sealed the comprehensive win.

Such a resounding scoreline looked in serious doubt when Tarpey raced onto a flick-on to fire low past Scott Brown from the edge of the box.

The manner of the goal frustrated

Blues boss Gareth Ainsworth as Wycombe failed to deal with a routine long ball forward and were found wanting in defence.

Their recovery was admirable, however, and Thompson soon had them level after reacting quickest to a loose ball to steer a left-footed strike home from eight yards.

Blues were on top from then on and O'Nien's excellent drive from 20 yards nestled in the bottom corner to give them the lead at the break.

The midfielder has spent the summer working on his finishing and again showcased the fruits of his labour to double the lead midway through the second half.

A cross towards Adebayo Akinfenwa, who was a nuisance throughout

his substitute appearance, broke off the burly forward and bounced up invitingly for O'Nien.

What followed was clinical and O'Nien smashed a left-footed volley home from close range without a second's hesitation.

By now United were out on their feet and a quick free-kick caught them out in spectacular fashion moments later.

The ball was rolled to Wood, who struck a fizzing drive from 30 yards which screamed into the top right corner to add gloss to the scoreline.

Wood was impressive throughout and looks set for a productive season after being introduced for Danny Rowe, who took a blow to the head, in the first half.

A succession of good chances followed for Wycombe and they could have been out of sight by full-time.

Matt Bloomfield and Akinfenwa were both guilty of wasting chances while Wood cracked the crossbar with a late volley.

Regardless of the scoreline, Wanderers could be pleased with a confidence-boosting display, which sets them up nicely for their season opener against Crawley Town tomorrow.

Wycombe Wanderers: Brown, Harriman (Jombati 46), Jacobson, De Havilland, Stewart, Rowe (Wood 35), Bean (McGinn 65), O'Nien (Bloomfield 65), Thompson (Akinfenwa 46), Weston, Southwell (Freeman 58). Sub not used: Richardson.

SPORT

NO CUP GOAL

Tyrrell Hatton insists Ryder Cup is not in his sights after another fine major result



OLYMPICS: Trio in quest for glory at greatest show on earth Grainger, Danson and Webster all set for Rio



Alex Danson.

IT seems like just yesterday that Buckinghamshire's finest were reaching new heights and winning medals at London 2012.

In reality it's been four years and Team GB's athletes are set to do it all again at Rio 2016.

Among their number will be rower Katherine Grainger and hockey star Alex Danson, who are competing in their fifth and fourth Games respectively, as well as weightlifter Sonny Webster.

Their routes to one of the world's biggest sporting spectacles have

been markedly different, but all three harbour an ambition to thrive on the grand stage.

For Marlow Rowing Club member Grainger, London represented a crowning moment as she picked up her first Olympic gold alongside Anna Watkins at the fourth time of asking.

It was a glorious high water mark in a glittering career, yet the four years which have proceeded have been far from straightforward.

The 40-year-old was driven back from a two-year sabbatical by a

burning desire to compete at another Olympics and she has faced multiple challenges to achieve her goal.

Her inclusion was in doubt until the final moment after she missed out on the initial selection for the team.

Ultimately Grainger and her partner Vicky Thornley made the cut and will compete in the double sculls in Brazil, but the path to doing so has hardly run true.

The pair's boat was disbanded after a poor showing at the European Championships in May and they

instead chose to focus on making it into a powerful women's eight.

That ambition never materialised, thanks in no small part to the women's eight winning silver at the World Regatta and gold at the European Championships.

The twelfth-hour call-up handed Grainger and Thornley a reprieve though, and the Scot will hope to find her form and collect a medal in her event which starts tomorrow.

Should she be successful in doing

Turn to Page 59

BLUES: The 'Beast' ready to write a new chapter Akinfenwa relishing an all-new challenge

ADEBAYO Akinfenwa is dripping with sweat and grinning from ear to ear as he arrives for his press session at the Wycombe Wanderers training ground.

It's become a familiar sight around the place since the loveable striker's move from AFC Wimbledon in July.

He has been busy putting the finishing touches to a pre-season training regime geared to preparing Wanderers for tomorrow's League Two curtain-raiser at Crawley Town.

Pre-season is far from the 34-year-old's favourite part of the job and he is eagerly anticipating the season getting under way.

"It's no secret that I am not a fan of pre-season, but this year I have embraced it more. You do that as you get older," Akinfenwa explained.

"You just want to play games and cherish every moment. It is a new chapter for me.

"The beginning of the season is what I have been looking forward to and we are all ready for the Crawley match.

"We have five games in the first month which will be a test which I will relish."

In recent times Akinfenwa's reputation for burly centre-forward play has almost been usurped by his alter ego the 'Beast'.

It would be foolish, however, to suggest a man who played 42 times

By Harry Gray

during the Don's ascension to League Two last season has nothing to offer on a Saturday.

The noise which accompanies his media commitments is just that to Akinfenwa, who plundered eight goals including a penalty at Wembley, in the 2015/16 campaign.

"People in football know, ask a couple of the defenders that I've played against. They know I'm a footballer.

"I am a footballer first and foremost and I keep saying that. There is no secret I do a lot outside of football and the gaffer knows that.

"I try as much as possible to work things around football and not let it affect my football."

Akinfenwa's personality has certainly helped him settle at Wycombe and his affable character has seen him integrate well with a tight-knit group.

There is a sense the veteran of more than 300 Football League games could have an important role to play off the pitch as well as on it.

"The lads have made me feel welcome," Akinfenwa says.

"The senior players like Haysey (Paul Hayes), JJ (Joe Jacobson), Thommo (Garry Thompson) and Blooms (Matt Bloomfield) like the responsibility of helping.

"I will keep doing what I have been doing on and off the pitch."



Adebayo Akinfenwa has already made a big impression in his short time with the Blues.
Picture: ANITA ROSS MARSHALL

Crawley unknown: Ainsworth

BLUES BOSS UNSURE WHAT TO EXPECT FROM FIRST OPPONENTS OF SEASON

GARETH Ainsworth believes Crawley Town represent an unknown entity ahead of Wycombe Wanderers' League Two opener against them tomorrow.

Dermot Drummy stepped into the Broadfield Stadium hot seat earlier this summer and has overseen a large overhaul to his squad.

These changes, along with this being Drummy's first role in League Two, make it hard to predict how the hosts will approach the game, according to Ainsworth.

"They are an unknown, which is good and exciting for League Two. Dermot Drummy has done shifts with the under-21s and under-18s with Arsenal and Chelsea and has a wealth of experience," he said.

"He is somebody who has got a great pedigree but has never managed at League Two level and we will see how he does.

"He has signed a lot of players, they may have gelled together really well or they may not have."

Paul Hayes will miss the match through injury, while Ainsworth will sweat on the fitness of Aaron Pierre and Paris Cowan-Hall.

Ainsworth will hope they can return as soon as possible as he will need his full squad to deal with a fixture schedule which sees Wanderers play five times in 14 days.

Ainsworth said: "We have got five games in 14 days now which is crazy once again for the lower leagues. It is the most chaotic season start for a long time."

Danny Rowe is likely to be available after recovering from a head injury sustained at Maidenhead United.