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Review of 2017

Looking back at a year
of highs and lows



Christmas shooting horror

Streets on lockdown after incident

A MAJOR police investigation is underway after a man was allegedly shot at in a shocking attack just hours before Christmas Day.

The man is in hospital with serious injuries to his shoulder following the incident, which happened in Station Road, Loudwater, at around 8.20pm on Sunday.

A scene watch was in place from the roundabout on the A40 to the roundabout on Treadaway Hill, and from Station Road to Fassets Road and Queensmead Road.

The land surrounding the Loudwater War Memorial was cordoned off on Wednesday and forensic investigators with metal detectors were seen in the area.

Neighbours spoke of their shock, with one woman saying she initially thought the alleged gunshots were fireworks.

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NEWS

M40 noise barrier work to start



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SPORT

Wycombe look to end 2017 on a high



Back page

Mum, 25, 'crushed by car'

By Stephanie Wareham

A YOUNG mother was "crushed" and killed by her own car in a tragic accident that has shocked friends

and neighbours in a quiet High Wycombe road - just days before Christmas.

Frantic 999 calls were made on the evening of December 23 after Sameha Mahmood, 25, became trapped

under her car in Whitelands Road - while her eight-month-old daughter was reportedly inside the vehicle.

Devastated friends and neighbours have now paid tribute to the "happy and kind" young

woman, who was given a poignant send-off with thousands of people attending her funeral at Jubilee Road Mosque on Thursday.

While police have not yet revealed the circumstances surrounding her

tragic death, neighbours say brave Sameha had desperately tried to stop her car after seeing it rolling back down a steep hill while waiting to pick up her mother.

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In the CHAIR



BBC3CR COMMENTATOR PHIL
CATCHPOLE



Phil Catchpole. Photo: PRIME
Media Images

HAVING worked in the music industry since I left school I had to reinvent myself when everybody stopped buying records, especially the ones that I was working on.

Somehow, I got a job managing a globally syndicated new music radio show, which came as a surprise to me as I knew absolutely nothing about broadcasting.

The next thing I know, I was volunteering to work on the Hospital Radio Sports Show which provided commentaries of the mighty Wanderers and after a few weeks of watching and learning, I got my chance behind the mic at Adams Park.

Something just clicked and working on the Sports Show became the highlight of my week, either in the studio (next door to the site of Loakes Park) pushing the faders up and down or calling the action at the game.

After the match, I'd listen back to a recording of the commentary whilst driving home, a truly painful experience: "Do I really sound like that?"

Some heavy self-editing followed and after a few weeks I was able to listen back to myself without wanting to career the car off the motorway.

A few months later I was reading the infamous Gasroom, an internet forum for Chairboys fans, and there was a thread bemoaning the poor coverage of Wycombe Wanderers on BBC Three Counties Radio. Here was my chance.

I made a demo of my 'best moments' and with the support of the Wycombe Wanderers media team, contacted BBC3CR to offer my services. To my surprise, they gave me a one game trial, a Tuesday night 2 - 2 draw at home to Rotherham. I came through unscathed and was offered the chance to cover the remaining ten games of the season.

Since then, I've called the action on over 200 games including the momentous survival day at Torquay, a Wembley play-off final and the seven goal thriller at White Hart Lane.

I've loved every minute, even the cold Tuesday nights at Accrington Stanley, and I've met some great people along the way.

WANDERERS RECAP

WYCOMBE 2-0 NEWPORT COUNTY

WYCOMBE Wanderers kept up their superb home form with an excellent 2-0 victory over Newport County.

Nathan Tyson and Adebayo Akinfenwa were the matchwinners for the Blues with two brilliant goals.

Tyson opened the scoring on 15 minutes with a fantastic finish after a flowing move. Ebere Eze produced a magnificent flick into the path of Luke O'Nien before the midfielder found Tyson who danced past Ben White before slotting coolly past Joe Day.

Akinfenwa then made the game safe on 78 minutes when he chested expertly in the box before walloping a volley past a despairing Day.

Newport did threaten in the second half with Joss Labadie hitting the bar for the visitors but Wycombe, led by Dan Scarr, were resolute in defence and manager Gareth Ainsworth was delighted with the victory.

He said: "The balance we got was spot on after the Coventry game.

"When we get the balance right we are good side. There was the right mix between possession and good balls forward at the right time and it was epitomised by Bayo's goal.

"He has got that ability and he can only do that if the ball into him is good. We worked the angles and it was a great all-round performance.

"The back five were imperious and Dan Scarr has probably had his best game for us. Sido Jombati and Dominic Gape played well out of position and I thought it was an excellent result."

The first goal from Tyson was a wonderful team goal and Ainsworth admitted that it was down to hard work in training leading up to the game.

He added: "We have worked hard in the week in getting the ball down and

we did some pattern work on Christmas Eve and I am pleased that the boys didn't rush off.

"They were keen to get what went wrong on Friday night to put that right for this game so the pattern work we did was great.

"We saw those in evidence here. The goal needed finishing and Tys is lethal on his left foot."

Eze also produced a good display after a quieter couple of games previously and the Wycombe boss hailed the special talent the QPR loanee has.

"The home form for Ebs is unquestionable," added Ainsworth.

"At Adams Park on a good pitch you are going to get the best out of that boy.

"He still has a lot to learn but he is learning game by game and minute by minute.

"If QPR can get a player back who is going to add to their squad I will have done my job.

"I am hoping I can see him in the hoops soon knowing I have played a big part in that.

"I think the fact that a team like Wycombe Wanderers can challenge for third place at this stage of the season is phenomenal and they have shown the belief that they really want to be there and that is all I need to see so let's keep our feet on the ground."

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: Brown, Gape, Jombati, Scarr, Jacobson, O'Nien, Saunders, Eze (sub: Bloomfield, 76), Tyson (sub: Mackail-Smith, 83), Akinfenwa, Cowan-Hall (sub: Freeman, 89). Subs: Ma-Kalambay, Southwell, De Havilland, Williams.

NEWPORT COUNTY: Day, Pipe (sub: Reynolds, 65), Demetriou, White, Tozer, Butler, Bennett (sub: Willmott, 63), Dolan, Labadie, Nouble, McCoulsky (sub: Amond, 77). Subs: Bittner, Foulston, Owen-Evans, Touray.

REFEREE: Charles Breakspear



Ainsworth saw his side record their sixth straight win at home in all competitions

CHAIRBOYS: Sensational Dan Scarr strike in vain Wycombe suffer cruel Coventry blow

WYCOMBE Wanderers suffered an unlucky 3-2 defeat against Coventry City in an action-packed game at the Ricoh Arena last Friday.

Two penalties, one nailed-on and one controversial, were given by referee Tony Harrington with the decisive blow being struck by Marc McNulty on 53 minutes.

McNulty went down very easily in the area after he was adjudged to have been fouled by Luke O'Nien and he smashed the penalty past Scott Brown.

Wanderers came back brilliantly after finding themselves 2-0 down in the first half to claw it back to 2-2.

Michael Doyle gave Coventry the lead with a complete fluke on 13 minutes when his cross from miles out looped in over despairing

Brown and into the net.

The home side doubled their advantage against the run of play when McNulty danced into the area and threaded a shot into the far corner.

However, Dan Scarr scored a wonderful goal right on half-time when he put a sensational volley right into the far corner from 20 yards after controlling expertly, a first ever professional strike for the on-loan Birmingham defender.

Just after the break, Wycombe had a penalty of their own when Nathan Tyson was hacked down in the box and Joe Jacobson coolly slotted past Lee Burge but McNulty had the last word which left Wanderers without an away win since October.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS:



Scarr scored a brilliant goal at the Ricoh Arena

Brown, Jombati, Stewart (sub: De Havilland, 43), Scarr, Jacobson, O'Nien, Saunders, Bloomfield, Tyson (sub: Eze, 78), Akinfenwa,

Mackail-Smith (sub: Cowan-Hall, 69). Subs: Ma-Kalambay, Gape, Southwell, Freeman.

REFEREE: Tony Harrington

Blues see off Newport County test



Wycombe cruise to win over Newport County. Photos: DC Photo Images



SPORT

Wanderers

All the action as Wycombe beat Newport County
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0963-2336



BLUES: Ainsworth makes no secret of his hopes to keep Eze Gaffer would love new deal for QPR loan star



Eze has been a star for Wycombe

WITH this year moving to an end, Wycombe Wanderers can look back with more positives than negatives as some great memories were made on the pitch.

Back in January, Wycombe came so close to beating the mighty Spurs only to be cruelly denied in the last few minutes and missed out on the League Two play-offs by just a point despite beating Cambridge on the final day of the season.

However, manager Gareth Ainsworth focused on some of the runs the players have embarked on and is

hoping for even better memories to be made in 2018.

He said: "Tottenham was an amazing game and the runs we have had but honestly turning the home form round has been excellent and the away streak has been brilliant as well.

"It is ever-changing this game and they say a week is a long time but believe me a year feels like an absolute lifetime and it goes thick and fast.

"The one thing I do know as a football manager is you live every game in the now. It is never about what

you did last game, it is never about what you are going to do in two games time. It is about now.

"It is about the next game and that is all you can ever think and focus on. You are always judged on now and I have to keep repeating the good results we are getting at the moment and try and pick up some points away."

Once New Year's Day hits, the January transfer window opens as Wycombe hope to kick on with their promotion challenge.

With the likes of Ebere Eze set to

have his last game on loan against Forest Green on New Year's Day, Ainsworth is clinging on to the hope that Eze will come back to Adams Park later in January.

He added: "We would love to be able to keep Ebs.

"At the end of January, I would love to see him back in a Wycombe shirt or see him playing first-team football for QPR.

"For selfish reasons, I want him back in this team but to see him playing in the blue and white hoops would be great as he is special."

WYCOMBE: Boss has tough decisions to make Ainsworth: It really is crystal ball time now

WYCOMBE Wanderers' magnificent home form is keeping them in and around the promised land of the play-offs.

The Blues recorded their sixth successive home win in all competitions as they dispatched Newport County 2-0 at Adams Park on Boxing Day.

Earlier in the season, the Chairboys equalled their run of 12 games without defeat away from home but now the focus is on their form at Adams Park.

They put that excellent run on the line against Mansfield Town tomorrow, who spent a lot of money in the summer revamping their squad for a promotion push.

Steve Evans' side are poised to challenge as 2017 draws to a close and Wycombe boss Gareth Ainsworth is under no illusion as to how tough a task they face tomorrow afternoon.

He said: "This will be a tough game without a doubt.

"The teams that have set their stalls out to get promoted as the likes of Luton, Notts County and Mansfield and they are in a nice position.

"Steve knows this league and knows his way out of it and so this will be a very tough game. The good thing is we are at home and we are doing very well at Adams Park.

"We have no new issues from Tuesday and we have a pretty de-

By Nicholas Tunney

cent squad to pick from but they have some very decent players at this level as well so it will be a tough test and I am sure it will be a great game."

Following that, the players travel to the Cotswolds to face Forest Green on New Year's Day, just a two-day turnaround from that Mansfield match.

Ainsworth added: "Obviously as a player you loved it as games are what you thrive off.

"You do get headaches with your older players with their knocks they may pick up and we have to make sure they are right for Monday or have them recovered.

"It really is crystal ball time. If you keep the same team and lose, people say you should have changed it but if you change it and get beat then people say you should have kept it the same.

"It is crazy and it is a decision that you have to do right and call correctly and as a coaching team, this is what we are paid to do and we will be trying to put the best 11 we think out for both games.

"I think that will involve more than 11 players for both games and I am sure that a lot of the guys will come into contention."

Skipper Adam El-Abd could be back for the Mansfield game after overcoming a slight knock to his calf.



Ainsworth thinks Mansfield will be tough opponents for his side tomorrow

Keeper praises strength

By Nicholas Tunney

WYCOMBE keeper Scott Brown has been in superb form between the sticks in recent weeks.

Wanderers are currently on a run of three clean sheets in four league matches and Brown has been a rock in goal for the Blues.

However, injuries have curtailed stability in the back four and Brown found himself behind a makeshift defence of Dominic Gape, Sido Jombati, Dan Scarr and Joe Jacobson against Newport.

Brown praised the strength of the squad as testament to the excellent defensive run. He said: "We have a string squad and when we work in shape in training we swap things round.

"In case we get injuries we need people who can come in like Sido and Dan and slot in well and they is a really good togetherness and we are all pulling in the same direction."

With Christmas games coming thick and fast, generally the division starts to take shape but with the league so congested, Brown added: "You keep thinking it is going to separate but you look down to the likes of Carlisle who are looking to get into the play-offs only a few points behind us so it is difficult and apart from the top two no-one is pulling away."

Brown has been a mainstay in the team this season after picking up an injury before the first game and the Wolverhampton-born stopper explained he is loving life in south Bucks.

He added: "I love it. Last season was an awful start and I just want to stay in the team as long as possible and look to keep improving."