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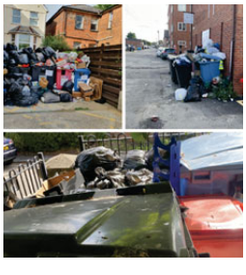

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Ex-fan favourite is to remain unavailable

By James Richings

EX-WYCOMBE Wanderers midfielder Nnamdi Ofoborh looks set to remain on the side lines at his current club Rangers after 'a heart issues' was discovered.

The former fan favourite, who had two separate spells with the Chairboys between 2019 and 2021, joined the then Scottish champions on a free transfer from Bournemouth last summer.

However, he has yet to play a single second of competitive football for the Gers due to the cardiovascular problem, and current manager Giovanni van Bronckhorst admitted that he is unsure when the 22-year-old will make his debut.

Speaking to the Rangers Review, the Dutch manager said: "I don't know what will happen in the future but for me the most important thing is health.

"He comes to the training ground once in a while and he's still one of the boys.

"If you see him he's very good with the boys and very energetic and happy.

"I feel really bad for him that he can't be on the pitch but the most important thing is the health."

This comes a year after former boss Steven Gerrard revealed that the Nigerian was going to miss the start of the 2021/22 season.

Speaking in July 2021, Gerrard, who is now in charge of Aston Villa, said: "I don't think you'll see him [Ofoborh] in the short term - unfortunately, something's flagged up on his ECG, which is the heart tests.

"We've got top medical people here at the club now and we check all the players thoroughly from head to toe when they arrive.

"Unfortunately, there's been a bit of a red flag with a heart issue, so he's going to see some specialists in the coming weeks, and we need to do more tests and checks before we move forward which is of course it's disappointing and frustrating, but we need to manage and cope."

During his two spells with Wycombe, he played 33 times and scored two goals for the club.

Both of his goals were scored away from home and each were a volley from outside of the penalty box.

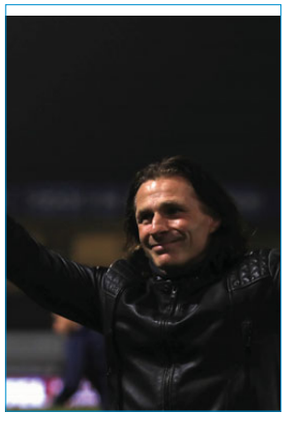
The first was against Milton Keynes in the EFL Trophy and the second was at Fleetwood Town in the first leg play-off semi-final.

The latter won Wanderers' Goal of the Season for the 2019/20 campaign.

Prior to his moves to Wycombe and to Rangers, Ofoborh spent four years with the Cherries, playing five first-team games for the South Coast side. He has also represented the Nigerian Under 20 team on three occasions in 2019, scoring two goals.

Nnamdi Ofoborh hasn't played a competitive match since Wycombe's 1-0 win over Preston North End on March 13, 2021. He also had a vital role in Wanderers' play-off final win over Oxford in July 2020 (PA)

'No panic' about transfers



Gareth Ainsworth

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth has insisted that 'there will be no panic' in terms of signing new players ahead of the new season.

So far this summer, the Chairboys have added Jasper Pattenden, D'Mani Mellor and Christie Ward respectively to their squad, whilst Jack Young signed a permanent contract with the club in the spring.

However, nine names have left the Adams Park club since the end of June which include goalkeepers David Stockdale and Adam Przybek, and centre back Anthony Stewart.

And with the season starting on July 30 at home against Burton Albion, Ainsworth has revealed that he is trying to bring new faces to South Bucks.

Speaking after he watched his side lose 4-1 in a behind-close-doors friendly on July 16 against Watford, the 49-year-old said: "We are trying to add one or two more to the squad so let us see if that happens in the next week.

"But there is plenty of time left in the transfer window yet and I am sure patience will be key in that so there are no alarm bells at all.

"We have got a similar squad to last year and I know people will mention David Stockdale, but believe me, there is something in the pipeline in terms of his replacement, and Anthony Stewart's replacement will be another one.

"Ryan Tafazolli, Chris Forino, Jack Grimmer and Joe Jacobson can all play in that centre half role and we've got Jack Wakely in reserve as well.

"He had a nasty season last year with injury, but he is looks like he going through a good spell."

On Adebayo Akinfenwa, the boss also revealed that Mellor, and Iraqi Ali Al-Hamadi could be collectively replace the forward.

He continued: "There will be no panic from me as those days have gone, and I just want to see how far we can go.

"It might take a few games into the season to see how we need to strengthen and how much if anywhere."

Wycombe Wanderers defeated by Watford

Wycombe (in January 2022) lost 4-1 away at Watford on July 16 (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers were well beaten in a behind-closed-doors friendly against Watford, as the Chairboys fell to a 4-1 defeat.

Taking place at the Hornets' training ground in London Colney, a brace from Ismaila Sarr, a strike from Emmanuel Dennis and a Yaser Asprilla goal saw the Hertfordshire defeat Gareth Ainsworth's men in what was the first-team's first loss this pre-season.

The first goal came just 120 seconds into the match when Sarr scored with a penalty.

He then got his second in the first-half after he rolled home from intercepting a loose ball, before Dennis made it 3-0 before the break.

In what was the first meeting between the two sides since March 2021, Wycombe pulled a goal back through Ryan Tafazolli after he was set up by Ali Al-Hamadi.

Asprilla then slammed home a fourth goal for Watford to seal the victory for Rob Edwards' side.

Up next, Wycombe will play a Bournemouth XI on July 22 which is the same day when a team full of trialists will represent the Chairboys away at Aylesbury United.

A day later, the Wanderers will take on Southampton B before the final friendly will see them take on Chesham a day before the season starts.

The last friendly of the summer will take place on August 2 at Worthing.

The Worthing and Chesham games will be filled with development players and trialists.

Five free agents who could do a job for Wycombe

By James Richings

WITH Jasper Pattenden, Christie Ward, D'Mani Mellor and Jack Young all signing for Wycombe this summer, Wanderers' recruitment for the season ahead has well and truly begun.

There is a fresh look about the team as loan players in Tjay De Barr, Connor Parsons and Ali Al-Hamadi have all returned on top of Nick Freeman's comeback after an 11-month

And with goalkeeper Nathan Bishop's move from Manchester United being imminent, the Adams Park club are very much rebuilding for what could be the most competitive League One season in recent times.

So with more new faces expected to join Wycombe before the window shuts at the end of August, here are five free agents I think the Chairboys should enquire about for the campaign ahead.

Ben Foster, 39, goalkeeper

With two Premier League winners' medals, three league cup final wins, two community shield victories, a Football League Trophy success and two promotions out of the Championship, Foster is a born winner, and his experience will not only benefit the defence in front of him, but the dressing room as a whole.

A bubbly character one and off the pitch, his YouTube persona as the 'Cycling GK' could also lead to fans wanting to see him in action, replacing the much-loved Adebayo Akinfenwa as 'that' celebrity at Adams Park.

Additionally, a close source to the Bucks Free Press revealed that they allegedly saw Foster 'go for a jog' in Stoke Mandeville after the most recent Premier League season had ended.

This was not officially confirmed but if he did sign for the Wanderers, Wycombe will have three top keepers in himself, Bishop and Tyla Dickinson.

Alfie Mawson, 28, centre back

A player that has been heavily linked with the club all summer, Alfie Mawson returning to Adams Park could be the perfect transfer.

A former fan favourite during the 2014/15 season, his goals and performances helped Wanderers book themselves a place in the League Two play-off final against Southend United.

His tally of seven goals that campaign, which were scored in the final 15 games of that season, secured him numerous individual accolades such as the club's Player of the Season and the Player's Player of the Season.

He has since played for Swansea City and Fulham in the Premier League but at the latter, injury issues have hampered what was a glistening career.

A move back to the club which began his Football League career could revive his form.

Michael Hector, 30, centre back

Released by Fulham this summer after their third promotion to the Premier League in five seasons, the 30-year-old hasn't had a full year of competitive football since the 2018/19 campaign, where he played 39 times for Sheffield Wednesday in the Championship.

Michael Hector (pictured) has played in the Premier League for Fulham but is now looking for his 20th club after he was released by the Cottages this summer following a three-year stint in West London (PA)

A strong, commanding centre-back who loves a good tackle, the 30-year-old was named as Wednesday's Player of the Season that year, and has also earned 35 caps for Jamaica at international level.

He has been picked to represent the Reggae Boyz at five international tournaments, three of which included current Wanderers star Garath McCleary.

And with Ryan Tafazolli and Chris Forino being the club's current centre backs with Jack Grimmer and Joe Jacobson being utility players in that position, Hector could make Adams Park his home.

Tom Carroll, 30, centre midfielder

With the former Tottenham Hotspur and Swansea City midfielder playing 26 times in the third tier for both Leyton Orient in 2010/11 and Ipswich Town in 2021/22, Tom Carroll is well equipped to have another year in League One for a new team.

It may be a position that doesn't need to be looked at considering the abundance of talent at the club's disposal, but squad depth is vital if promotion is secured come May 2023.

So far on the club's books in that position are the likes of Dom Gape, David Wheeler, Curtis Thompson, Jack Young, Jasper Pattenden, Nick Freeman and Josh Scowen.

But with Thompson still out, and with the games coming in thick and fast, any injury or knock could deplete the squad and hamper any promotion push.

The former England Under 21 international also hails from Watford, so it could be a sensible transfer which could see him return closer to home.

Connor Wickham, 29, forward

In terms of attacking, wide and creative players, Wycombe are spoilt for choice.

Lewis Wing, Anis Mehmeti, Daryl Horgan, Sullay Kaikai, Garath McCleary, Brandon Hanlan and Connor Parsons have all proven that they can score goals and get assists, but up top, it's a different story.

Sam Vokes is the only senior striker at the club, and even though D'Mani Mellor, Tjay De Barr and Ali Al-Hamadi will be waiting in the wings for their chance, another proven Football League goal scorer might be needed at Adams Park.

This is where Connor Wickham could come in.

Following his release from Milton Keynes after six months, the 29-year-old is desperate to show the world of his ability after several injury-hit seasons.

He was recently on trial at Reading, but it has been reported that he is no longer being looked at by the club.

His physical attributes are similar to Vokes', and with quick players in Mellor, De Barr and Al-Hamadi alongside him, the Chairboys' attacking force could be the recipe for a promotion push to the Championship.

Connor Wickham pictured at Adams Park for MK back in May (PA)

Narrow defeat for the ladies

A narrow defeat (PA)

AN experimental Wycombe Wanderers Women XI continued their pre-season schedule with an impressive performance against Bedford Ladies on Sunday, going down to a narrow 3-2 defeat.

New manager Carl Simon took the opportunity to test a combination of first-team, reserve and under-18 players against higher-placed opposition. New signing Katie Riddington (pictured) got off to a good start, netting from an impressive 25-yard free-kick, whilst last season's Golden Boot winner Chante Inniss was also on target for the Chairgirls.

Simon said: "Today was a good test for us; throughout the game we showcased exactly what we can do, but also showed where we need to improve.

"We had four players making their senior debut and another five players returning from their post-season break, so for now pre-season is all about fitness, establishing our three squads, and seeing if individuals are ready for first-team football, which means the performances and results may not necessarily reflect our true standard at this stage."

Up next for the ladies will be two games that will take place on the same day.

On Sunday, July 24, the first team travel to Luton Town, whilst the reserves kick off their pre-season schedule away to Actonians Reserves.

Meanwhile, the Chairgirls were out and about greeting fans at Eden's Big Day Out on Saturday, July 23.

The squad will be one show handing out goodies and free tickets.

For more up-to-date coverge on all things Wycombe Wanderers from the men's first team to the ladies reserve, go to the Bucks Free Press website in www.bucksfreepress.co.uk.

SPORT

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Massive statement made by Wanderers

Phil Alexander has been appointment as Wycombe's new senior advisor (Wycombe Wanderers)

By James Richings

WYCOMBE Wanderers have confirmed the appointment of Phil Alexander as the club's senior advisor.

Working directly under the Chairboys' owner, chairman and CEO in Rob Couhig, Alexander's arrival at Adams Park 'will help to oversee the commercial and operational side of the football club, with Pete Couhig focusing more on footballing matters.'

Prior to his arrival in south Buckinghamshire, he was previously the chief executive officer at Crystal Palace for 26 years, and was recently named as the Premier League CEO of the Year at the Football Business Awards in May.

He will also remain at Selhurst Park with a part-time consultant position.

Speaking on his new position, Alexander told the club's website: "I live locally and I've got to know both Rob and Pete Couhig over recent years, and I admire the ambition and passion they have for the club.

"My work at Wycombe fits nicely alongside my consultancy role at Palace and will focus primarily on driving commercial revenues and improving the fan experience on match days.

"I've been involved in sports all my life and my objective will be to generate a team spirit amongst the staff and achieve our commercial goals in the same way that Gareth does at the training ground.

"I want to hear from any businesses in the area who wish to get involved with the club in any capacity.

"Just call me anytime at the club."

As well as being the longest-serving Premier League CEO, Alexander was a member of the FA Council, representing the Premier League, and sat on the FA's Professional Game Board.

Rob Couhig, the club's owner, added: "We wanted someone who had the right experience, integrity, and an understanding of the Wycombe Way.

"I believe in Phil Alexander we have found that person.

"Phil has earned the enormous respect he enjoys in the football community.

"I am very excited that Phil has agreed to take on the challenge.

"It's a huge step forward in our plan for the club."

Gareth Ainsworth (PA)

Boss praises ex-PL sided after loss

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth has praised the performance of Watford after the Hornets defeated the Chairboys 4-1 in a pre-season friendly.

Taking place behind-close-doors in London Colney, a double from Ismaila Sarr, and a strike each from Emmanuel Dennis and Yaser Asprilla condemnethe d Bucks team to the first defeat of the summer involving their first-team.

However, despite the result, Ainsworth remained upbeat as Wanderers take on a Bournemouth XI and Southampton B side across two days next week.

Speaking to the club's media after the loss in Hertfordshire, he said: "They are a good side.

"They played in the Premier League last season, I don't think they have changed too much [in terms of squad personnel] and I don't think you can be too disheartened with the scoreline. Although, we gave a couple of goals away that disappoints me. That's something we need to work on.2

Free tickets for friendly fixture

ONE hundred tickets have become available for Wycombe's away friendly match against Southampton B.

The fixture on Saturday, July 23 will take place at the Saints' Staplewood Training Ground with the game kicking off at 3pm.

Originally taking place behind-closed-doors on the South Coast, the Chairboys have since confirmed that tickets are able to be obtained, which are free of charge.

Tickets can be attained from tickets.wwfc.com and refreshments will be available to purchase on site.

The club said: "There is very little parking on-site so fans are advised to use public transport; there are local bus routes that stop right outside the venue."

A day earlier (July 22), Wanderers will play Aylesbury and Bournemouth on the same day with two different squads.

For more information, go to www.wwfc.com.

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