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Merry Xmas to our readers
Festive round-up from across south Bucks
Picture special: Pages 16 & 17



INSIDE • 4 pages of Property • 12 pages of Freetime • 3 pages of Nostalgia • 6 pages of Sport

CHRISTMAS DEVASTATION



- Family lose everything just days before Christmas
- Pets killed and presents destroyed in horror blaze

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CRIME

Banker found guilty of murder



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NEWS

Outrage over £7k church vandalism



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PETITION

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In the CHAIR



Wycombe supporter Oliver White



Oliver White

I HAVEN'T been able to watch Wycombe quite so often this season as I am down in Southampton at university but the times, I have seen them, excluding the first month or two, I have been very impressed.

The two seasons after that heart-breaking day at Wembley I think it's fair to say weren't the most exciting.

We were struggling for goals and apart from that FA Cup run where we played Aston Villa in the third round it was a fairly dull and average season.

The next season was better. We had an even better cup run and sitting in the away end of White Hart Lane when Garry Thompson headed home in the 87th minute, along with falling five rows of seats in front, I really thought we were going to hold on and get a famous FA Cup win.

That brings me onto last season. What a season.

I remember standing in the terrace as 2017 was coming to an end when Lee Angol flicked in a late winner for Mansfield, I said to my old man on the way home that we'll do well to get play-offs. How wrong I was.

Five months down the line, this time in shorts and t-shirt, I stood in the terrace as Matty Bloomfield squeezed his shot in at the near post to cap off a truly memorable campaign which at Christmas I really didn't think was possible.

I was unable to attend may games to the start of this season and I'm sure like most were fearing the worst.

Surely, we weren't going to do what we did under Peter Taylor and Garry Waddock and make an immediate return to League Two.

But watching the game against Barnsley the other week I thought, 'wow, we've good a really good team here'.

It was the best I'd seen us play since we destroyed Southend at Adams Park 4-1 back in 2014/15.

Gareth Ainsworth has got a really good bunch of lads together and, with the pace we have upfront, we can cause problems against any team in this league. The lads have even given me the cheek to say to some of my uni mates that support championship teams that we'll be playing against them next season.

WANDERERS

Ainsworth's mixed emotions after draw

By Nicholas Tunney

WYCOMBE manager Gareth Ainsworth had mixed emotions at the final whistle after seeing his Wanderers let slip a two-goal lead in their 2-2 draw with Gillingham at the Priestfield Stadium.

First-half goals from Adam El-Abd and Nathan Tyson looked to have set the Blues on their way to another superb League 1 win.

However, chances to wrap up the game were wasted and the Gills fought back with goals from Tom Eaves and Josh Parker to grab a point they rarely looked like gaining.

Ainsworth said: "The story of the game is I would have taken a point before the match as this is a tough place to come for a lot of teams and Gillingham are in form.

"However, at half-time I wasn't going to settle for a point at all. I thought we were well worth the three points.

"We had the lion's share of the chances and we had more shots on target than them. I thought we were devastating in the first half with some of our forward play and we deserved our two goals.

"Second half, I have to give credit to Gillingham and they did well to come back and they showed good heart.

"However, it was a couple of sloppy mistakes from us and I am disappointed with that. The first goal looked offside which is hugely disappointing but you get that against you sometimes.

"We have to roll our sleeves up and go again next week. Somebody has



Gareth Ainsworth was pleased with the performance Adam El-Abd scored the first goal against Gills

just said in my dressing room that would be a great point if we can win next week against Wimbledon and that is a true statement."

Wycombe had countless chances to kill off the game but Gillingham were indebted to goalkeeper Tomas Holy for keeping them in it.

Ainsworth added: "Fred Onyedima was through one-on-one in the second half and their keeper pulled off a fantastic save. He pulled off a

superb save from Randell Williams at the end of the game too.

"He was the busier keeper and he made some good saves and they took the two chances we gifted them.

"A point at Gillingham isn't such a bad point and overall I am pleased we didn't lose the game. I am proud of the group who were told they didn't have enough fight to stay up this season."

Ainsworth also praised the impact

of in-form midfield duo Dominic Gape and Curtis Thompson during the match.

He added: "They were fantastic. Everyone sees what the players do on the ball but there is plenty of work to do off the ball.

"We will keep improving as a team and I will work my socks off with everyone to keep going and keep making this team better and my aim is to stay in this league."



WYCOMBE: Striker hails 'phenomenal' first half Tyson 'disappointed' with Gills point

WYCOMBE forward Nathan Tyson said the side were bitterly disappointed that they couldn't hold on for a deserved victory as they squandered a 2-0 lead to draw 2-2 against Gillingham.

Tyson grabbed his first goal this term with a clinical finish to give the Blues a two-goal cushion before the home side came back after the break to claim a share of the spoils.

Despite another excellent Wycombe performance, Tyson explained the team were despondent and held his hands up for the Gills equaliser.

He said: "We are very disappointed.

"I made a mistake for the second goal which is unlike me. The guy got a good run on me which I am disappointed with and I apologised to the lads and the gaffer.

"We conceded a sloppy first goal and that got them up. After the first

half performance, they shouldn't have been anywhere near us but we are still unbeaten and it is a point away from home and it is something we can build upon.

"I thought we were phenomenal in the first half. I thought everyone played really well and Adam (El-Abd) got his goal and we were glad to get the point in the end."

On a personal level, Tyson bagged his first of an injury-hit season so far and he was delighted to get on the scoresheet.

He added: "It is good to get off the mark after such a slow start to the season in terms of injury.

"It is great to be out there and the gaffer put me in the starting line-up which was great.

"It is one of those things, if you take your foot off the gas you will get bitten at this level.

"It says it all. We are disappointed to draw but on a good run."



Nathan Tyson bemoaned the fact Gillingham came back for a draw

THE BIG MATCH: No fresh injuries for Wanderers

WANDERERS boss Gareth Ainsworth has no new injury concerns ahead of a hectic Christmas schedule of four league games in 10 days.

The Blues host Wimbledon this Saturday (3pm) before long away trips to Burton Albion on Boxing Day and Scunthorpe on December 29 before a home game on New Year's Day against Coventry City.

Ainsworth is delighted he has pretty much a full squad to choose from, although defender Darius Charles is a little bit behind the recovered injured party.

A full squad clean of injuries presents a tricky selection poser ahead

of Saturday's match.

He said: "Fortunately, we have no new injury issues from last weekend, which is good.

"We are weeks closer with Adebayo Akinfenwa and Matt Bloomfield which is really good and they are out in the training pitch now.

"It is up to me whether I stick them in the squad and the team for tomorrow. Obviously, Bayo with his AFC Wimbledon connection has been targeting this game, which is fantastic.

"I am not giving anything away but we have a good squad to choose from tomorrow now, which is very pleasing for me ahead of a run of games."



Darius Charles is getting closer to full fitness

WYCOMBE: Chairboys skipper prides himself on clean sheets El-Abd: Goalscoring is a bonus

By Oliver White

WYCOMBE captain and centre half Adam El-Abd admitted he doesn't practice his shooting in training despite another impressive goal in last weekend's draw against Gillingham.

El-Abd thumped in a half-volley that strikers Adebayo Akinfenwa and Nathan Tyson would have been proud of, but despite equaling his best goalscoring tally for a season, he insists his main focus is always on defending.

He said "Goalscoring is a bonus, I pride myself on clean sheets and how you perform from a defensive aspect, if the defenders can chip in with the odd goal it's a bonus.

"They've come like London buses with two in fairly quick succession after a long time without one, I'll take it but first and foremost I'm a defender and pride myself on that."

The defender admitted he leaves the goal scoring to the forwards in training, focusing on his defensive work, but if the opportunity is there, he isn't afraid of a crack on goal.

He added: "The strikers go off and do the finishing in training and I go and do some defensive and attacking heading, that's the side of things we work on."

Wanderers went two goals up in an excellent first half display, but a second half fight back from the Gills meant the points were shared but the skipper is optimistic going into the busy festive fixtures starting this Saturday at home to AFC Wimbledon.

He said: "We're all positive going into the Christmas period, we've got three or four good games for us that start on Saturday with Wimbledon, they're bottom of the league but they have a very good squad and I'm sure they will climb the table."



Adam El-Abd equalled his best goals tally for a season against Gillingham

SPORT

Rugby
Beaconsfield
suffer defeat
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Wanderers
Tyson reflects
on Gills draw
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Ainsworth has massive respect for Wimbledon

Blues boss prepared for very difficult test



Ainsworth hopes his side make it seven league wins in a row at Adams Park

By Nicholas Tunney

WYCOMBE manager Gareth Ainsworth is wary of the threat of AFC Wimbledon as his side entertain League One's bottom side at Adams Park tomorrow (kick off 3pm).

AFC Wimbledon have endured an extremely tough season so far, with club legend Neal Ardley losing his job and being replaced by Wally Downes.

The Dons have lost seven games in a row on the road in League One and come into this game having

lost 2-0 to Charlton last weekend but Ainsworth admits that his side have to keep focused, despite their highly impressive form in recent weeks, with wins against promotion hopefuls Barnsley and Peterborough the highlights.

He said: "How often do we see teams get out of a bad run and end it against your side?"

"Bradford have been on a bad run and they go and beat Walsall 4-0 last weekend so there is no way we are going to take this game any other way than the same as Sun-

derland, same as Barnsley, same as Gillingham.

"We are approaching this as a League One fixture with huge respect for a team who have done fantastically.

"This team is the Wimbledon I used to play for, definitely. It is the Wimbledon in south-west London and it is the Wimbledon who have fought their way back up through the leagues.

"I am hoping we can put a good performance in against them. We have had tricky times against them

at home with a lot of draws against each other.

"It is definitely going to be a tough game and Wally Downes is bringing a new era to it and we don't want to be the first scalp of that new era.

"We have been working really hard this week to work on what we can do to break Wimbledon and what we can do to stay solid and stay in the game at all times.

"It is going to be an interesting one but I am expecting nothing more than a full-blooded battle as always in League One."

Meakin: A great experience

Beaconsfield Town

BEACONSFIELD Town manager Gary Meakin felt his side gave a good account of themselves against Leyton Orient in the FA Trophy on Saturday, despite a 4-0 defeat to the Vanorama National League leaders.

The Rams were only 1-0 down after 55 minutes before Orient stepped up a gear to hit three more goals and give the scoreline a flattering look to it.

However, Meakin was pleased overall with how his charges had played.

He said: "We did OK. It wasn't like they had a loads and loads of chances. We were well in the game at 1-0 but they had the extra class in the end.

"It was a good experience for everyone involved."

They followed that up with another defeat, this time in the Southern Premier League Division South as they lost 2-1 to Harrow Borough, with Marvin Morgan giving the Rams the lead.

However, Meakin felt his side were very unlucky to lose and praised the performance of his side just three days after that Orient match.

He added: "We played very well and a draw would have been the very least we deserved.

"We missed two open goals and their winner was a handball. We tired towards the end of the game on a very heavy pitch but overall I was pleased with how we played."

Beaconsfield now have a hectic schedule over Christmas and Meakin commented: "We have quite a few injuries and we need to apply ourselves properly."

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