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- Man left for dead in town centre hit-and-run

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NEWS

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COMMENT

With
**NICHOLAS
TUNNEY**

Blues to bounce back



WYCOMBE'S League One clash against Doncaster Rovers on Saturday should be a cracker.

Wanderers have been brought back down to earth with a bump in recent weeks after a stellar run had pushed them to the fringes of the play-offs.

That run in November and early December saw some magnificent football being played and the Blues more than matched the biggest sides in the division.

The last four matches have shown just how competitive this division is and the mantra that anyone can beat anyone on their day in this league really does ring true.

The Blues faced teams in an around them in the past four games and I don't think they did things a lot differently. The effort was there as always. They just came up against teams who were close to their best on the day and Wycombe were slightly off colour.

The Scunthorpe game was one that the Chairboys should have got at least a point from and the 2-0 defeat against Coventry was a very tight affair. I don't think anyone could have moaned if the game ended up 0-0 such was the rarity of goalmouth action in either box.

Wanderers have a chance to get back into the groove against their opponents, Doncaster. Donny have been very impressive this season and the 3-0 defeat at the Keepmoat Stadium in August really was a rude awakening for Wycombe and how they need to play and progress in League One. I actually think that match was a real godsend for the Blues. They played against a very impressive outfit who won the League Two title in 2017 and have since become an established League One club with aspirations in a higher division.

They have a host of dangerous players, with the likes of John Marquis banging in the goals, but Wanderers have a brilliant record against the teams battling for promotion.

They have beaten Barnsley and Peterborough, drawn with Portsmouth, Sunderland and Luton and were very unfortunate against Charlton.

The Blues seem to relish the challenge of playing against those teams near the top and I believe Wanderers can definitely get a result.

It was also great to see Curtis Thompson pen a new deal to stay at Adams Park until 2021. Week in and week out from the press box, Thompson seems to get better and better and he has arguably been the player of the season for Wycombe so far. Another sensational signing by Gareth.

Wycombe Wanderers

Last five league games:
DLLLL



VS



Doncaster Rovers

Last five league games:
WDLWW

OPPOSITION VIEW



1. Ian Lawlor

17. Matty Blair

12. Tom Anderson

6. Andy Butler

3. Danny Andrew

11. Ali Crawford

8. Ben Whiteman

15. Herbie Kane

26. James Coppinger

7. Mallik Wilks

9. John Marquis

THIS week's Opposition View comes from Liam Hoden of the Doncaster Free Press and Sheffield Star.

How have Doncaster fared since the last meeting between the sides?

They have lost one in 12 matches, winning nine of those, a run which has seen them reach the fourth round of the FA Cup and move back into the top six.

Is promotion a definite aim now?

It is. At the start of the season the aim is to have a solid push for a top six finish and to a degree, that remains the aim. Grant McCann repeatedly says Rovers are aiming for the stars but if they don't quite make it then they'll have had a good season.

John Marquis continues to bang in the goals. Are you worried he might leave?

I know plenty of supporters are. He's showing again this season that he is one of the top strikers at the level and would have few problems making an impact in the Championship.

Any potential signings this month?

All their business seems to be done, for in-comings at least. They signed highly-rated forward Kieran Sadler in December after he left Cork City.

With loan extensions sorted for Liverpool midfielder Herbie Kane and Leeds striker Mallik Wilks, that should be Rovers done and dusted for

January, barring any unforeseen injuries or departures.

Prediction?

It's difficult not to be highly optimistic about Rovers currently. So I'll go for a 3-1 win for Doncaster.



Liam Hoden

In the CHAIR

Wanderers chairman Trevor Stroud



Trevor Stroud

FIRSTLY a Happy New Year to all Wanderers fans and also to the readers of the Bucks Free Press and followers of sport in our local area.

For us at Adams Park, 2019 represents a year of potentially major and exciting change, as we pursue discussions with two American businessmen who are seeking to acquire a majority stake in the football club.

As you'll have read about, the board of directors of Wycombe Wanderers Trust have recommended Bill Luby and Jim Collis as the best option for taking the club forward, and invited them to meet Trust members back in November, to explain their backgrounds and their vision for the club.

In the two months that have passed, we have continued our discussions with Bill and Jim and will be holding a meeting on Monday January 28 for all Legacy Members to attend; Legacy Members are Trust members who have held a season ticket for four or more years.

At this meeting, at the Hub (Union Baptist Church on Easton Street, High Wycombe), Bill and Jim will present their proposal for investment, and then a period of voting will open, giving members the opportunity to vote in favour or against the proposal.

As we are talking about selling a majority stake in the club, 75 per cent of the 810 Legacy Members have to vote in favour. The important message is that a non-vote is a no vote and it would be criminal if apathy decided the future of our football club.

It is planned to issue details of the proposal before the first meeting, and there will be ample time to ask questions, at the meeting, as well as online during the voting period.

We are entering one of the most important phases in the history of our Football Club; it is your Club and it is vital that you understand what is being proposed.

We pursue an upturn in form on the pitch, and are confident that Gareth and the team will be back to winning ways after a break.

WANDERERS

Tyson looks forward to facing old employers

By Nicholas Tunney

WYCOMBE forward Nathan Tyson is relishing the prospect of facing his old club Doncaster Rovers on Saturday.

Tyson scored 18 goals in 71 games for Rovers between 2014 and 2016 and he revealed before joining Donny, he was close to retiring from the game.

He said: "My first season there was fantastic. I almost retired before I went there but my wife said you don't want to retire and my time at the club made me fall in love with football again.

"The fans were fantastic with me but it was a shame I had to leave because of relegation. I have great memories there and am glad that they are doing well but come Saturday, that is all of the window and if I am selected and I score I will be sliding on my knees."

Wycombe's record against those sides in and around the promotion chase has been superb this season and Tyson is hoping they can replicate those performances on Saturday.

He added: "It is not anything that is new for us. We aren't playing against Man City. Don't get me wrong, they are a very good side.

"They play good football and when we went there they beat us fairly but we are at home and our home form is good and I am confident we can get a result.

"The game at the Keepmoat showed the level we need to be at and to achieve the 55 points. We need to make sure we are up to their standards and it was a life lesson for



Tyson faces his old side on Saturday

us and since that game we have progressed well."

The Chairboys go into Saturday's match on the back of four straight defeats but Tyson explained the feeling is excellent around the camp, which he puts down to Gareth Ains-

worth and his staff. He said: "I have said before their man management is fantastic. They know each and every player and they know their personalities.

"To deal with everyone's personalities is not an easy job to do and

it rubs off on the players. What is done is done and we look to the present and the future and they have done everything they can to get our heads right and take the gaffer and Dobbo take pride in the job at hand."

WYCOMBE: Goalfest keeps Chairgirls dream alive

Ladies annihilate Wokingham 9-0

WYCOMBE Wanderers Ladies kicked off 2019 with a 9-0 demolition of Wokingham & Emmbrook at Spring Lane on Sunday afternoon, keeping them level on points with league leaders Moneyfields.

The Chairgirls were three goals up at the break and ran riot after half-time, with Christina O'Connor and Tara Woodward both bagging hat-tricks while Natalie Barette, Chloe Ball and Chante Inniss were also on target.

An early goal from the Blues saw Natalie Barette head the ball in the back of the net from a corner from Christina O'Connor. The attacking play did not produce another goal until 20 minutes, O'Connor repossessing the ball in the attacking third, and feeding Tara Woodward

who finished with a low finish. O'Connor, who would complete a hat-trick of shots from outside the box, added the third.

The second half started well but the pace dropped, O'Connor and Woodward extended the lead before 60 minutes. The defence stayed alert and started some good attacking moves.

An injury to the impressive Bonnie Messitt involved a switch in shape and the introduction of Chloe Ball and Rachel Southby which exerted more pressure on the visitors' goal. The Blues bagged four goals in 16 minutes from Chante Inniss, Ball, O'Connor and Woodward completing her hat-trick.

Moneyfields and third-placed Abingdon also collected three



Wycombe Ladies swept to a 9-0 win over Wokingham & Emmbrook

points each to keep the title race wide open, with both sides having games in hand over the Chairgirls. Next up is a League Cup quarter-

final tie against Premier Division side New Milton Town on Sunday again at the Amersham & Wycombe College.

THE BIG MATCH: Samuel back in Donny contention

WYCOMBE Wanderers have been handed a boost ahead of their match against Doncaster Rovers on Saturday with the news that striker Alex Samuel is likely to be fit for the game.

Samuel has been one of the Chairboys' star players this season but went off with a serious-looking injury in the New Year's Day defeat to Coventry.

However, manager Gareth Ainsworth revealed that Samuel looks set to play a part at Adams Park on Saturday as he has a near fully-fit squad at his disposal.

He said: "Alex looks like he could be involved in the squad on Saturday.

"I think the week off has helped him. It was a muscle in his stomach that he has pulled somehow so I think we will be seeing him feature on Saturday.

"He has been absolutely outstanding for us and I think he has got over this injury which is great.

"Apart from Darius Charles, everyone else is fit. Bayo [Adebayo Akinfenwa] and Blooms [Matt Bloomfield] are back and fit and with the loan players going back it really needs to be a full squad.

"We only have 17 or 18 outfield players now but we are looking good in the fitness front."



Alex Samuel is likely to be back for Doncaster

WANDERERS: The opposition team news ahead of Saturday Rovers boss gets Niall Mason boost

By Liam Hoden

DONCASTER Rovers manager Grant McCann has revealed that Niall Mason could be involved in the squad for this weekend's trip to Adams Park – but the game will come too soon for Joe Wright.

The Blues face Rovers, who have scored 69 goals in 35 league and cup games this season, at Adams Park tomorrow.

Both Mason and Wright are back in full training after their respective injuries but at different stages of their comebacks.

McCann declined the opportunity to field the defenders in Rovers U23s' clash with Notts County, deeming it too soon for both.

But they are set to feature for the U23s next Tuesday when Rotherham United visit Cantley Park.

"They're both back training," McCann said.

"The game on Tuesday came too quick. Could they have played? Yes. Is it worth me risking them? No.

"We'll look to see where they are at the weekend.

"Niall possibly will be okay to be involved at the weekend, Joe possibly not.

"We'll look for the game the week after to try and get them some game time in that before they're ready to go."

McCann says Wright will need more time than Mason due to the length of his absence.

The centre half suffered an ankle injury in early November while Mason damaged his toe in early December.

"Joe has been out for ten weeks and he needs a couple of weeks in training and a game before he's ready."



Grant McCann hopes to have his key duo back for Saturday

SPORT

Hockey
Ansell focuses
on future
- Page 55



Football
Williams happy
with Penn form
- Page 59



Ainsworth: We need to add to our best players

Blues gaffer looks to get January signings



Ainsworth hopes to get a couple of signings in this month

By Nicholas Tunney

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth admitted he is hoping to get a couple of signings in this month as he looks to bolster his squad ahead of their objective to survive in League One.

The Blues currently sit in 14th place in the division, an excellent effort despite losing their last four games.

With an 11-day break between games, Ainsworth has used the time to prepare as much as possible for the tough contest against

Doncaster on Saturday and explained that he wants to make signings after the departure of three loanees after the Coventry defeat.

He said: "Body-wise we are now a little bit down and we have been here before but I have always said I would rather have a small number of players who are quality than a big number who aren't up to the task."

"We have to cut our cloth accordingly with what we are. We may not be able to fill the bench but we

would rather have that quality player than just sheer numbers.

"To add a couple of bodies will be important. I won't just bring anyone in. They have to fit straight in and bed into League One as there are no reserves here and no practice games, it is straight in and ready to go."

"There is plenty going on behind the scenes. My staff are phenomenal. We are getting to the training ground when it is dark and leaving when it is dark as we want to get the right players in."

This weekend promises to be an

absorbing contest against Rovers. Back in August at the Keepmoat Stadium, Wanderers lost 3-0 to Grant McCann's side and Ainsworth believes that loss stood them in good stead.

He added: "Doncaster are a very good side and it will be a tough game, no doubt about it."

"The game in August helped us realise what this league was about. They have a very strong side with the likes of John Marquis."

"I am expecting a good performance."

Thompson signs new extension

Wycombe Wanderers

WYCOMBE Wanderers midfielder Curtis Thompson has extended his stay at Adams Park until 2021.

The former Notts County man signed a short-term contract in the summer after playing a part in the successful run-in towards promotion last season.

Thompson has now established himself as a regular in the Wanderers midfield with some outstanding performances, leaving Ainsworth in no doubt that the 25-year-old was deserving of a new deal.

Ainsworth said: "It is fantastic news."

"Curtis has been outstanding since he broke into the team and we knew he was a great player at County and he lost his way slightly."

"He has the heart of a lion and you can see how much he loves it here and it is a great acquisition for us."

"We are working hard to get some players in and Curtis is a very welcome addition for us."

Thompson added: "I am delighted and glad to get it done and to be here for another two and a half years."

"I enjoyed it when I initially joined. The lads here are great and they are wonderful people and I am really enjoying my time here."

"We were expected to be near the bottom and the boys have shown we can compete in this league. I am really enjoying playing with Gapey in the midfield and I am loving playing in a team that works really hard for each other."

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