

## SPORT

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GRAHAMSycob into  
round four  
of FA Cup

BEACONSFIELD Sycob made history after an Ollie McCoy-inspired performance powered them into the fourth round of qualifying for the Emirates FA Cup against Felixstowe & Walton.

McCoy notched a second half hat-trick as the Rams ran riot against their Thurlow Nunn Premier Division opposition at Holloways Park to make history for the second time in four weeks.

Sycob got to the third round of qualifying for the first time earlier in the month after they saw off Essex-based club Whitham Town 3-1.

Felixstowe started quickly but couldn't make their dominance count and as half-time was beckoning winger Charlie Losasso fired in a wicked cross to the front post which McCoy duly converted.

Despite Felixstowe emerging with a better purpose at the start of the second half it was the Rams who got the crucial second goal.

Former Reading footballer Losasso was again on hand to provide the assist for McCoy's second when his decent run and inch-perfect pass was prodded home with minimal fuss after 60 minutes.

McCoy got his third in the dying embers when he went on a mazy run and saw his shot ricochet off the crossbar and into the net to cap off a memorable day.

It means the Rams will now host Northamptonshire side Brackley Town, who ply their trade in the National League North, on Saturday, October 15.

Ben wary  
of danger

From back page

as I can going forward because I feel like I'm ready to make a statement as a pro after doing so well in the amateurs."

And after a devastating period which has seen further demands for an inquiry into the safety of the sport once again after the death of Scottish fighter Mike Towell, Smith is trying not to let it cloud his focus.

"It doesn't worry me at all," he said. "Every now and again we have a death in boxing but there are so many more deaths in other sports, it feels like boxing is the only sport highlighted."

"I didn't know much about Mike, I just heard a few rumours he possibly wasn't well before the fight but still it was horrible to hear about and such a shame, especially because he had a young family."

And Smith readily acknowledges the dangers of his craft.

"Boxing is a fighting game, it's a hard sport, and everyone knows the risks before stepping into the ring, but at the same time that is why we love it because it is an adrenaline sport," he said.

But for now, though, Smith remains focused on an important period in his career.

"This year determines how fast my career progresses," he said. "One day, I want to be a world champion."

## Chairboys nail win over hapless Hammers

WYCOMBE 3  
WEST HAM UNDER-23S 0

IT was bye bye West Ham, as Wycombe sent the hapless Hammers tumbling out of the revamped EFL Trophy on a night to forget for the Premiership's much exalted academy teams.

West Ham, West Brom and Middlesbrough all found the exit door to this year's competition, also known as the Checktrade Trophy, becoming the first Premier League acad-

emy sides to be eliminated in the group stages.

As for Wycombe, the comfortable victory, following on from their 3-0 away win at Northampton Town last month, means the Chairboys are safely through to the knockout rounds – with still one more group match to play against Coventry City.

The competition, which has featured 16 development squads alongside League 1 and 2 teams, has come in for some criticism and been marked by low crowds around the country. Adams Park was filled

with 1,060 fans for the match. Six of the academy clubs' players have to be under 21, with no limits on the other five players in their team.

But Wycombe boss Gareth Ainsworth won't mind. His team picked up from their two league wins on the spin with victory over a youthful West Ham team.

Adebayo Akinfenwa, Scott Kashket and Nick Freeman were on target for the League Two side, with Freeman scoring the third goal of the night and his first in senior football.

Akinfenwa, whose neat skill earned Wycombe a 1-0 win over Exeter on Saturday, headed home a Sam Wood free-kick after six minutes to open the scoring for Wycombe.

And then Kashket, also in a rich run of form after his two goals in the 5-1 demolition of Crewe last week, was on target again two minutes after half-time thanks to a neat through ball, with Freeman getting the third on 68 minutes.

The match was marred by eight bookings – six of them Wycombe players.

Glorious Generals up  
for another cup scalp

Dave Pearce

CHESHAM United could repeat their cup heroics again this season after ending Staines Town's eight-match unbeaten run to make the fourth round of qualifying in the Emirates FA Cup.

Andy Leese's side made headlines last year when they humbled League Two side Bristol Rovers in the first round after Ryan Blake eventually won it with a fine individual goal.

And a repeat could be on the cards again thanks to the heroics of Drew Roberts who netted twice in the second half against Staines to put the Generals into the mix for the next round of qualifying.

"The players executed the game plan perfectly," admitted Leese. "Drew was back to what he does best, but he was supported by many other excellent individual performances on the day."

"We started slowly, but I felt we shaded the first half in terms of chances and possession and in the second half we started to press them a bit higher and it eventually

paid off for us. Barry deserves a special mention for a performance that both rolled back the years and belied his age. We await with anticipation now to see where the next round takes us."

Staines started brighter and, in truth, should have gone into the interval comfortably leading but they failed to convert any of their chances and would later pay for their profligacy.

A rejuvenated Swan's side emerged after the interval and they took the lead three minutes into the second half thanks to some inspired individual play from veteran striker Barry Hayles.

Hayles strong-armed his way past two Staines defenders and squared the ball to the unmarked Roberts who duly walked the ball into an empty net.

Goalscorer Roberts was then hauled to the ground in the penalty area after 71 minutes and he had no trouble converting from the spot to cap off a memorable day for Leese's side.

## Chalfont St Peter keep up spell of top form

CHALFONT ST PETER continued their fine spell of form winning their second game within a week with victory over strugglers Kidlington in Southern League Division One Central on Saturday.

Kofi Lockhart-Adams, who scored a hat-trick in Saints' 5-3 win over Hanwell Town last Tuesday, opened the scoring just before half-time when he prodded in Alex Hedley's audacious cross.

Only seconds in the second half had elapsed when the Saints doubled their lead after Charlie Strutton ghosted in from midfield and finished neatly at the front post.

The home side had to weather a late storm when Kidlington striker Eddie Odhiambo netted from close range following a mistake from Saints' skipper Tom Franklin.

But Danny Edwards' side held on and the win sees them move up to third in the table, nipping at the heels of joint leaders Kempston Rovers and Farnborough.

"It was a thoroughly professional performance," admitted Edwards. "Kidlington are a good side and I don't expect them to be down the bottom end of the table come the end of the season."

MARLOW were comfortably beaten 4-2 away from home at the hands of Royston Town in the Southern Division One Central on Saturday.

A poor start proved too much for the Blues to overcome as they found themselves trailing 3-0 at half-time.

Royston threatened to run riot when they made it four shortly after the break but goals from Chris Ov-

endon and Jay Welch restored some pride in a dispiriting performance. MARK Bartley's side have another away trip on their hands when they face Brentwood Town tomorrow.

HOLMER Green saw off FC Broxbourne Borough 2-0 at home on Saturday in the Spartan South Midlands League but they made hard work of it.

Eliot Derby scored either side of half-time which ensured Holmer leapfrogged Biggleswade United into 12th having amassed 12 points from seven league games.

Next for Holmer is an away trip to Hadley tomorrow.

FLACKWELL Heath had three players sent off as they drew a thrilling game 4-4 with C B Houn-

slow in the Hellenic Premier Division last Saturday.

A mass confrontation which ensued at the start of the second half was the reason why so many players were given their marching orders at once, including two players from the opposition.

Toby Cook was caught late with a rash challenge and a punch-up developed with both sets of players getting involved in the fiery confrontation.

RISBOROUGH Rangers got back to winning ways with an emphatic 5-1 away at Codicote on Saturday in Spartan South Midlands Division One.

Kevin Mealor scored twice as Rangers breezed their way to victory.

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# WYCOMBE Boss happy with rich vein of form at Adams Park

## Ainsworth buoyed by win over Hammers

### FREEMAN AND AKINFENWA HAVE ADDED GOALS TO THE CHAIRBOYS

GARETH Ainsworth says he is buoyed by his side's rich vein of form at home in recent weeks but he insists there is plenty more work to do on the road.

The Chairboys have won their last three matches at Adams Park including a fine 3-0 win in the Checkatrade Trophy against a young West Ham side on Tuesday night.

But they are yet to pick up a win in five away games thus far after only amassing a solitary point when they shared the spoils with Blackpool in August.

"We've played some of the top sides in the league away from home already," admitted Ainsworth ahead of his sides near 240-mile round trip to Yeovil Town on Saturday afternoon.

"Five of our seven summer signings have been injured, we've had bad luck with poor refereeing decisions but so does everyone else so it's no excuse for us faltering a bit when we've played away.

"It's still too soon to panic, the depth of the squad is looking a lot stronger because players are coming back in and there is a confi-



WANDERERS MANAGER GARETH AINSWORTH  
By Anita Ross Marshall

dence and swagger about us at the moment with the way we are playing."

And Ainsworth is relishing the

challenge of coming up against another young manager in Darren Way, someone he knows well after completing his coaching badges

with.

"I did my A license with Darren," Ainsworth said. "He's very enthusiastic character, a motivator, and he is someone who has a similar state of a club to what we have so I can empathise with him there."

Nick Freeman bagged his first Wanderers goal, and his first in league football, in the victory over the Hammers while Adebayo Akinfenwa's recent form has given Ainsworth a welcome headache with a plethora of attacking options.

"I like Nick a lot," Ainsworth said. "He was a year late for his trial because he was going to come in before the start of last season but he was injured so he spent another year in non-league."

"He took his goal against West Ham really well, he's a ball carrier who makes it tough for other players to handle."

Ainsworth also welcomes the presence of Akinfenwa, who has been back in the goals recently after scoring twice in Wanderers' last two games.

"Bayo can be really calm and not what you might expect him to be," he said. "He talks really well, he's very intelligent and he's got the respect of everyone here."

## Blues start to pick up pace

### WYCOMBE WANDERERS 1 EXETER CITY 0

THESE are good times for the Chairboys.

After a stuttery start to the season with a squad riddled by injuries, Gareth Ainsworth's team are acquiring that most important of attributes in football – momentum.

Following a thumping 5-1 midweek win at Crewe, it took patience for the League Two side who looked destined for a point against a struggling Exeter side who were clearly looking for a point to take back to Devon.

Chances were at a premium with neither goalkeeper really having to make a save of note.

But then it took the introduction of the man known as 'The Beast' to turn this match.

Adebayo Akinfenwa was introduced on the hour and Wycombe boss Gareth Ainsworth sought to break down a solid Exeter defence. The man signed from AFC Wimbledon in the summer was in the thick of the action straight away, twisting in the penalty area to flick a header high and wide.

Just as the muscular presence of the Grecians' Reuben Reid was causing Wycombe's defence a few twitchy moments with his barn-storming runs, so the imposing figure of The Beast helped change the momentum of this game.

Five minutes from time and Anthony Stewart lofted a high ball into the Exeter penalty area. Akinfenwa's first touch was exquisite – the neatest of chest traps which confused a gaggle of luminous yellow-shirted Exeter defenders around him – a sharp swivel which would have a "10" on Strictly, followed by the coolest of finishes into the bottom right-hand corner, sealed the points.

"Exeter came with a game-plan," reflected Akinfenwa. "They tried to deny us space, they more or less got ten men behind the ball and came for a draw. So tactically, the Gaffer saw that, made the change and we got the three points."

"It is always nice to come off the bench and make an impact. The most important thing was to keep the momentum that we've got. The boys were magnificent on Tuesday with the 5-1."

Boss Ainsworth admitted he was becoming resigned for the draw, despite shaking up the tactics at half-time, and then throwing on his big striker.

But, in his pre-match chat, Ainsworth had warned that this was a time to be patient, and that patience was rewarded.

"Exeter's set up with a 4-5-1 frustrated us," reflected the Wycombe boss.

"They sacrificed much of their attacking prowess to be solid. It seemed like they just wanted a point here today, slowing the game down when they could. Paul Tisdale is a good manager, he knows what he is doing."

"He has got an injury crisis at the moment and he can't put his solid first back four out so you do that by clogging your midfield and it almost worked. Exeter were five minutes away from getting a point."

## Belief in 'The Beast' has paid off for Wycombe's boss

IT was a genius move which even the most practised of public relations spin doctors would have admired.

Supersize cult-hero Adebayo Akinfenwa had just scored the winning penalty in the play-off final at Wembley, helping AFC Wimbledon into League 1.

In his post-match interview on Sky, the 34-year-old striker gave his best sales pitch, reminding managers that he was now technically unemployed and urging them to "hit me up on Whatsapp".

One of those managers who saw the interview was Wycombe's Gareth Ainsworth.

"I think I texted him back" recalled Ainsworth, after bringing on the experienced front-man as a second half substitute to score the winner in a dogged 1-0 win over Exeter City. "I think his agent then got in touch and Ade has proved to be a good signing for us on and off the field."

"I think the text said 'I want you'," is Akinfenwa's version of the Whatsapp conversation. "He said I am interested. It was cool. I sat down with him as I sat down with a few other clubs."

"What the gaffer said resonated and stood out. He has got that burning desire which I still have.



Akinfenwa has become a cult figure in FIFA 17

Wycombe seemed similar to AFC Wimbledon in the togetherness and what they are trying to build here.

"I am not saying we are the underdogs, but we haven't got a massive budget. The gaffer told me what he wanted me to bring both on and off the pitch, and I am a big believer."

"As of now it has been a right decision and I am happy I am a Wycombe player."

Ainsworth certainly has no doubt that Akinfenwa was the right man

to bring in to add his experience both on and off the field working with the youngsters. The only gamble was his age, insisted Ainsworth. There was no question about his ability.

"Ade was always in the back of the mind," revealed the Wycombe boss.

"We signed Paris Cowan-Hall for pace up front, because with Paul Hayes last season we just struggled to get behind teams some- times. Hayes is a fantastic player,

well above this level, but last season when we fired the ball into the box a few times, we just needed that big man."

"So I ended up getting the biggest which is Bayo."

Ainsworth described the striker, who now has two goals to his name this term, as a breath of fresh air for the club. It gives him an option, either as a starter or as a substitute to change up things.

Over the years, teams have become wise to Wycombe's tactics. Throwing on Akinfenwa isn't necessarily a plan B, but it is a card to play when the time is right.

As for Akinfenwa, who has now become a cult figure in the newly-launched FIFA 2017 computer game The Beast, is biding his time.

"Of course I would like more game time," he pointed out. "The time I am happy not to get game time and sit on the bench is the time I will pack it in."

And asked after Saturday's game how his body would react on Sunday morning, he replied: "I will be stiff from the game, but I will feel blessed and I will feel good. I will be at church on Sunday and I will praise the Lord for all the blessings I have been given."

"And then I will go at it again on Monday."