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What's on?
Brand-new 7-day
TV guide
Pages 38 & 39



Star signs
Russell Grant joins BFP
with weekly column
Page 40

INSIDE • 20 pages of Property • 8 pages of Freetime • 3 pages of Nostalgia • 7 pages of Sport

HELICOPTER HORROR



Investigation continues after four
men killed in mid-air crash
See page 5

NEWS

'Chiltern Hilton'
told to improve



Page 2

CCTV

Manhunt for hit-
and-run driver



Page 2

Road overhaul nears finish

By Stephanie Wareham

A NEW two-way traffic system is set to come into force in Easton Street and Queen Victoria Road, in High Wycombe, from the early hours of Wednesday, May 29.

The new road system comes after major roadworks in the town

centre as part of phase five of the Wycombe town centre masterplan.

Ahead of the new layout coming into place, Queen Victoria Road, Easton Street and Crendon Street will be shut from 8pm to 6am from Tuesday, May 7, for five nights, while contractors carry out final surfacing works.

The new two-way system - the first time both roads have seen traffic in both directions for more than 40 years - aims to improve north-south journey times.

The High Street crossroads and the Easton Street exit on to Abbey Way have been remodelled to allow two-way traffic, and traffic lights

will synchronise with signals further up Crendon Street and in London Road.

The new arrangement will also allow traffic to travel straight on and make left turns, but prohibits right turns from Queen Victoria Road into Easton Street.

See page 5



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In the CHAIR



BFP sports reporter Nick Tunney



Nick Tunney

I HAVE been in my sick bed most of the week but before my chickenpox (!) kicked in, I was at Kingsmeadow on Saturday to watch Wycombe narrowly lose 2-1 to AFC Wimbledon.

It was an odd game, a game which I feel Wanderers deserved a point from.

Wimbledon started like a rocket and Ryan Allsop produced heroics to save a penalty when the home side were on top.

The Blues then took a hold of proceedings but Wimbledon got the lead against the run of play.

Once again, Wycombe hit back strongly and were threatening to run riot at the beginning of the second half.

Alex Samuel scored one then nearly got another. I think if Wycombe took the lead they would have gone on to win the game and ultimately seal survival on their own terms.

However, the Dons scored their second goal, also against the run of play, to rock the Blues.

Wycombe huffed and puffed but ultimately fell short. For me, the game followed a similar pattern to most of those in recent weeks. Look good for the most part but sloppy mistakes are being punished every time.

Once again, the star turn was Samuel. He has been an inspired signing for the Chairboys, as have Curtis Thompson and Jason McCarthy.

Samuel was released by Stevenage but clearly Ainsworth saw enough to believe he will be a huge weapon for the side this term.

He is full of running, holds the ball up well, causes defenders nightmares and is a clinical finisher.

To pick up someone who was let go by at League Two club is something of a punt but Samuel's performances have earned rave reviews from Wycombe supporters and opposition fans alike.

Sunderland fans believe Samuel's performance in the 1-1 draw at Adams Park was one of the best displays by a player against their formidable side this season.

The likes of Samuel and Thompson have fitted right in with the squad's mentality and spirit and these guys will be the future for a very long time to come.

WANDERERS

Wycombe effectively seal League 1 safety

By Nicholas Tunney

WYCOMBE Wanderers have produced a monumental achievement by effectively surviving in League One for another season, despite a narrow 2-1 defeat to AFC Wimbledon at Kingsmeadow.

Survival was all but sealed with the likes of Scunthorpe and Plymouth losing. Plymouth are three points behind but have a far inferior goal difference to Wanderers, with no chance realistically of them catching the Chairboys.

Goals from Joe Pigott and James Hanson got the three points for the Dons, sandwiched by Alex Samuel's goal in a game which ebbed and flowed.

The Dons had the first half chance on seven minutes when Anthony Wordsworth's corner found Hanson but he headed well over under pressure from Anthony Stewart.

Wimbledon's early pressure soon told when Ryan Allsop was slow off his line and felled Hanson in the box on nine minutes.

However, Allsop guessed the right way to magnificently tip away Pigott's spot kick.

Wycombe came so close to taking the lead on 24 minutes when McCarthy's corner found Adam El-Abd but his header appeared to be cleared off the line.

Wimbledon were trying to work a way back into the contest and Pigott's cross on 33 minutes found Hanson but he was denied by good defending from El-Abd.

The game ebbed and flowed. Wordsworth's free kick on 38 minutes found Pigott but his effort was



Alex Samuel got Wycombe's goal

excellently tipped wide by Allsop.

However, from the resulting corner, Pigott nodded home from four yards out from another superb Wordsworth delivery.

Wanderers made a blistering start to the second half and on 49 minutes, McCarthy's wicked cross was turned home at the near post by Samuel.

Just two minutes later, Samuel came so close to making it 2-1 when

he met Kashket's vicious ball in and saw his header cannon off the crossbar.

However, on 52 minutes, Hanson scrambled the ball home from Wimbledon's first real attack of the half after Wycombe failed to clear their lines.

On 68 minutes, Curtis Thompson had a crack from long-range but his effort was well held by Ramsdale.

The Chairboys, however, can pret-

ty much celebrate their survival with goal difference saving them as they head into their final game against Fleetwood.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: Allsop, McCarthy, El-Abd, Stewart, Harriman, Gape (sub: Cowan-Hall, 89), Thompson, Freeman (sub: Bloomfield, 86), Samuel, Akinfenwa, Kashket (sub: Tyson, 69). Subs: Ma-Kalambay, Jacobson, Bean, Frempah.

WYCOMBE: Boss assesses AFC Wimbledon loss

Ainsworth: It is a very weird feeling

WYCOMBE manager Gareth Ainsworth admitted that not quite sealing definite survival left the squad with a weird feeling after their defeat to AFC Wimbledon.

The Blues lost 2-1 to the relegation rivals but with results going in their favour, mean they are three points clear of Plymouth with a far superior goal difference, meaning only a catastrophic and unlikely turn of events will relegate them.

Ainsworth said: "It is a very weird feeling.

"I am sure as the week goes by, the bigger picture will come out and things will be seen and as a football manager, I am a proud man.

"I don't like losing games, it doesn't look good on my record and it is not good on the players' records.

"They are here to win games and next week I want us to win that game and we will be giving eve-

rything we can to stay up on our terms."

Alex Samuel capped another fine, hardworking performance with another goal and Ainsworth was quick to praise the Welsh striker for his displays.

He added: "He is a phenomenal character and a phenomenal kid.

"Alex and the likes of Curtis Thompson were told they weren't good enough to play in League One.

"They have proven everyone wrong constantly and the more players we can sign like that, the better."

Ainsworth felt his side weren't as good as they have been at Kingsmeadow and revealed he thought Wimbledon deserved their win.

He said: "We didn't make our chances count and the one shot they had on target in the second half, we let in and that was a weak goal to give them and I want a reaction."



Gareth Ainsworth

THE BIG MATCH: Bolton should return for Blues

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth could have Manchester City loanee Luke Bolton back in contention for Saturday's final game of the season against Fleetwood at Adams Park.

Bolton has missed the last few games with a hamstring issue but could return for his final game for the Blues before returning to the Etihad.

Ainsworth said: "We have one or two knocks and feeling their injuries a little bit after Saturday's game which I expected a little bit.

"It was a tough, bruising game as AFC Wimbledon are a big, physical side and we have had a couple in the

treatment room which is a concern.

"The likes of Luke Bolton are back now and he is flying and there is no repercussions from earlier on in the season.

"Gape had a problem with his knee which was a concern but he is ok. The usual suspects are carrying injuries and playing through them for me which is absolutely fantastic and I can't ask anymore for that.

"There are one or two new little knocks which we will have to have a look at before Saturday.

"Hopefully we have a full squad for a chance at pulling this five-year plan off."



Sido Jombati

WYCOMBE: Captain thinks Southend win was pivotal for Blues El-Abd: It is mission accomplished

WYCOMBE Wanderers skipper Adam El-Abd explained that he will look back over this season with pride after the Chairboys pretty much assured themselves of a place in League One next season.

El-Abd has been one of Wycombe's best players in recent weeks, starring in the two crucial wins at Southend and at home to Walsall recently.

The former Brighton man hopes the players and fans can enjoy what should be a wonderful occasion on Saturday at home to Fleetwood.

He said: "It is mission accomplished.

"The aim was to survive and we have done.

"Although it was a disappointing second half of the season, I think the lads have shown tremendous character and togetherness through the tough times and we managed to get enough wins to stay in the league.

"We achieved our aim and hopefully we can end on a good note on Saturday."

Looking back, El-Abd felt the 2-0 win at Roots Hall over Southend United was absolutely vital to ensure Wanderers stayed up this season.

He added: "That was huge.

"It was a huge step because the outlook would have been a lot different had we have lost that game.

"I think we would have been in the relegation zone potentially, or a point outside.

"It certainly eased the pressure because it gave us a four point gap with a better goal difference.

"We went into the Rochdale game and played well.

"They were fortunate with their chance and won the game but because we won the Southend game it ensured we weren't under as much pressure for the Walsall game."



El-Abd (left) with Jason McCarthy

SPORT

Rugby
Chiltern teens
win trophies
- Page 54



Cricket
Hales snubbed
by England
- Page 54



Ainsworth wants to end season on a high

Blues boss eyes strong finish on Saturday



Wycombe hope to emulate last season's final game of the season when they beat Stevenage

By Nicholas Tunney

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth wants his team to finish their first season back in League One on a high note by beating Fleetwood in front of potentially a bumper crowd on Saturday (5.30pm kick off).

Wycombe find themselves in a strange position. Mathematically, they aren't completely safe as they are three points clear of Plymouth Argyle with a solitary game left.

However, the Blues would need to

lose 7-0 and Plymouth would need to win by the same margin against Scunthorpe.

With that hugely unlikely scenario in mind, Ainsworth still didn't afford himself to say his team were safe but admitted that he wants to end the season with a bang at Adams Park.

He said: "We should have come away with something from Wimbledon and put the five-year plan to bed."

"As I said, it is Wycombe Wanderers and it always comes down to

the last game and lo and behold it has and we need to get something out of it to survive.

"I am really looking forward to a fantastic opportunity on Saturday to close this five-year plan once and for all."

Wycombe do have a tricky test to overcome on Saturday as they entertain Joey Barton's Fleetwood, who had an excellent win over Sunderland in midweek.

Ainsworth added: "Joey Barton is a winner. He has his team playing very well."

"Whether he changes or keeps the same team from Tuesday, we have to see."

"I would love to survive on our own right but above that line was the remit for this season."

"If we are above that dotted line, it would be a huge success story for Wycombe Wanderers and the players would deserve it as they have been brilliant."

"If we manage to get to 53 points, brilliant, 51 would be great and 50 would be fantastic. I just want a nice survival party at the end."

QPR link flatters Ainsworth

Wycombe Wanderers

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth admitted he was flattered to be favourite for the QPR job but insisted his focus is on his side's final game this season against Fleetwood.

Ainsworth has overseen promotion from League Two and a brilliant survival mission completed in League One over the past two seasons and the job he has done at Adams Park has seen him installed as 1/3 favourite for the QPR role.

Speaking to the Bucks Free Press, he said: "It is fabulous to be linked."

"Everyone knows I have a big affinity for that club. It is great for me to be linked and I would like to get Saturday out the way first and we will see what comes next week."

Wycombe midfielder Marcus Bean, who was also a team-mate of Ainsworth at QPR, told Love Sport Radio that he deserves a crack at a job he knows he would love.

He said: "He's not only my manager, he's a friend as well."

"I want him to get the opportunity to manage a team that he loves - we all know he's a big QPR fan - but he also deserves to now manage somewhere else."

"He's cut his teeth at Wycombe and deserves the opportunity."

"If that were QPR, I know that would make him really happy. Let's see what happens."

"I love working under him and so do the boys. We all want him to stay but we also don't want to hold him back."

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