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Rangers' happy New Year

RISBOROUGH RANGERS had a solid festive period in the league, picking up four points from a possible six.

Their latest result came on Monday when they were held to a thrilling 3-3 draw away at Buckingham Athletic in the South Midlands League Division One.

Rangers found themselves starting down the barrel as they were 2-0 down inside 15 minutes. However, goals from Lamar Mason-Williams, Kevin Mealar and James Shrimpton saw them get back to 3-3.

Unfortunately, heartbreak was to follow as Shrimpton missed a penalty late on as Rangers were forced to settle for just a point.

Before that, Risborough trounced Chesham United Reserves 4-0 on December 27.

Mealar scored a brace with Shrimpton and substitute Wes Young adding further goals to seal a convincing win.

Rangers were much the quicker out of the blocks when the in-form Mealar scored after only two minutes from close in.

The hosts extended their lead 10 minutes later when Shrimpton fired home from the penalty spot.

Risborough were now dominating play but were then caught out from a quick counter attack resulting in the visitors being awarded a penalty right on half-time.

However, Lee Parrack made a fine save to keep Chesham at bay. In the second period, Mealar scored again when he struck into the bottom corner from 20 yards.

Chesham's fate was finally sealed when Young headed home at the back post in the 90th minute to give Risborough Rangers a great finish to the end of the year.

Tomorrow, they entertain Arlesey Town Reserves as they hope to keep their run going (kick off 3pm).

Henley cop Flack

FLACKWELL HEATH now just sit two points off the top of the table in third place after demolishing Henley Town 7-1 last Friday.

Dan Rapley was the hero with a hat-trick at Wilks Park. Joe Blount also chipped in with two goals with other goals from Dan Bayliss and Jack Thomson-Wheeler.

The hosts, who moved into second place in the Hellenic League Premier Division with this comprehensive victory, scored early on through Rapley and although Henley equalised, that was as good as it got for them.

Flackwell were 3-1 ahead at half-time before doubling that in the second period to seal a sixth consecutive win.

Tomorrow, the Heathens face Burnham at home (kick off 3pm).

Scott Kashket in with League Two honour



Scott Kashket receiving his League Two Player of the Month award

SCOTT KASHKET has been named Sky Bet League Two Player of the Month for December after an spectacular month in front of goal.

The 20-year-old has played a huge part in Wycombe's superb unbeaten run, bagging four goals in four games as Wanderers picked up 10 points from a possible 12.

Kashket, signed from Leyton Orient in the summer, scored the second in a 2-0 win over Notts County, the first in a 3-3 draw at Plymouth on Boxing Day and the winning goals against Cheltenham Town and his old club.

He has scored an incredible 13 goals in 14 games so far this season and the in-form striker told the Bucks Free Press what an honour it was to get this award, as well as praising his team-mates for their part.

"It feels very good to win this award and all the hard work what myself and the team have put in has paid off," said Kashket.

"The reason behind my run is down to the team. Everyone is doing their job and I am doing my job at putting the ball in the back of the net and at the moment everything is going in so I just want that to carry on."

In the midst of this scoring run, Kashket has scored some fine goals, including a magnificent volley against Cheltenham and a cool finish against Plymouth.

However, one goal meant more to him than any other. He added: "The one against Orient is my favourite. That was special and I am sure it will be for a long time to come."

Gareth Ainsworth praised the impact Kashket has had since arriving at Adams Park and lauded him as one of the best finishers he has worked with.

He commented: "No-one expected Scott to do what he has done. He has grown in confidence and come out of his shell and he is a player that breeds off being part of this fantastic squad."

"Scott is thriving in this environment and he is flourishing and this is a fantastic achievement in just his first full month in professional football. To win player of the month is just astonishing."

"He is up there with the best finishers I have seen. Scott aims for the corners and finds the places where the goalkeepers aren't."

"He means to do what he does and that is what makes him such a great finisher."



Kashket has been a revelation at Wycombe since joining from Leyton Orient in the summer, bagging 13 goals in just 14 appearances for the Chairboys. Photos: Andy Rowland and Anita Ross Marshall

Nine on the line for Rams

BEACONSFIELD SYCOB saw their game away at Egham Town on Monday called off due to the weather but hopes are high they can stretch their winning run to nine tomorrow.

Following an incredible run of eight wins on the spin, culminating in a whopping 17 goals in their previous three games, SYCOB have propelled themselves up the league.

Their last three games saw them

smash Petersfield Town 6-0 away from home before crushing Chalfont St Peter 5-1 at home.

Kidlington were the last team put to the sword by the rampant Rams as they were annihilated 6-0 at Beaconsfield on Boxing Day.

Manager Andy Hurley conceded that his side were concentrating more on the FA Cup but remains thrilled at his side's current form.

He said: "We had a good run in the

FA Cup and that brings the money in so we took our eye off the ball in terms of the league.

"Once we were out of the cup, it became important that our league form picked up quickly as we were in trouble so I am absolutely delighted with our run."

Tomorrow, SYCOB entertain league leaders Royston Town at home in what is sure to be a hum-dinger (kick off 3pm).

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WYCOMBE: Ainsworth's men keep up their unbeaten run

Wycombe's wonders cement play-off place

by Nicholas Tunney

WYCOMBE WANDERERS marched on with a brace of wins against League Two strugglers, Cheltenham Town and Newport County, to cement their place in the playoffs.

Gareth Ainsworth's side travelled to Cheltenham on Friday and emerged victorious, winning 1-0 thanks to Scott Kashket's superb volley on eight minutes after good work by Adebayo Akinfenwa.

The win came on the back of a stolid display from Wycombe's backline after the Robins hit them with numerous attacks in the second half.

Ainsworth praised his side's resilience. He said: "What pleased me most about this result was that we were average and won the game.

"Successful teams do that and that was the biggest plus out of this match. Cheltenham made life very tough for us in the second half but we managed to come through that."

Kashket undoubtedly took the plaudits again with his 13th goal in as many games but Ainsworth was also keen to single out on-loan Southampton midfielder Dominic Gape for yet another fantastic performance.

He commented: "Dominic's performance was outstanding. He has calmness on the ball and tenacity off the ball and he will be an important player for us to keep hold of."

Ainsworth was also thrilled to see his team so well backed by a raucous following and heaped praise on them. He added: "I don't think we would have won that game without them.



Paris Cowan-Hall celebrates his audacious winner against Newport County with Adebayo Akinfenwa. Photo: Anita Ross Marshall

"They really got behind us and they kept us going throughout. What a turnout from the fans and it was truly magnificent support from them so thank you so much."

Their first game of 2017 saw them entertain Newport at Adams Park

on Monday and after going behind to Mark Randall's strike, the Chairboys fought back with two sublime strikes from Sam Wood and Paris Cowan-Hall.

Ainsworth said after the game he was delighted with his side's character to bounce back from a goal down.

He commented: "I am really pleased with the character we

showed to come back from behind.

"The last game of the Christmas period is always a tough one and the plan was to always rotate and keep it fresh.

"The front three of Paul Hayes, Garry Thompson and Myles Weston came in and I thought they did a really good job of running Newport into the ground. I also thought Sam Wood played really well in the Matt Bloomfield role.

"However, after going behind, which was such a blow, I felt the three for three change would lift the ground and the mental side of the game is as strong as anything."

The win at Cheltenham was Ainsworth's 200th league game in charge at the club and before the Newport match he said he was overwhelmed to receive a picture commemorating that achievement.

"Before the game in the dressing room, the boys presented to me a framed picture saying 'Well done gaffer on your 200th league game' all signed by them.

"I felt that was such a special moment as you don't get that often at clubs and for them to do that for me and it shows we have a real good thing going here and I am glad we capped the day with a win."

Ainsworth's side now look forward to Saturday as they entertain Stourbridge in the third round of the FA Cup, hoping that they don't become victim of a giant killing (kick off 3pm).

Blackman extends Wanderers loan deal



Blackman has been in impressive form this season for Wycombe

ON-LOAN Chelsea goalkeeper Jamal Blackman has extended his deal with Wycombe until the end of the season, delighting manager Gareth Ainsworth.

The 23-year-old has excelled with 11 clean sheets in 25 appearances since arriving in August following an injury to first-choice stopper Scott Brown.

Brown - who produced a match-winning performance in the 1-0 win at Cheltenham last Friday - is likely to complete a loan deal in the coming days.

Ainsworth said: "Jamal has been first class for us and he has real quality which is well above League Two level, so it's fantastic for us to be able to keep him for the rest of the season.

"He commands his area superbly, his distribution is outstanding and he's made some saves which are out of this world to help us pick up some valuable points.

"I'd like to think we do things right here when it comes to developing young players and Jamal is another example of someone who's come in, worked hard and improved his game with us.

"Scott was unfortunate to pick up an injury on the first day of the season and by the time he recovered, Jamal was playing extremely well and had earned his place in the team.

"It's important for Scott to get game time and moving out on loan will enable him to do so.

"He was excellent at Cheltenham and it shows the strength of our squad that we have two goalkeepers with such quality.

"There's a lot of work to be done in January to keep this squad as strong as it can be and to give us a real chance of achieving something in the second half of the season.

"The 500 Club has played a massive part so far and I'd like to thank everyone who's contributed because the fans here can make such a difference."

Blackman has produced many heroic displays as the Chairboys have propelled themselves into the playoff picture in the last few weeks.

Arguably, Blackman's best performance came against Cambridge in November, when he produced several brilliant saves to seal Wycombe's first away league win since February.

Jacobson lauds fans and team-mates for their support

JOE JACOBSON expressed his delight at seeing Wycombe's unbeaten run continue over the tough New Year period and praised his team-mates and fans for their part in the last few weeks.

The run over the festive period began with a 3-3 draw over Plymouth, after coming back from 3-1 down, before beating Cheltenham last Friday and Newport at home on Monday, again after coming from a goal down.

October 22 was the last time Wanderers suffered defeat in League Two and Jacobson explained that the squad are oozing confidence currently.

He said: "The boys are feeling really fresh still. When you are winning and picking up results every week, you don't seem to get fatigued.

"Injuries drop down and it is strange how it works like that. At the minute, everyone is flying and buzzing around and we are all desperate to keep this momentum going at the minute."



Joe Jacobson thanked the fans for their support over the tough festive period, which saw Wanderers gain seven points from nine

Jacobson pinpointed the Plymouth result as a crucial point. He added: "It took a lot of character to come back.

"That result has kicked us on even more and it can be better than winning a game 4-0 and managing to

scrape through the Cheltenham game was great as well on a tough pitch."

The game at Whaddon Road last Friday saw a whopping 871 Chairboys supporters make the trip down the A40 in extremely dangerous

conditions, due to dense fog.

Jacobson commented that the support the squad have received recently has been amazing and hopes for it to continue.

"Their support has been massive. When we came out at Cheltenham in a small stadium and you see fans packed out behind the goal, it gives you a massive boost," added the Welshman.

"It gives all of you that feeling that we are all here, and you aren't just up against us but you are up against everyone.

"Winning and good performances encourages everyone to come along and we hope that can continue."

The game tomorrow against Stourbridge will be a tricky one for Wycombe to overcome and Jacobson has warned against complacency.

He explained: "This is one of the biggest games in their history. They beat Northampton and it won't be an easy game by any stretch so we need to remain focused."

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Ainsworth: The FA Cup still holds all its magic

WYCOMBE: Gareth has soft spot for FA Cup

by Nicholas Tunney

GARETH AINSWORTH is preparing his team to guard against a huge upset in the FA Cup third round tomorrow against Stourbridge FC as Wycombe hope to avoid a potential banana skin.

The FA Cup, to Ainsworth, is still a magical competition and the game tomorrow, against opponents three leagues below, represents what the oldest cup competition in the world is all about.

Ainsworth's birthday in May is very close to when the FA Cup Final is always played and when the Chairboys manager was younger the final was always a huge event in the Ainsworth household.

He said: "Growing up the final used to be the first weekend in May and it would coincide with birthday celebrations for me as a kid.

"It was a huge event. The day shut down for us. It was on TV from 10am and one of the channels was dedicated to the FA Cup and the romance of it.

"The build-up was fantastic, as were most of the games. Nowadays we seem to have a lost a little bit of that as there have been evening games as part of the FA Cup, which upsets me.

"The FA Cup has always been a big part of my life and I always loved FA Cup Final day so I will never treat this competition with anything but the utmost respect as a manager.

"When I was playing, we had some great games in the FA Cup such as Port Vale vs Arsenal and the cup run with Wimbledon and Wycombe so I have some great memories of this amazing competition."

Tomorrow's game represents a huge opportunity for Wycombe to progress to the fourth round but Ainsworth is not taking Stourbridge lightly.

"They are on a fantastic unbeaten run and they beat League One Northampton in the previous round so it will be an exceptionally tough game," added Ainsworth.

"People have been saying that we have an easy draw but I believe the opposite. Everyone wants to see an upset and we will have to be at our very best tomorrow."



Gareth Ainsworth has had many amazing FA Cup memories over the years and hopes Wycombe can progress. Photo: Anita Ross Marshall



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