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Then and Now
Look back to see how
village has changed

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The big game
Match preview as Blues
prepare for rivals

See Sport

INSIDE • 20 pages of Property • 8 pages of Freetime • 3 pages of Nostalgia • 9 pages of Sport

MUM'S TRIBUTE TO TRAGIC STUDENT



My baby girl is gone.
No more birthdays with us.
No more Christmas Days.
No more family time all
together. No family should
endure that. No sisters should
have that special girl taken.
No brother should have his
idol taken from him. No dad
should have his princess
taken. No grandparent
should lose their first-born
grandchild. No mother
should have to watch her
family go through all of that...

'LIBBY'S GONE FOREVER'

Libby Squire 1998 - 2019

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Brexiteer MP
threatens to quit



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Tory targeted in
'EU ambush'



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Police warning
over attack fears



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COMMENT

With
**NICHOLAS
TUNNEY**



IT has been a quiet week or two for me without Wycombe playing last

weekend. No press conference last Thursday and no game on the Saturday meant a decrease in pages and a slightly quieter working week.

However, that was just the calm before the storm as Wycombe have eight massive games to stave off the threat of relegation and stay in League One.

Speaking to Gareth in the past few weeks, he believes that staying in this division will be a bigger achievement than getting promotion last season.

I firmly agree with him. The budgets flying around this league are astronomical and clubs like Sunderland can spend £4m on a striker like Will Grigg.

Wycombe have had to use the loan market to their advantage as well as free transfers to try and compete this season and I think Ainsworth has done a monumental job so far.

Forget the form for the moment, Ainsworth has reiterated time and again about a relegation battle and they are firmly in that. Even though they are struggling, I still

think a lot of fans would be pleased that they aren't in the bottom four.

The euphoria of being on the verge of the play-offs as now long gone and Wycombe are now entrenched in a 12-team war to keep their place in this mad league.

It was great to see Gareth on Thursday. He is always positive, even in defeat, but he was buzzing at the press conference and that will surely rub off on his players.

That infectious enthusiasm is still there and as long as it is, I believe Wycombe will be absolutely fine this season.

The run, albeit tricky, is favourable. They play Portsmouth and Charlton at home after the Oxford game but their record against the top sides at Adams Park is fantastic so they should hold no fears.

Then two big away games against Southend and Rochdale with both sides fighting hard. If Wycombe can get two wins from the next three games, they will reach 50 points and one more win should secure safety.

It sounds easy when you put it

like that but it really isn't and Gareth and his players know you have to work hard for wins in this league.

However, recent performances have been, on the whole, good and they deserved to beat both Sunderland and Shrewsbury in recent weeks. In the end, they could only muster one point from those two fixtures.

I back Gareth to get his team fully focused for Oxford and think they can get back to winning ways!

COYB!



WANDERERS



VS



OXFORD UTD

OPPOSITION VIEW

AHEAD of the big match against Oxford United at the Kassam Stadium, we catch up with Oxford Mail reporter, Dave Pritchard, to get his views on how Oxford's season has panned out.

How would you rate Oxford's season so far?

Overall, it's been a disappointment.

Having been dragged into the fringes of a relegation battle at the end of last season, this campaign was supposed to be different.

But several factors combined for a disastrous start which piled the pressure on from the opening weeks of the season.

The outlook is brighter now – and providing they finish the job and stay up they will deserve some credit, but few will look back on this term with much fondness.

There has been an upturn in form in recent games. What do you put that down to?

Keeping things simple.

For much of the season United have attempted to out-play teams. But while they have had talented players, a lack of options up front has proved costly and opposition teams have picked them off.

A 4-2 defeat at Accrington Stanley last month appears to have marked a change in approach, with substance preferred to style.

In the six games since going back to basics they have conceded just twice – and while they have only scored five goals the 13 points gained have transformed their position in the table.

Are you still confident the team can stay in League One?

After four wins in the last six games, things are looking much better.

They should now go on and secure their status, but given the way they have kept slipping backwards after threatening to break

free this season, no-one at United will be completely confident until they win a couple more games.

Who are your dangermen?

Ahmed Kashi has been influential in recent weeks, having taken time to force his way in after a January loan move from Troyes.

The midfielder played for Karl Robinson at Charlton Athletic and has been an asset with his range of passing and cool decision-making.

Out wide, Gavin Whyte's pace has made him a marked man in League One. He missed last weekend's win at Coventry due to an international call-up for Northern Ireland, but a minor niggle kept him sidelined so if he is available this weekend the winger will be fresh.

Likely line-up?

Eastwood; Long, Nelson, Dickie, Ruffels; Kashi, Brannagan, Henry; Whyte, Sinclair, Graham.



Ahmed Kashi

In the CHAIR



Tom Jarvis pens his Wycombe thoughts as he leaves the club



Tom Jarvis (right)

SATURDAY'S game at Oxford United will be my last as digital content manager for Wycombe Wanderers after three special seasons at Adams Park.

I never thought somewhere over 200 miles away from where I live would instantly feel like home but such is the culture of this special club I instantly felt an emotional connection to the place.

I arrived at Wanderers in the latter stages of 2016/17 to work with the legendary Matt Cecil after previously working at Southend United, and my first experience at the club was certainly a memorable one as I was grilled by former chairman Andrew Howard in my interview (just a tip - don't say inexperience is a weakness to him).

After narrowly missing out on the play-offs by a single point in my first season, myself and Matt looked forward to a summer of building momentum on our social channels about backing the boys for a promotion push. Top seven was the PR line but that was quickly extinguished when an excitable Luke O'Nien sat down and said he wanted to win the title to the Bucks Free Press on the first day of pre-season.

The cat was out of the bag, League One was the desired destination and what a ride it was to get there. The greatest anniversary present I could have given my now fiancée Hannah was a seat in the press box for Nathan Tyson's late winner against Crewe Alexandra. Marcus Bean gave me one of the greatest moments I have ever witnessed watching this beautiful game with his strike vs Carlisle, and walking past Danny Hylton's glum face in the tunnel after the 3-2 win at Kenilworth Road still brings a smile to mine today.

Of course I do have to mention that day at Chesterfield though, when Sir Dominic Gape scored I ran the length of the gantry in pure elation before finding Nick Tunney and Phil Catchpole on commentary.

I have been so proud of what the team and club have achieved in its first season back in League One in over six years, and I know that Gareth and the boys have what it takes to finish this five-year plan I bought into two years ago by securing their status in this division.

WANDERERS

Robinson wary of Wanderers' threat

By Nicholas Tunney

OXFORD United boss Karl Robinson has explained that he is well aware of Wycombe's threat ahead of this weekend's M40 derby at the Kassam Stadium.

Robinson's men have pulled away from grave danger, having won their last two games and conceding just two goals from their last six matches.

The Liverpoolian has highlighted a few Wanderers players who will be a threat to his side on Saturday and added he didn't know if the break would do the Chairboys good.

He said: "They've had two weeks to build into this game with the Charlton game getting called off, so you don't know where they're going to be at physically. I think sometimes it's hard to have a break. We just have to make sure we look after ourselves. We know what a good Wycombe team is all about.

"They're a good footballing team as well. They've got players from Man City on one wing and McCarthy who's from Barnsley last year and did a fantastic job. Bloomfield's a good player, full of energy, Curtis in midfield we know what he can do because Shaun Derry has worked with him. They've got good players all over the pitch and have a competitive nature. So we're not saying they have a tag of being aggressive and that's how they get results, they have many other parts of their game that we know they can beat us.

"We'll try to reduce their strengths as much as we can and work very hard."



OXFORD: Whyte could make his return from injury Dangerman could be back for U's

OXFORD United could have winger Gavin Whyte back this weekend to avoid any risk of the winger missing the run-in.

The 23-year-old reported a thigh injury last week while away on international duty, where he did not feature in either of Northern Ireland's two Euro 2020 qualifiers.

He is one of three senior players struggling to be fit for the home game with Wycombe Wanderers in Sky Bet League One.

But while the U's could do with an extra attacking option, head coach Karl Robinson is reluctant to gamble on his fitness.

He said: "We think Saturday may be just a little bit too soon (for Whyte).

"It proves it's not a drastic one, we've just got to be careful because if you force him to play it could become a rest of the season job.

"We've just got to be a little bit

calm and have a bit of resilience within our thought process really, even though you want him to be available for this game.

"It's a big game, but sometimes you have to take yourself out of that situation."

Jordan Graham (knee) and Rob Dickie (calf) are also doubts for the clash with the Chairboys.

Robinson said: "We think maybe only one of that three might make it, we've just got to wait and see how it all settles down."

One player who won't be playing for the Blues is winger Rob Hall who is still returning to fitness.

Robinson added: "Rob Hall's got the biggest four months of his life now - it's as simple as that.

"He needs to get in a physical state that his body recovers and heals to allow him to perform to the best of his ability.

"He's going to have to change."



Gavin Whyte

THE BIG MATCH: Ainsworth has lots of options

WYCOMBE manager Gareth Ainsworth admitted he has pretty much a clean bill of health as he prepares his side for their crunch derby clash against Oxford on Saturday.

With two weeks between games, it has given the squad a chance to shake off any niggles ahead of the all-important fixture and Ainsworth was pleased that nearly the whole squad was available, bar Nathan Tyson who is still suspended following his sending off against Sunderland.

Ainsworth said: "We are looking pretty good for Saturday.

"Darius [Charles] is the long-term and it is looking like he will be

injured for a few more weeks yet but the rest of them are fighting for their places.

"We have one or two knocks that have carried on through the season and the summer, people will be able to rest these and maybe have little procedures done here and there, but on the whole we are looking good.

"Luke Bolton, who came off with a suspected hamstring problem at Shrewsbury, is looking quite lively and hopefully can play some part this weekend.

"We are strong going into this game so I am really pleased about that."

The game kicks off at 3pm.



Tyson is banned for the Oxford game

WYCOMBE: Defender eyes derby day success at Oxford United Jacobson relishing match return

WYCOMBE defender Joe Jacobson explained the players are raring to go after a two week break as they prepare for this weekend's six-pointer against Oxford United.

The team were due to play Charlton Athletic at home last weekend but the Addicks have a plethora of internationals in their squad so the game has been rearranged for April 9.

Jacobson commented that the squad have been working really hard in the run-up to the game and now they are itching to get back out on the pitch.

He said: "It is strange time to not have a game at this time of the season. Normally there are loads of games going on with people playing midweek and catching up on games missed.

"For us, we have had a two week break and it has been a chance to work hard on the training pitch and look back on what has gone wrong over the past couple of months and do some team building stuff that we did last week.

"It has been a good two weeks but we are desperate now to get a game under our belts and no bigger game than a derby."

The away form has been a concern with just three wins on the road all season but Jacobson admitted that he wasn't too worried, especially with some of the results they have picked up on their travels.

He added: "For the whole time I have been here, over the past four or five years, the away form has been stronger suit for us but this season it has turned around.

"We have picked up some decent points away from home so I don't think there is anything to worry about with that.

"We need to make sure Adams Park becomes a fortress again like it was earlier in the season and make sure we are really hard to beat."



Jacobson hopes the break can bring a change in fortune

SPORT

Rugby
Wycombe lose
to Reading
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Golf
Gough wins
prestigious gong
- Page 52



Ainsworth hails fans ahead of Oxford clash

Big turnout expected in Oxford away end



Ainsworth is buzzing ahead of the Oxford game

By Nicholas Tunney

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth hailed the Chairboys fans as a predicted 1,800 are likely to make the trip to Oxford on Saturday for a mouthwatering M40 derby at the Kassam Stadium.

Both teams are battling to avoid relegation from League One with Oxford having an upturn in form in recent weeks and Wycombe coming back from a break in the fixtures last weekend.

Ainsworth knows the importance of the clash and thanked the fans, who will be turning out in their droves on Saturday afternoon.

He said: "The fans are awesome. I can't thank them enough and it will be a great occasion.

"Our fans are fantastic and they are really behind the boys. I have had some great comments and all I have to do is turn up at Oxford and see the numbers.

"You don't get that if they are not with the team and not all pushing for the completion of this five-year

plan in place.

"I thank the fans in advance and I promise we will give our all and we will in the seven games after that as well."

This game represents Wanderers' first since their last-gasp loss against Shrewsbury on March 16 and Ainsworth admitted that training has been spot on in the two weeks since that match.

He added: "It has been very tough and the boys had Saturday and Sunday off and that's been it.

"They have been in the rest of the

time and they have been working hard. It gives us a good week or so to prepare for Oxford."

Oxford have only conceded two goals in their past six games and are second in the League One form table and Ainsworth is under no illusion as to how difficult the game will be.

He said: "They have some very good players and it will be a tough test.

"However, we embrace tough tests. You only have to look at those games against the likes of Sunderland and Portsmouth."

Heathens suffer cup heartbreak

Ardley United 1-0 Flackwell Heath

FLACKWELL Heath crashed out of the Perpetua Press Floodlit Cup on Monday night after losing their semi-final tie 1-0 against Ardley United at the Nolans Oil Ground.

The game started at a furious pace and on six minutes, Flackwell had a huge chance as Mo Ceesay was slotted through with just the Ardley 'keeper to beat. Ceesay could only hit the Ardley stopper who then recovered well to save the second strike.

Ardley then began to put the pressure on and Aaron Watkins was forced to tip over a long-range strike. Ten minutes later Ardley played a short corner which Flackwell reacted poorly to and were lucky as the resulting shot hit an Ardley player and went out for a goal kick.

On 47 minutes against the run of play, Ardley took a quick throw-in and their tricky central midfielder slid a pass to Troy Bryan who finished from just inside the Flackwell penalty area.

Flackwell looked for an equaliser and the best chance came from a free kick which was headed towards goal and cleared off the line by an Ardley defender. The Flackwell bench erupted in celebration as they thought they'd scored. The referee and his officials waved it away.

The final whistle went and the Flackwell players sunk to the ground. They'd thrown the kitchen sink at it and Ardley United had answered all their questions. Flackwell's next fixture sees them take on Bishops Cleeve on Saturday afternoon in the Hellenic League Premier Division (3pm).

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