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CRIME

PC in court over on-duty teen sex



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POLITICS

Dominic Grieve faces Brexit axe



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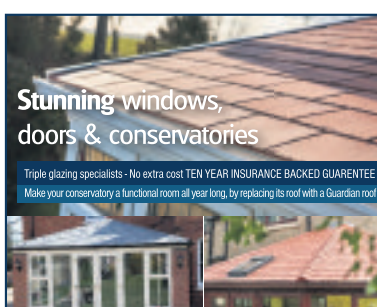
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Full story: Page 7



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GALLERY: Oxford 2-1 Wycombe



El-Abd steers home the opener



Fans celebrate



Jacobson fouls Browne



Alex Samuel wins the penalty



Wycombe celebrate El-Abd's goal. Photos: David Fleming



Wycombe defend for their lives



Ruffels celebrates



Dominic Gape in attendance



In the CHAIR



BFP sports reporter Nick Tunney



Nick Tunney

IT should be a humdinger on Saturday at Adams Park against the mighty Portsmouth.

A lot has happened since the last game there, an unfortunate 3-1 defeat against Accrington. That does seem like a long time ago.

Wycombe have had two away games and an international break since that match and on the bare face of it, two defeats from two seems like two terrible losses.

However, with a bit more luck, both the games at Shrewsbury and Oxford could have been wins and we could be rejoicing in the fact that the relegation trapdoor is somewhat in the distance.

I was at the Kassam on Saturday and once again the Blues took the lead through Adam El-Abd. Oxford's equaliser 10 minutes later was about the only real chance I can remember for Oxford in the first half.

It was a tight affair in terms of possession, but I thought Wycombe looked comfortable and well-drilled and the front two of Akinfenwa and Samuel were causing the U's problems.

The pivotal moment was the missed penalty from Jacobson. As Gareth said, these things happen but you can't help but feel if that penalty went in, I think the Blues would have gone onto win the game comfortably.

The 94th minute winner from Josh Ruffles was an absolute gutwrencher, but probably easier than the Shrewsbury defeat to take as it was a wonder strike from a left-back. When things conspire against you, a left-back pops up with a strike Lionel Messi would have been proud of!

Wanderers are now back at Adams Park and face a tricky task to overcome Portsmouth. Pompey overcame Sunderland in an epic contest at Wembley in the Checkatrade Trophy final on Sunday, winning on penalties.

Kenny Jackett knows what it takes to get sides up from this division but Wycombe produced an excellent performance at Fratton Park in September to get a deserved 2-2 draw.

The home record against the big sides in this league is superb and Wycombe will be hoping to draw on those memories.

COYB!

WANDERERS

Wycombe get more Blues with late loss

By Nicholas Tunney

WYCOMBE Wanderers suffered more late heartbreak as they lost 2-1 to Oxford United in an action-packed game at the Kassam Stadium.

The M40 derby certainly lived up to its billing as both sides look to avoid the dreaded League One trapdoor.

Josh Ruffles got the winner with a wonder strike, curling the ball home right into the top corner to spark wild scenes.

Wanderers took the lead on 20 minutes when Adam El-Abd tapped home after Joe Jacobson's free kick was missed by Oxford keeper Simon Eastwood.

Oxford equalised 10 minutes later when Jerome Sinclair smashed home from close-range after excellent wing play from Marcus Browne.

After that, the best chance fell to Jacobson on 37 minutes but he hit a penalty wide of the target after the excellent Alex Samuel was fouled in the box by Rob Dickie before Ruffles' winner.

The first attempt on goal for Wanderers came on 13 minutes when Adebayo Akinfenwa expertly chested the ball down to Nick Freeman 20 yards out and his shot was deflected wide of the far post.

The Chairboys then took the lead on 20 minutes through El-Abd before Sinclair equalised.

A pivotal moment occurred on 37 minutes through Jacobson's missed penalty.

Wanderers had half-a-chance on 50 minutes when Jacobson's raking



El-Abd scored for the Chairboys

free kick found an unmarked Marcus Bean in the area but his free header went straight at Eastwood.

Oxford hit back and Dickie's header was cleared off the line on 59 minutes by Gape.

Up the other end a minute later, Akinfenwa's superb header smashed off the crossbar after a brilliant cross by Freeman.

Wycombe had a sniff on 89 minutes when Michael Harriman's

free kick was headed across goal by Akinfenwa but Paris Cowan-Hall couldn't quite latch onto it.

However, Ruffles had the final say to condemn Wycombe to 10 games without a win.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: Ma-Kalambay, McCarthy, El-Abd, Stewart, Jacobson (sub: Harriman, 57), Bean (sub: Bloomfield, 81), Thompson (sub: Cowan-Hall, 78), Gape, Freeman, Akinfenwa, Samu-

el: Subs: Allsop, Jombati, Kashket, Owens.

OXFORD UNITED: Eastwood, Long, Dickie, Nelson, Garbutt (sub: Sykes, 87), Kashi, Brannagan, Ruffles, Henry (sub: Mackie, 71), Browne (sub: Graham, 64), Sinclair: Subs: Stevens, Hanson, Mousinho, Lopes.

REFEREE: Simon Hooper
ATTENDANCE: 9,250 (Wycombe 1,716)

BLUES: Boss defends Jacobson for penalty miss Ainsworth bemoans really bad luck

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth believes his side deserved at least a point as they yet again conceded a last minute winner, losing 2-1 to Oxford United at the Kassam Stadium.

Ainsworth said: "There is no such thing as luck at the moment at the me. If there is, it is only bad luck we are getting.

"We have deserved a point here, maybe more. The missed penalty is going to be looked back on and hitting the bar.

"Moments and people are what is going to keep you in this division. We have the right people, I am sure of that. We just need to take those moments now and that will be enough to survive in this league.

"I thought Alex Samuel and Nick Freeman were excellent and didn't deserve to be on the losing side.

"We will brush ourselves down and I will pick the boys up and we

know these performances will turn into three points very soon."

Ainsworth also hailed the fans as 1,800 turned out at the Kassam to cheer their hearts out for the team.

He added: "I am blown away by the support.

"On a winless run like we are on, for them to turn up like that has made us proud. Our fans were absolutely brilliant and I was gutted for them and they have supported me from thick and thin."

Jacobson's missed penalty came at a pivotal moment in the game but Ainsworth defended his full-back for the effort.

He said: "It happens.

"It has happened at a bad time for us when we could really do with some luck but I am going to vilify Joe.

"He has been a fantastic servant for this club and he has played a big part in where we are sitting today."



Ainsworth was perplexed at conceding another late winner

THE BIG MATCH: Bolton and Tyson could be back

WITH the exception of defender Darius Charles, Wycombe boss Gareth Ainsworth is hoping to have a clean bill of health for Wanderers' clash against Portsmouth.

Nathan Tyson is back in contention having served his three-match suspension following his red card against Sunderland.

On-loan Manchester City winger Luke Bolton could also be back in the frame following an injury sustained against Shrewsbury.

Ainsworth said: "We are looking pretty good.

"We have had one or two little knocks and an illness during the

week but we are hoping everyone will be back for Saturday and have a good squad to pick from.

"Nathan Tyson is back from his suspension which is great and Luke Bolton is looking closer and closer to a return.

"We are hoping Saturday comes and we have a very strong squad to choose from."

Portsmouth boss Kenny Jackett has confirmed that former Wycombe loanee Bryn Morris is available again for Pompey.

Following on from the Portsmouth clash (3pm), Wycombe's next opponents are Charlton Athletic at home.



Luke Bolton could be in contention

WYCOMBE: Pompey boss says his side have to be at their best Jackett expecting a very tough test

PORTSMOUTH manager Kenny Jackett believes his side will take a lot of confidence into this weekend's match against Wycombe Wanderers at Adams Park.

Pompey won on penalties at Wembley on Sunday in their Checkatrade Trophy final clash with Sunderland and they are on a good run of form, sitting fourth in the league with eyes firmly set on finishing in the top two in League One.

Jackett said: "It was an excellent and unique day for us. The atmosphere was terrific and the players should take confidence out of that.

"It is confidence for us that you should take out of wins and we must make sure that complacency doesn't creep in on Saturday.

"The Wycombe game will be a different type of test, a different type of game but if we are going to be successful in it we need to apply ourselves to a very high standard to take the points.

"Confidence is hard earned in football and you have to back that up with hard work. We are respectful of Wycombe and it is a big occasion.

"We have 1,800 supporters that look to be going on Saturday, which is fantastic and we want to reward them."

Jackett is under no illusion that his team are in for a tricky test at Adams Park on Saturday, despite Wanderers' recent run.

He added: "You look at the overall story of their success in recent seasons and they are one of the sides looking over their shoulder."

"They will be looking to get the points on the board sooner rather than later to secure their League One status and they thrive on the big clubs coming to Adams Park.

"We understand and know it will be a big test for us on Saturday and if we are going to earn the points we have to be at our very best to beat Wycombe Wanderers."



Kenny Jackett says his Portsmouth side are in for a hard game on Saturday at Adams Park

SPORT

Boxing
Smith eyes
ninth win
- Page 80



Football
Marlow suffer
setback
- Page 84



Ainsworth: We need to remain switched on

High-flying Pompey up next for Wycombe



Ainsworth is hoping his side can end their winless run on Saturday

By Nicholas Tunney

WANDERERS manager Gareth Ainsworth urged his squad to be switched on in games until the very end as they bid to end their 10-match winless run this weekend against high-flying Portsmouth.

The Blues have lost their last two games in injury-time despite taking the lead and deserving of at least a point in both encounters against Shrewsbury and Oxford.

The Oxford winner was a wonder strike by full-back Josh Ruffels and

Ainsworth feels it is a lack of concentration that is costing his side points at the present time.

He said: "We saw against Oxford where we could be vulnerable and in training we are looking great and maybe it is a switching off at the end of games which is hurting us."

"It isn't fitness levels because we know we are a fit bunch and we go until the end and we score goals at the end."

"The mental side of the game in League One, you just have to be

much more switched on and these are tough things to work on.

"You can work all day on technique and all the physical side of things but the mental side and the emotional side is very tough to work on."

"You have to get the right players in to do these things."

"I think we have a fantastic squad and there are some very good teams in the last few minutes in this league and we just have to up our game in those last moments."

Portsmouth come into this game on the back of a win at Wembley

in the Checktrade Trophy final against Sunderland and Ainsworth is relishing pitting his wits against Kenny Jackett.

He added: "It is going to be a brilliant occasion but it is a game of football I want to win."

"It is great to have these teams coming here."

"We have matched these big sides and we have the capabilities of matching and beating teams in our league."

"I don't see why we can't compete with them."

Samuel relishing clash

Wycombe Wanderers

WYCOMBE forward Alex Samuel believes he and his team-mates can pose Portsmouth some real problems as they prepare to face Kenny Jackett's side tomorrow at Adams Park.

Although on a rocky run, Wycombe's form against League One's best sides at home has been superb, with only Coventry in the top half beating the Chairboys on their own patch this term.

The likes of Barnsley, Peterborough and Doncaster have all lost to the Blues in south Bucks and Luton and Sunderland held on for barely deserved draws.

Samuel said: "I really think Portsmouth will be worried and concerned as we pose that threat against the larger sides and I think we have done better against the bigger sides than the lower sides this season and I think it will be in their minds."

"The atmosphere is going to be good and the fans will be right behind us."

"We have shown against Peterborough, Barnsley, Sunderland that we can compete and we are looking forward to this game and we will get out there and give it our all."

Despite their 10-game winless streak, Samuel explained the mood in the camp is as good as ever before Saturday's clash.

He added: "We have responded really well and are really up for it."

"It has been tough. Conceding late goals is a difficult thing but the way the boys have reacted I am really confident we are ready to go in and play Pompey."

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