

SPORT

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GRAHAMClark in
show of
strength
at FondoHIGH WYCOMBE CYCLIST AMONG
BRITAIN'S QUICKEST IN AUSTRALIA

GEORGE Clark continued his fine 2016 form with a strong showing at the UCI Gran Fondo World Championships in Perth, Australia.

The High Wycombe Cycling Club member has enjoyed an impressive first year competing at under-23 level and carried his performance levels into the 19.4km course.

Racing in a field of 350 riders, Clark clocked a time of 27.36.01 to finish 84th overall and 15th in the 19-34 age category.

His time was enough to make Clark, who is the UK's second fastest junior rider over 25 miles, the fourth quickest British rider at the event.

The result in Perth is the latest success in a season which has seen Clark finish fourth in the National Derny Championships at the Olympic Velodrome.

Sponsorship from Jeff Banks and his team, Catford Equipe Bikes, has allowed Clark to train in Australia and he now plans to spend the winter preparing for next season.

He hopes to continue his development into next season and will look to compete at more major events and gain his first category licence.

Victories
on debutFORES ON FIRE AS MARLOW RACER
TAKES DOUBLE WIN AT SILVERSTONE

ALEX Fores continued his fine form as he claimed back-to-back race victories at Silverstone in the Formula Ford Monoposto Championship.

The Marlow teenager has experienced a number of technical difficulties throughout the season and it was a similar story at one of the world's most iconic race tracks.

He headed into qualifying without any testing but still managed to guide his car to pole position on a soaking wet track.

The achievement was made all the more impressive by the fact Fores was racing at Silverstone for the first time.

He took the form shown in qualifying into the first race of the weekend, which again took place in heavy rain, to take the chequered flag.

Sunday brought far dryer conditions with it, but Fores once again showed his class to outpace the rest of the field and claim his first-ever double.

It was another fine accolade in a season where the talented youngster already set a record lap at Donington Park.

The victories were enough to take Fores to fifth in the overall standings ahead of a trip to Snetterton on the weekend of Saturday, October 8.

Blues captain 'getting
the chances to score'PAUL HAYES PUTS IMPROVED GOAL
RETURN DOWN TO BETTER SERVICE

AFTER last season yielded just four goals, Paul Hayes looks to have blown off the cobwebs and found his goalscoring touch again.

The Wycombe Wanderers captain has registered three times in all competitions this campaign, and looks closer to the player whose goals fired Wycombe to a play-off final in 2015.

The reason, Hayes explains, is simple. The service he is receiving this season is playing to his tune and allowing him to do what he has done for his entire career.

"I always debrief my performances in games and over a season, and I could have scored more goals last season if I had more service," the 32-year-old said.

"This season, I have been given more service, been given the chances and I have been able to put them away."

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of Hayes' tally of goals this season is the clinical manner in which he has finished all three.

He added to a delicate chip against Northampton Town with a controlled first-time strike and sumptuous effort with the outside of his right foot against Portsmouth on Saturday.

Both of his strikes at Fratton Park were assisted by Garry Thompson as a relationship which stems back to playing together at Scunthorpe United reignited.

"Thommo and I are very good friends at the club and we had a lot of success assisting and scoring goals together at Scunthorpe, maybe that helps," Hayes said.

"I know when he gets the ball out wide all he is thinking about doing is getting the cross in."

Thompson's best position has



Paul Hayes believes better service has allowed him to rediscover his goalscoring touch for Wycombe Wanderers this season.
Picture: ACTION IMAGES

been a bone of contention since he joined the club last summer and the 35-year-old has been used in a number of attacking roles.

He regularly partnered Hayes as an out and out forward last term in a season which saw Thompson score eight times in 49 appearances in all competitions.

That return made him the club's top scoring attacker, but Wanderers' wealth of striking options, which includes Adebayo Akinfenwa, Day-

le Southwell and Paris Cowan-Hall, should see him return to the wing.

Hayes believes that can only help Thompson and feels Wanderers fans will see a different player this season.

"Thommo is one of the quickest at the club, is physically strong and up until last season has played all of his career out wide. He is a right winger," Hayes explained.

"He had to play up front last season due to the fact we didn't have

anyone else to play alongside me. That has been hard for him.

"It is always hard to judge someone who is playing out of position. You will play there for the gaffer because anyone would, but you are not going to play your best football out of position.

"To be thrown up front, he obviously is not going to play his best football and he is very happy to play out wide because that is what he wants to do."

AMR fall short in GT4 title decider

BEECHDEAN Aston Martin Racing (AMR) narrowly missed out on claiming the British GT4 title at Donington Park on Sunday.

The team, which is owned by Wycombe Wanderers chairman Andrew Howard, ultimately finished third, but can look back on a season of team and personal success.

The weekend saw Howard win the coveted Blancpain Gentleman Driver Award, while GT rookie, Jack Bartholomew, claimed the Silver Cup Championship.

Despite the disappointment of missing out on overall top spot, 17-year-old Bartholomew chose to focus on the positives of his breakthrough year in the sport.

He said: "Everyone in the team did

a great job this weekend. It wasn't meant to be, but it is my debut season in British GT and I am only 17.

"Getting second and being Silver Cup Champion is still amazing. I've really enjoyed my first season in GT racing and have learnt a lot. I will be back."

Bartholomew went into the Donington decider with a genuine chance of claiming the title alongside team mate Ross Gunn after securing pole position.

They struggled to maintain their pace in the race though and gradually dropped back down the rankings to fall to third in the overall standings.

RCIB Insurance ran out eventual champions and Gunn was left to

wonder what could have been at the end of an enjoyable year of racing.

"Sunday was certainly tough to swallow," Gunn said. "After qualifying on pole, Jack and I had reason to believe that it might be possible to take the title.

"Unfortunately, it didn't pan out that way, but I have enjoyed 2016."

The GT3 race saw Howard racing alongside Rory Butcher and produce a masterclass in overtaking to take his car from 11th on the grid to fourth at the chequered flag.

Howard was pleased with the result and insists Beechdean AMR will challenge for honours with or without him behind the wheel in 2017.

He said: "It has been a great week-

end of racing and while it will be my last full British GT for a while, Beechdean will be back to try and reclaim our titles in 2017."

Butcher added: "It was a fantastic experience racing for Beechdean.

"The way the guys work and how the cars are prepared is second to none and it showed in our race result."

Their haul of 18 points at Donington was enough to keep Beechdean's GT3 car in sixth position in the overall standings as TF Sport took the title.

Howard, meanwhile, finished ninth in the driver's standings, 18 points clear of team mate Gunn who spent much of the season racing in the GT3.

Gape looking to show his worth with the Chairboys

By Harry Gray

DOMINIC Gape wants to prove his worth while on loan at Wycombe Wanderers and make the most of playing the first-team football he has craved.

The Southampton youngster is on a short-term deal from the Premier League club which keeps him at Adams Park until January 3.

He was handed his first Wanderers start in the 4-2 defeat to Portsmouth on Saturday and is eager to push on during his time at the club.

"I am hoping to prove myself, to get out there a little bit more. This is what I have been working for, three o'clock on a Saturday, men's games, crowds and three points that matter," Gape said.

"It is more physical and the tempo is more end-to-end. There is a bit more respect in the under-21s and it is a bit more a case of you have it then we have it.

"I am getting used to that, working off second balls and trying to play my football when the opportunity arises."

In a feverish Fratton park atmosphere, Gape more than held his own as he made up for his diminutive stature with efficient use of the ball.

It would be easy for someone of Gape's 5ft 7in build to get lost in the overtly physical world of League Two football, but he believes he has the quality to prosper.

"I can get about, hold my own and I back myself in a tackle. I am working hard in the gym to make sure I make up for my size and I can handle myself," Gape explained.

"I like to think I can use my height



Southampton loanee Dominic Gape was handed his first Wycombe Wanderers start in the 4-2 defeat to Portsmouth on Saturday. Picture: ACTION IMAGES

to my advantage. I'm small, nippy, have a good centre of balance and have a good leap so can challenge in the air as well."

Gape, who turned 22 last Friday, has predominantly played as a defensive midfielder during his education with the Saints.

He showed plenty of attacking instinct on Saturday, however, and twice came close to dragging Wan-

derers back into the game with the score at 4-2.

His second effort was particularly impressive as he flashed a shot from distance just wide of the upright.

Goalscoring is a facet of his game which Gape hopes to improve on and he has been given free rein to shoot by manager Gareth Ainsworth.

"He spoke to me in training and told me if I get the opportunity to

shoot rather than try and fiddle balls in from the edge of the box," Gape said.

"I have a good strike on me, so [scoring goals] is something I need to add to my game and is something I am looking to work on.

"Usually I play more defensively but I do shoot regularly in training and I want to implement that in my game and show I can score goals."

BLUES: Ainsworth's charges slip up at Fratton Park Defensive frailties prove costly

DEFENCE has been a constant strength during Gareth Ainsworth's tenure at Wycombe Wanderers, but it was a quality which was sorely missing against Portsmouth on Saturday.

Fratton Park is not the place to lose your defensive composure and Wanderers were duly dispatched 4-2 in a match which at times flirted with the absurd.

Wycombe's attacking play was bright enough and Paul Hayes gave them a 10th-minute lead after a sweeping Anthony Stewart pass found Garry Thompson in space.

His volleyed cross was perfectly weighted and Hayes tapped home from close range for his first league goal of the campaign.

The lead lasted until Christian Burgess Bundled home in the 34th minute to spark a truly crazy conclusion to the first half.

Sido Jombati's blatant handball gave Gary Roberts the chance to hammer a penalty high past Jamal Blackman and give his side a 45th minute lead.

They held their advantage for only a minute though as Thompson and Hayes combined again for the Wycombe skipper to score a sublime second.

Hayes' finish was excellent as he struck first time across goal with the outside of his right foot to leave David Forde helpless in the Pompey goal.

That really should have been that, but some slack Blues defending allowed the hosts to re-establish their dominance in the fourth minute of stoppage time.

Having chased Roberts' pass down the left by-line, Conor Chaplin flicked the ball inside the over-committed Stewart and proceeded to head unerringly over an advancing

Blackman from an acute angle.

It was a bitter pill to swallow for Wanderers and they began the second period suffering a hangover from the frantic end to the opening period.

Their slow start allowed Portsmouth to extend their lead and effectively end the game as a contest with eight minutes of the half played.

Again the Chairboys' defensive frailty made scoring a simple task for the hosts as Enda Stevens' cross from the left picked out Carl Baker unmarked at the back post.

His measured volley snuck in to send Wanderers to their third league defeat on the spin.

They have conceded 10 goals in that time and desperately need to rediscover their defensive solidity if they are to climb from the 22nd position they currently find themselves in.

Saturday's failings were made all the more frustrating by the fact the Blues looked dangerous going forward, particularly through the re-energised Hayes.

Attack was their big issue throughout last season as they scored just 45 goals, and both Hayes and Gareth Ainsworth admitted being at a loss as to what has caused the role reversal.

Portsmouth: Forde, Evans, Davies, Burgess, Stevens, Baker, Doyle, Rose, Lalkovic (Naismith HT), Roberts (Hunt 88), Main (Chaplin 25).

Subs not used: O'Brien, Clarke, Smith, Linganzi.

Wycombe Wanderers: Blackman, Jombati (Akinfenwa 80), Stewart, Pierre, Harriman, Gape, Bloomfield, Rowe (McGinn 86), Thompson, Hayes (Southwell 80), Wood.

Subs not used: Richardson, Freeman, De Havilland, Kashket.

Referee call was 'a killer'

AINSWORTH QUESTIONS OFFICIAL AS HANDBALL GOES UNPUNISHED

GARETH Ainsworth says a refereeing error in the build up to Portsmouth's third goal helped provide the killer blow during Wycombe Wanderers' 4-2 defeat at Fratton Park.

The goal came moments after Wycombe had pegged Pompey back to 2-2 in a frantic five-minute spell at the end of the first half, which saw the score change from 1-1 to 3-2.

The Blues boss felt Pompey forward Gary Roberts handled the ball before sending Conor Chaplin through on goal to put the hosts ahead just before the half-time break.

"The third goal is a real killer before half-time. How the referee (Tim Robinson) hasn't seen a handball, I am absolutely amazed," Ainsworth said.

"I don't often question the referees but that was obvious to many, many fans on this side of the ground.

"I am looking forward to seeing the replay and I thought Roberts controlled the ball with his hand.

"That is a disappointment, because at 2-2 at half-time it is a different team talk and different set-up in the second half for us."

Tickets on sale Tuesday

WANDERERS ALLOCATED 300 SEATS FOR AWAY DAY AGAINST CARLISLE

TICKETS for Wycombe Wanderers' League Two match at Carlisle United will go on sale at 10am on Tuesday.

Wanderers have been allocated 300 tickets in section three of the Pioneer Foods stand which is all seated and under cover.

Adult admission costs £19, seniors (65+) £16, young person (18-22) £13, junior (11-17) £10 and children (10 and under) £7.

Children under the age of six go free, while a range of adult and junior ticket deals costing between £24 and £35 are available.

Tickets will also be on sale at Brunton Park on the day of the match (Saturday, September 24), but will be subject to a price increase of £3.

To buy tickets call 01494 441118, book online at tickets.wwfc.com or visit the shop at Adams Park.

SPORT

HAYES TALKS

Blues Skipper attributes his upturn in scoring fortunes down to improved service



CHAIRBOYS: Fans asked to dig deep and fund transfer kitty Scheme bids to strengthen Wanderers' squad



WYCOMBE Wanderers are asking fans to help fund a January transfer kitty of £75,000 after launching the 500 Club.

The scheme hopes to raise money to be spent on loan or permanent signings in the winter transfer window.

The target will be made up of pledges of £150 from 500 supporters and Chairman, Andrew Howard, believes it will give Wanderers a timely financial boost.

He told the club website: "To succeed in football requires passion,

belief, hard work and determination, and these are all attributes the management, players and staff have in abundance.

"It also takes money, and although the club and trust have made strides, we still have debt, and like any football club, we will always require investment.

"We have pushed our budget to the limit this season in the real hope we can, and will, achieve great things. That has to be our primary focus."

The Blues' squad has been decimated by injuries, and while many

of those out will be fit by January, Wanderers are likely to need to strengthen.

Gareth Ainsworth has stressed the importance of keeping his side in contention until the turn of the year, and the money would represent a sizeable fund to invest in his squad.

Trust and Fans Council members devised the idea together, and Howard feels confident the investment will give Ainsworth a better chance of achieving success.

"While survival and sustainabili-

ty of the club is our number one priority, we want to give the management staff the best possible chance of moving us forward on the pitch," he said.

"That means widening the funds they have available to spend on players. In short the bigger the budget, the better our chances of success."

Members of the 500 Club will be entered into a series of exclusive prize draws and will also receive a signed photograph as well as an invitation to an end of season event with the players.

PREVIEW: Blues look to stop the rot against Boro Ainsworth puts faith in boys at the back

By Harry Gray

GARETH Ainsworth has no concerns over Wycombe Wanderers' defensive solidity ahead of the visit of free-scoring Stevenage Town to Adams Park tomorrow.

Boro come into the League Two encounter on the back of scoring eight goals in their previous two matches in 6-1 and 2-1 victories over Hartlepool United and Crawley Town.

Wanderers, on the other hand, boast the rather less welcome stat of conceding 10 in their last three, including letting in four apiece against Luton Town and Portsmouth.

Ainsworth is unperturbed by the apparent mismatch and is resolute in his belief his defenders will be up to the challenge.

"We have been working hard on our defending and it has been crazy because we have had one of the best defences for the last two seasons," he said.

"You can look at form and say 'both teams are scoring and conceding goals, so it will be an open game' but it doesn't always work that way.

"I have faith in the boys we have at the back and I can't not because of the work they have put in for the past two years."

The Chairboys will start tomorrow's match just a point outside the relegation zone after picking up five points from their opening seven matches.

Ainsworth remains steadfast in his assertion Wycombe will turn their form around, but accepts they would be wise to do so sooner rather than later.

"There is no panic setting in and we have a long way to go yet," he explained.

"We have had four away games at tough places to go and have had quite a tough start to the season.

"As a football manager I don't want to be going into the final games near the bottom of the league.

"We need to start climbing the table now, but Stevenage will not be an easy game."

Paul Hayes reiterated his manager's sentiments and says Wycombe must move on from a difficult start and begin to rebuild their campaign.

The Blues' captain said: "I know it's a cliché, but our season starts against Stevenage. We are not playing badly and need to make sure we sustain that for the majority of the match."

None of Wycombe's seven injured players are expected to return and Ainsworth will again have to operate with a skeleton squad for the visit of Darren Sarll's side.

He confirmed Paris Cowan-Hall is the closest to recovering full fitness and could be in line for a return within two weeks.



Gareth Ainsworth has faith in his defences ability to contain a free-scoring Stevenage tomorrow.
Picture: ACTION IMAGES

Wanderers not short of support

WYCOMBE STRIKE SPONSORSHIP DEAL WITH INDEPENDENT RECORD COMPANY

WYCOMBE Wanderers have announced a deal for Cherry Red Records to become the club's new shorts sponsor.

The London-based independent record label has been involved in football for the past two decades and has sponsored AFC Wimbledon's ground since 2006.

Head of commercial activities, Damian Irvine, believes the company's previous experience working with fan owned club's make them the ideal match for Wanderers.

He said: "Cherry Red Records are solid supporters of Wycombe Wanderers and league football generally, particularly supporter-owned club's like ours.

"They've shown real enthusiasm for working with us and many of our fans and staff are passionate supporters of independent music - not least our manager."

Cherry Red Records' logo will appear on Wycombe's home and away kit for the remainder of the 2016/17 season, starting at tomorrow's match against Stevenage.

Their managing director, Adam Velasco, is a long-time Chairboys fan and is happy to have struck a deal with a club which is so close to his heart.

He said: "I grew up in High Wycombe and I have been a fan since the non-league days at Loakes Park, so I am delighted we are now officially involved with the club.

"I sincerely hope we can help out for many years to come.

"We are proud to become a sponsor of the club and look forward to seeing our logo displayed on the team's shorts up and down the country."