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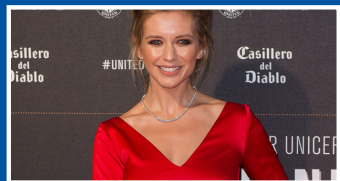
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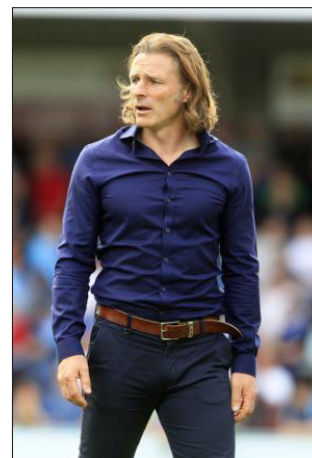
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FOOTBALL: The boss opens up about his career Ainsworth 'feared for his job' after bad run



Gareth Ainsworth has been at Wycombe since 2009. He's been manager of the club since 2012



Gareth Ainsworth

'Success stories' at Wycombe

AINSWORTH ON PLAYERS WHO MOVED ONTO BETTER THINGS AFTER WYCOMBE

WYCOMBE boss Gareth Ainsworth has revealed his favourite 'success stories' on former players who have made big money moves, with the manager stating that Alfie Mawson and Eberechi Eze are two names that come to mind.

Mawson played for the club in the 2014/15 season where the Chairboys reached the League Two Play-off Final, but lost to Southend United on penalties.

Ainsworth, who was on the 'I Had Trials Once' podcast said: "I signed Alfie Mawson and then he went to Swansea for £5m and then Fulham for £20m. He's the big success story.

"But the great thing was, when he got into the England squad and where he was a substitute against Brazil about two years ago, he rang me and he offered me two tickets to come and see him playing for England, which was amazing."

On Eze, Ainsworth added: "Eberechi Eze at QPR - the best talent I've ever coached, the best natural talent.

"I gave him his league debut at Wycombe after I went down and saw him in one game where he got a hat-trick.

"I thought I'm having him, so, I gave him his debut at Wycombe."

But Ainsworth admitted that he has made errors by not offering certain players contracts.

He said: "I think the big one that sticks out is Sean Maguire [now at Preston]. I think he had about a 10-day trial at Wycombe and I didn't sign him as I didn't really see what I'm seeing now in him, and maybe he needed some more development.

"But he's turned out to be a hell of a player. You try and get the majority right."

WYCOMBE manager Gareth Ainsworth has admitted that he wasn't ready to be a manager when he was given the opportunity.

The 47-year-old opened up about his first managerial gig at QPR back in the 2008/09 season, when he was made caretaker following the sacking of Iain Dowie.

During his spell in charge of the Loftus Road side, he reminisced about the time his QPR team went up against Sir Alex Ferguson's Manchester United, with the two sharing a drink after the match.

Talking on the 'I Had Trials Once' podcast, he said: "I was manager at QPR when we faced Man United and Alex Ferguson in the in the third round of the League Cup.

"It was only 1-0 [to United] and I had a drink with Alex Ferguson afterwards and it was it was a great experience."

Ainsworth also revealed that he feared his job was 'under fire' at the beginning of his reign at Adams Park.

By Robert Folker

He continued: "I wasn't ready to be a manager.

"I didn't want to be a Championship manager.

"I went back to being a player for one year and half way through that season Wycombe came in for me. I was 37.

"They made me captain. We got promoted but we went down the next season.

"And then eight games into that season, Gary Waddock, who is a close friend, and is still a close friend, got sacked.

"And they said: 'Gareth's nearly 40.

"He's done a little bit at QPR.

"We'll give him the caretaker manager's job and eight years later and I'm still here."

He said: "I totally feared for my job.

"That season we went 17 without a win.

"Now you tell me what manager nowadays and who'd have 17 games without a win and not get sacked.

"I don't think they had the cash, I wasn't on a lot of money but I don't still think they had the cash to go 'let's sack the manager and get a new one.'

"And then that summer I thought you can either bumble along again and you're bound to get sacked or you better make big changes.

"I was a tracksuit manager for my first 18 months.

"Now I wear a shirt and trousers. 'I'd made so many new signings.

"They didn't really know me as the tracksuit manager apart from Matt Bloomfield who's been here years.

"They were calling me Gaz in that first 18 months.

"So, I said: 'right it's gaffer'.

"I felt a little bit awkward saying that but I had to make a change.

"And Matt Bloomfield went: 'Right, gaffer. Yeah, quality'.

"He made it easy for me.

"I can't thank him enough because,

he the club captain, and the rest of the players followed.

"I think my fear factor now is based on long-term selection, and I think the lads fear not playing and that's the way it should be.

"They know that I'll go you're cut.

"But I always give them a chance.

"My fear factor is that being in the team now is a huge thing.

"I get players who care.

"I sign players who care because the ones who don't care are not scared of being dropped."

During his playing career, Ainsworth had spells at Northwich Victoria, Preston, Cambridge, Lincoln, Port Vale, Walsall, Cardiff City, QPR, Wycombe and Wimbledon, where he scored in the Premier League with the latter.

He is also currently the EFL's longest serving manager, as he has been in charge of the club since since September 2012.

Prior to this, he was a player at Wycombe for three seasons where he played 118 games for the Chairboys.