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Bucks Free Press

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Prime doc for seven-year-old

A SEVEN-year-old boy from High Wycombe will appear in an Amazon Prime documentary next year.

Ralph Martin will be included in the 'Driven Dreams' series which looks at the next generation of young drivers.

The youngster has been described as a 'natural talent' in the karting world by several coaches, with the child being ranked as one of the best of his kind within his age group.

Speaking to the Free Press, Ralph's mum, Kirsty, said: "We went on holiday to Spain where he would go on the car tracks.

"One of the guys there said he was a 'natural talent' and that he'd never seen anyone that young drive so well.

"We didn't think of it but my husband looked into the electric karting group where he had a test day, and he went from strength to strength.

"He started at the back of the grid but eight months later, he's now winning trophies in his competitions.

"We got an email about the younger drivers in the electric scene as they're trying to promote it.

"They asked if we could send a video of Ralph to them which we did, they came back and said that they wanted to have an interview with him in London which we did and it's been brilliant."

"I'm very proud of him."

As time went on, Ralph joined mid-season in the BKC (the Bambino Kart Championship) which saw his results shine.

He won the top novice prize before earning a place on the podium.

His dad, Stewart, added: "As Ralph grew older (and thanks to Covid!) we had some time on our hands and researched the options available to us, this is where we found the kart series known as Total Karting Zero.

"An electric series that arrived and drive, this involves little initial investment but gives the opportunity to explore electric bambino karting.

"We attended their advance licence day and Ralph was awarded the licence to be allowed in their championship.

"Although we enjoyed it, ultimately we decided it wasn't for us so we furthered our research and found an alternative option whereby we could purchase our own kit, practise where and when we liked and compete in two championships.

"This is where the fun began."

Ralph is currently looking for sponsorships so for more information, email kirstyr20@hotmail.co.uk.

Additionally, you can follow him on Instagram (Ralphracing.32)

Jeff's marching to the Chairboys

Jeff Stelling was at Adams Park on March 13 to confirm his latest walk to raise funds for Prostate Cancer UK (PA)

By James Richings

BROADCASTING legend and Soccer Saturday host Jeff Stelling will walk from Wembley Stadium to Adams Park in aid of Prostate Cancer UK.

The 65-year-old, who has helped raise an incredible £1.4m for the cause through his treks across the country, will conduct his 34th walk on Sunday, September 17 this year in honour of the late Bill Turnbull.

The former BBC Breakfast host sadly succumbed to the disease in August 2022 after being diagnosed with the illness in November 2017.

He publicly revealed his condition to the world in March 2018 which led to a 20 per cent increase in men booking prostate checks at their local GPs.

Speaking on his decision to do the 30-mile trek from North London to South Buckinghamshire, Jeff told the Free Press and BBC 3 Counties Radio on March 13: "Over the years I have done a lot of walks for Prostate Cancer.

"I've done 33 and I thought that would be it, but, Bill Turnbull is associated with Wycombe Wanderers and it was put to me that there was a possibility that we could do something to in Bill's memory.

"Bill did many great things as Prostate Cancer is concerned because after he revealed he was diagnosed with the illness, there was a huge increase in the number of people who went to the doctor to get checked.

"It was around 20 per cent which was brilliant as he created so much awareness and would save so many people's lives.

"Prostate Cancer is one of the easiest to treat if you catch it early.

"Tragically for Bill, it wasn't caught early enough.

"So we felt it would be nice to do something for Bill after all the work he did for Prostate Cancer UK.

"That's why we are going to walk from Wembley to his beloved Wycombe."

Despite the two not crossing paths in their careers and lives, Jeff openly spoke about how there were numerous similarities between himself and Bill.

From their journeys in the media industry to their age, to their love of football, the 66-year-old spoke candidly about how the late presenter came across as 'a lovely man', and that he hopes people will continue to raise awareness about Prostate Cancer UK.

He added: "We didn't really cross paths so I can't pretend to be his friend but there are many similarities in our lives.

"Bill and I started in local commercial radio at pretty much the same time

"We both ended up in London, we both worked for LBC, we both supported lower league football clubs in Wycombe Wanderers and Hartlepool United, we both ended up being prostate cancer supporters so there were lots of parallels, but we didn't know each other.

"I, with the rest of the country, watched him on TV on Breakfast or on Strictly and the general conscious was that everyone thought he was a lovely man."

To sign up for Jeff's March on September 17, go to www.prostatecanceruk.org/get-involved/football-march.

Beaconsfield play their home games at Holloways Park and under their new joint-managers, they have won three times (NQ)

Beaconsfield Town bounce up the league

BEACONSFIELD Town are enjoying life under their new management team as they picked up their win in four matches.

The Rams appointed Neil Baker and Jon Underwood as their new coaches following Gary Meakin's departure at the end of February.

And despite the exiting Meakin drawing his last two games, Beaconsfield are now unbeaten in six and have moved from midtable to the top half of the Southern League Premier Division South table.

The club now sit in 10th place and are 11 points off the play-off spots.

In their mini-run under Baker and Underwood, the Rams have beaten Dorchester Town, Hartley Witney, Tiverton Town and have drawn with Weston-Super-Mare.

Their next match is at home against Yate Town on March 18.

To read more about the latest sports news in Buckinghamshire, go to www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/sport or follow James Richings on Twitter (@James_BFP).

It's the first time Wanderers have completed the double over Bristol Rovers since the 2009/10 season (PA)

Another away win

WYCOMBE Wanderers currently sit three points off the play-off places following a solid 2-0 victory away at Bristol Rovers.

Former Gas striker Brandon Hanlan gave the Chairboys the lead on 16 minutes after being assisted by Tjay De Barr.

It was his third of the campaign and his second away from home.

Wanderers continued to have chances as Lewis Wing hit the post, whilst Garath McCleary was thwarted by the Rovers keeper James Belshaw.

The second period was a continuation of the first as it was chances galore.

Hanlan's header was brilliantly clawed away by Belshaw, Wing was denied by the keeper and Joe Jacobson saw his free-kick get saved.

However, the Chairboys doubled their lead inside the opening five minutes of the second-half, as Chem Campbell nodded home a McCarthy cross from four yards.

It was the winger's second of the campaign for Wycombe.

The victory has not only put Wanderers within touching distance of the top six, but it was Matt Bloomfield's first away win in charge of the club, and it's the first time since the 2009/10 campaign that Wycombe have completed the double over the Pirates.

'Disappointed' as Wanderers defeated

Matt Bloomfield lost his fourth game in charge of Wycombe against Burton Albion on March 10 (Carol Mason)

By James Richings

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Matt Bloomfield has said he was 'disappointed' in his side's 2-1 away defeat at Burton Albion.

First-half strikes from Dale Taylor and Joe Powell succumbed the Chairboys to their second loss in four games, whilst the Brewers have picked up five wins from their last eight.

The fixture at the Pirelli Stadium also saw Deji Oshilaja receive a red card on the stroke of half-time for a late tackle on Lewis Wing, whilst Joe Jacobson missed a second-half penalty for Wanderers.

Wycombe did pull a goal back through Tjay De Barr's first Football League goal, but it wasn't the Chairboys' day in Burton.

Speaking to the press, he said: "We're bitterly disappointed to lose the game but for the first six or seven minutes, we started off really well.

"I'm disappointed in the manner of how we conceded the goals, especially the first one as we shouldn't have been caught that square.

"We knew that this will be a tough place to come, and we knew of the qualities that Burton have.

"However, I thought the manner in which we kept plugging away really impressed me on a tough pitch.

"It was tough in the conditions but the boys kept going at 2-0 of course, we don't have as many positives if we were to win.

"I'll watch the game back this evening with unemotional eyes and look at what we can do to improve."

"It's just disappointing that we couldn't get anything from that but fair play to the boys as they kept trying, they had chances, they put balls into the box and we did plug away.

"We certainly should have got something out of the game based on how many chances we had."

The 39-year-old also refused to blame the state of the Pirelli pitch for the loss.

The fixture was in doubt due to the freezing temperatures in Burton, however, the turf looked very heavy which the manager noted.

He continued: "We tried to play as best as we possibly can, but I'm not going to start making excuses as the pitch is the same for both teams.

"We came knowing what to expect and knowing what we had to do.

"We prepared as best as we possibly can."

Wycombe remain in seventh place, six points off the top six.

To read more about the latest Wycombe Wanderers news, go to www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/sport or follow James Richings on Twitter.

The handle is @James_BFP.

Alan Parry's Previews: Barnsley at home

Barnsley are playing well (PA)

WITH 10 games left until the end of the season, every fixture is vital in Wycombe's quest to reach the play-offs, but the visit of Barnsley to Adams Park on Saturday, March 18 is more important than most.

The Tykes are the form team of the moment in League One with five wins and a draw from their last six games. They are fourth in the table with games in hand on all three teams above them.

After being relegated last season, they are on course for a quick return to the Championship, where they spent seven of the last 10 seasons.

Barnsley boast a formidable defensive record – only leaders Sheffield Wednesday have conceded fewer goals – and their away form is one of the best in the division.

This is undoubtedly one of the toughest games Wanderers will face this season, but they can take encouragement from earlier home wins against promotion contenders Ipswich Town, Derby County and Bolton Wanderers.

They also produced an outstanding display away to Barnsley at the start of the season, a 3-0 win in August, 2022.

It was Barnsley's first home defeat in League One for six years, and the first time Wycombe had ever won at Oakwell.

It was also the day Max Stryjek made his Wanderers debut, the Polish-born goalkeeper having been signed from Scottish club Livingston just three days earlier.

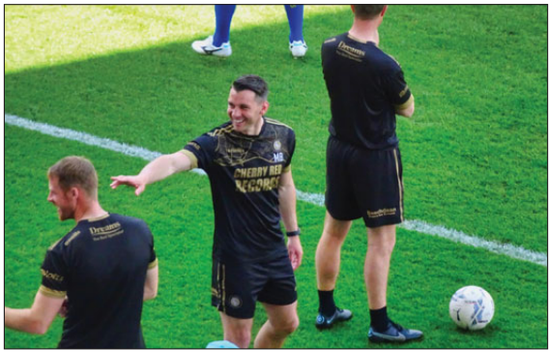
Stryjek has gone on to become a huge favourite with Chairboys fans, and played a major role in the midweek win at Bristol Rovers, the perfect response by Matt Bloomfield's team to a disappointing defeat at Burton Albion four days earlier.

It might make Rovers boss Joey Barton think again about his statement that he wouldn't swap any of his players for any of Wycombe's after they lost at Adams Park on Boxing Day last year.

In a criticism of Wycombe's tactics, Barton said that Wanderers fans needed neck braces because the ball was constantly in the air.

Perhaps he is the one who now needs a neck brace as he stares up at Wycombe's lofty position in the table, 15 points above his team!

SPORT



It was another win for Wycombe (Carol Mason)

Bloomfield beams as Wycombe win away at Bristol Rovers

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield has reflected on his side's 2-0 away victory against Bristol Rovers.

Goals from Brandon Hanlan against his former club and a Chem Campbell header secured the Chairboys' 18th league win of the season which has moved them onto 60 points.

The Adams Park side now sit just three points off the top six with a game in hand, with the triumph at the Memorial Stadium being their eighth win in 12 matches this calendar year.

It was a brilliant performance which saw both sides enjoy large portions of possession, as a whopping 36 shots were registered.

Speaking after the win in the West Country, Bloomfield said: "There is no such thing as a perfect performance as I think we want to get better all the time.

"At the same time, we don't want to get too high after wins and too low after defeats as it's about watching the match with unemotional eyes.

"There were loads of positives in the way we passed the ball, the way we carried the threat and I thought Tjay and Brandon were excellent up top.

"Not a positive for me as I didn't want us to be that open but at the same time we had several attacks so it was a hairy 10 minutes.

"We had to let the game settle and I thought Bristol Rovers got out of the traps quickly.

"We had chances ourselves but once things settled down, we took control and I'm pleased with that."

Injury update from the boss

By James Richings

DESPITE missing seven first-team players in the 2-0 victory over Bristol Rovers, Wycombe Wanderers boss Matt Bloomfield has praised the individuals who helped him achieve his first away victory as manager.

Ryan Tafazolli, Jordan Obita, Sam Vokes, Nick Freeman, Dominic Gape, David Wheeler, and Curtis Thompson were all absent from the match at the Memorial Stadium on March 14, and the 39-year-old admitted that the names mentioned shouldn't be rushed back to the frame.

Following their omissions, the development names have made sporadic appearances in several matchday squads.

This includes striker Tjay De Barr, who has played in four of five Bloomfield's fixtures in charge.

Speaking on the players that are missing, the manager said: "We have got a lot of injuries and illnesses at the moment so it's not ideal.

"Taf is not too far away but Curtis is a bit further away.

"They're working as hard as they possibly can, but their bodies need to take the course they need to heal.

"We hope to have them back soon but we're mindful of the fact that we don't want to rush them as we don't want them to break down.

"The medical team provides everything we need to know and we will welcome them back as soon as they can."

On his squad depth, Bloomfield added: "The boys have been playing well in recent weeks so we're asking the same group to go again after a couple of Saturday/Tuesday fixtures.

"But with those who started, I thought Tjay did brilliantly against Bristol Rovers on Tuesday night.

"He was such a bright spark and it was good for him to finally start in the league.

"Brandon led the line really well both towards and away from the ball so we're optimistic about our future."

Finally, on the win in the West Country which was the club's second over the Gas this season, he concluded: "Everyone is really pleased with the performance as it was a great result for us.

"The boys were very good on Tuesday but there are a couple of bits that we would like to improve on.

"But everyone is in good spirits."

Wycombe's home match against Barnsley on March 18 will kick-off at 3pm.

Wycombe's next fixtures:

Mar 18: Barnsley (H)
Mar 25: Charlton (A)
Apr 1: MK (H)
Apr 7: Ipswich (A)
Apr 10: Forest Green (H)
Apr 15: Morecambe (A)
Apr 18: Cambridge (A)
Apr 22: Lincoln (H)
Apr 29: Cheltenham (H)
May 7: Portsmouth (A)

Matt Bloomfield hopes several first-team players return soon (Carol Mason)

Wanderers' Brandon Hanlan (PA)

Brandon's beaming after win

WYCOMBE Wanderers forward Brandon Hanlan has described Tjay De Barr as 'class' following the duo's partnership in the club's 2-0 triumph over Bristol Rovers.

The victory at the Memorial Stadium on March 14 saw Hanlan bag his third of the campaign after being assisted by the Gibraltarian.

The result means the Chairboys have moved three points off the play-off places in what was their 18th league win of the season.

They have also kept 16 clean sheets in the league, with goalkeeper Max Strjyek keeping 15.

Hanlan, who Wanderers signed from Rovers in the summer of 2021, told the Free Press: "For me, a goal is a goal regardless of who I play against.

"I'm not the type to really care if it was against a former club or not as I'm happy to score.

"Hopefully we can push on from here.

On starting alongside De Barr for the first time in his Wycombe career, he added: "I think Tjay has been class every time he has played.

"He took his chance when he played as the gaffer believes in him.

"Tjay gives nothing but positive energy."

Finally, on his campaign so far, the 25-year-old added: "For me, it has been a stop-start season so I am just happy to get minutes and play.

"I just want to try and help the team and hopefully score a few more goals."

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