Reaches 75% of adults in High Wycombe, Beaconsfield and Marlow each month
*E Telmer Oct 2021 (4 weeks in print & online)

Bucks Free Press

Friday, April 28, 2023 | *Covering Wycombe, South Bucks, Chilterns and Aylesbury since 1856* | £1.50

CORONATION KEEPSAKE

Your free eight-page souvenir to treasure ahead of royal celebrations *INSIDE*

INSIDE • Property • Court listings • Planning roundup • Sport

'GIFTED' GIRL FOUND DEAD AT SCHOOL

Tributes paid to talented pupil, 16, found dead at Wycombe Abbey just days before she was due to sit her GCSEs

Page 2

NEWS

Major expansion planned for film studios

Page 4

NEWS

Not enough cash to fix potholes, leader claims

Page 6

Briants Fencing Supplies
LAP PANELS
Autumn/Winter can be a great time to replace broken and damaged fence panels. Once the shrubs and borders have been cut back it's far easier to access those awkward areas.
Opening Hours - Weekdays 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM & 1:45 - 5:00 PM
Collection OR Local Delivery (Within approx 20miles of HP27 9SG)
Order instore, online or call 01844 343663. www.briantsltd.co.uk

acorus Planning. Design. Property.
MILTON KEYNES, Great Brickhill
Modern 4 bed farmhouse with large garden and parking set in a superb location with views over open countryside. Includes agricultural building and land extending to approximately 5 acres (2 ha).
SUBJECT TO AN AGRICULTURAL OCCUPANCY CONDITION
GUIDE PRICE: £1,095,000 (Ref: C370)
acorus.co.uk 0345 340 5215

RAJ
BRING YOUR OWN ALCOHOL
TUESDAY BANQUET NIGHT
£14.95 per person
4 Course Meal
SUNDAY LUNCH 12PM-2PM
17 Penn Road, Hazlemere, HP15 7LN
01494 715666
www.raj-hazlemere.com
FREE HOME DELIVERY WITHIN 4 MILES

More from the owner

WYCOMBE Wanderers owner Rob Couhig has admitted that some prices 'will almost have to rise' for next season.

The American explained to both BBC 3 Counties and the Free Press on April 22 that he plans to have tickets 'location sensitive', so that the 'better seats' around Adams Park will cost more than others.

However, he also confirmed that both the Chairboys manager, Matt Bloomfield, and the club's CFO (chief financial officer) Pete Couhig, have plans to place to help with squad depth.

He explained: "We will talk about prices, we will almost have to raise some prices, we want to give our most loyal fans an opportunity to lock in at the present prices.

"We want to make the price for gameday tickets more location sensitive, so the better seats will be at a higher price than the others, and we will come out with an announcement about this shortly.

"We want to give people a chance to lock in at this year's prices."

He continued: "We have an opportunity to set this club on a course for the years to come, in being sustainable and as a club that wins.

"We're comfortable with where we are going to be.

"People will be happy."

Cheering on the Chairgirls

WYCOMBE Wanderers Women will host a sponsors day for when they take on Maidenhead United on Sunday, May 14.

The fixture will take place at the 1878 Stadium, the home of Burnham.

The main club sponsors are Swish, Red Kite, Optima & Eleven Sports.

Additionally, the Chairgirls will be supported by the Wycombe Wanderers Trust, OWWSA, Twenty 11 and Martin & Co.

Each player from the first team down to the under 18s own personal sponsors have also been invited to mark the occasion.

Tickets are £1.50 or free if you are under 18.

The club said: We also want to show how grateful we are to be supported by all the families of our players. Without you plenty of what we do as a club would not be possible.

Sunday League report is here

There was a lot going on last Sunday within Bucks Sunday League leagues

By Will Carter

THE 2022/2023 High Wycombe Sunday Football Combination is slowly drawing to a close, as teams across the town fulfil their last batch of fixtures ahead of the upcoming summer break.

There were 51 goals rattled in across just 8 fixtures, with a weekend high of 13 scored at the Dene in Hambleden, as Division Three Champions-Elect FC Lions ran rampant against Hambleden FC.

Ross Shearer opened the scoring for Lions in the 13th minute, before volleying home a spectacular own goal to draw the teams level, moments later.

Sloppy defending from the away side, saw Hambleden seize a 2-1 advantage a minute before the interval. Changes were made for Lions, and the game changers were sent on from the bench to turn the game around which they duly did, largely thanks to the influence of Lions number 9 & top scorer James Przybylak, who hit a stunning five goal salvo in just 45 minutes.

The pick of the goals being a thumping header from the edge of the box.

Shearer added his second goal of the game & his 13th of the season, before goals from Mark Slatter, and Will Russell saw Lions secure a 4-9 away victory.

A point at home to Mayflower FC on Wednesday evening will see Lions crowned Division Three Champions.

HWSFC Plate Competition

Marlow Swans were 2-1 ahead against FC Beaconsfield Reserves when the game was sadly abandoned due to injury.

Likewise, and unbelievably, the other Semi-Final fixture between AFC Wycombe & Prestwood United was also abandoned due to injury.

Division One

Denham United were 4-1 victors at home to Lane End, to secure the Division One title. Both teams meet in the League Cup final, to be held at Marlow FC in due course.

Ridgeway Royals hammered Wycombe Athletic 7-2 in the Division One Subsidiary Cup.

Joao Escrivaes hit a hat-trick, Alfie Fleming hit a brace alongside efforts from Louie Paul & Aaron Baines to condemn the Divisions bottom side to a heavy defeat.

Division Two

Second-Place Bucks Puma's handed table toppers, AFC Liberal their first defeat of the season, winning 3-1 at the Rye, to keep their faint title hopes alive.

A win away to Slough United next Sunday will see Liberal crowned Champions for the first time in their history. Puma's will guarantee promotion with a point in their next game against Prestwood United.

Division Three

Hambleden v FC Lions was the only game played and finished 4-9 in a thriller.

Division 4

Seer Green thumped Ridgeway Royals Reserves 4-1, Adam Mc Caslin scoring the consolation for the away side.

Holmer Green Rangers all but ended Italia Unita's late title push, as they brushed away their counterparts 5-2.

Bucks Buffalo's keep up their promotion push as they defeated Mill Lane 2-0 at the Rye.

More for, follow FC Lions on Twitter and Instagram.

It wasn't Bucks' day last week as they lost to Berkshire (Pixabay)

Bucks lose to Thames Valley rivals, Berkshire

BUCKS face a tough task to qualify for the later stages of the National Counties T20 Championship after losing both games in their double-header against a powerful Berkshire side at High Wycombe on Sunday.

Berkshire won both contests comfortably, leaving the hosts with just one win from three games in this competition.

The first match was very one-sided. Bucks, put in to bat on a green-looking pitch after all the recent rain, were bowled out for 104 in 19.3 overs.

Ross Richardson top-scored with 27, while seamer Andy Richardson, supported by some smart fielding, took 3-19. Berkshire knocked off these runs in just 11.3 overs, after an opening stand of 89 in 8.5 overs between Savin Perera, whose 50 came off 29 balls, and Dan Lincoln (35).

Bucks were also inserted in the second game.

This Sunday, Bucks play their next group double-header against Wales NC at Lisvane just north of Cardiff, where they must win both games to have a chance of reaching the quarter-finals. The match scorecards are on the Bucks playcricket website.

Concussion causes Jack Grimmer to be absent

By James Richings

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield has confirmed that Jack Grimmer will 'probably not play again' this season.

The 29-year-old right-back suffered his second concussion of the season in the Chairboys' 2-0 home loss to Lincoln City on April 29, which ended their hopes of reaching the play-offs for the third time in four years.

His first head injury of the campaign occurred during Wanderers' 1-0 victory against Bolton Wanderers on February 18 (Gareth Ainsworth's last match in charge), and the manager wants the ex-Fulham and Coventry City to be 'fit and ready' for the club's pre-season fixtures.

Bloomfield has revealed that Grimmer will 'probably not play again this season' after he suffered his second concussion of the campaign last week.

Speaking to the Free Press ahead of this weekend's clash against Cheltenham Town, Bloomfield said: "Jack will probably not play again [this season] so he can recover.

"He came off against Lincoln with a concussion, so he won't be involved, and I don't think again for the rest of the season.

"I want to make sure he has enough time to rest.

"He's had a couple of concussions this season, and if anyone understands the importance of recovery, it's me.

"You can play with a muscle injury but you can't risk anything with your head.

"I take responsibility for the decisions I make as a manager in terms of the players.

"I care for these players as people first and foremost, and we will not risk their health for performance.

"Jack needs rest and hopefully he'll be fit and ready for pre-season."

Grimmer's absence, coupled with Wycombe only being able to finish in either eighth or ninth this campaign, could see several of the club's fringe players make an appearance in the next two games.

Jasper Pattenden, Jack Wakely, Harvey Cartwright, Christie Ward, and Jack Young could feature, but Bloomfield has remained tight-lipped over his squad selection for Cheltenham and Portsmouth respectively.

He continued: "There won't be radical changes but I would suggest that some of the [fringe] players could get minutes.

"We could potentially see them but I don't want to name any names at the moment.

"We've still got a couple of days before kick-off so let's see how training goes, but it's important to see what the players can offer and what we can learn.

"It's important for us to learn about the group as we're looking forward to the future."

Jack Grimmer (pictured against Derby County in February) will miss the last two matches of the season after suffering a concussion against Lincoln City on April 22 at Adams Park (PA)

No top six spot this year (PA)

Bloomfield reflects on Lincoln loss at play-off dream ends for 2023

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Matt Bloomfield has described the 2-0 home loss against Lincoln City as 'disappointing and frustrating'.

The loss at Adams Park means the Chairboys can not finish in the play-off places for the third time in four seasons.

The club can only finish as high as seventh or as low as ninth, in what has been a rollercoaster of a campaign.

An injury crisis at the start of the season, coupled with the sale of Anis Mehmeti to Bristol City, the retirement of Alfie Mawson at the age of 29 due to injury, along with the sudden departure of manager Gareth Ainsworth to Queens Park Rangers, has made it a year without regular stability.

However, despite the outcome, Bloomfield is positive about the future.

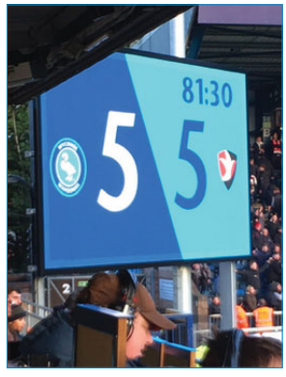
Speaking on the result against the Imps, which was Licnoln's first win at Adams Park since September 2006, he said: "We knew it would be tough this afternoon [April 22], but we had a number of chances but we didn't finish them off.

"It's really frustrating.

"We went 1-0 down and we tried to get ourselves back into the game.

"We had a big half-time team talk and had a bit of momentum in the second-half, but their second goal is a sucker punch, even though it was an incredible strike from Sorensen."

Alan Parry's previews: Same again?



It ended 5-5 last season (NQ)

THE dream of achieving a place in the playoffs has died, but there is still plenty to celebrate at the end of another eventful season for the Chairboys.

With two games left to play – home to Cheltenham Town on Saturday, April 29, then away to Portsmouth a week later – Wanderers are on course for one of their highest ever finishes since joining the EFL 30 years ago.

There was an inevitable sense of disappointment after last week's home defeat by Lincoln City meant they could no longer finish in the top six, but this has been another campaign in which Wycombe have overcome the odds.

I wrote at the beginning of the season that to qualify again for the playoffs they would have to compete with some of the biggest clubs outside the Premier League and that has proved to be the case.

No fewer than eight clubs in League One have enjoyed time in the top division of English football, and it is no surprise to find Ipswich Town, Sheffield Wednesday, Barnsley, Bolton Wanderers and Derby County leading the charge for promotion.

Given the history, levels of support and financial power of these clubs, Wycombe can be proud that they were still in contention for a playoff place with three games to go, especially after suffering so many setbacks.

They started the season without a recognised senior goalkeeper, lost several key players for lengthy periods due to injuries, saw the departure of the most successful manager in their history at a vital stage, and replaced him with a young coach who admits he is still learning the job.

It is remarkable they have done so well despite these problems, and with the core of the team still in place for next season the future is bright.

Hopefully, Wanderers will give their supporters more to cheer when they face Cheltenham in their final home game of the season.

If previous fixtures between the clubs are anything to go by, it certainly promises to be an entertaining finale.

Cheltenham's last three visits to Adams Park have produced a staggering twenty-two goals with a couple of 3-3 draws and a crazy 5-5 scoreline last season…..bring it on!

SPORT

D'Mani Mellor (left) is on loan at Rochdale (PA)

Striker D'Mani Mellor subjected to racial abuse whilst at Rochdale

WYCOMBE Wanderers striker D'Mani Mellor has stated he will 'always smile in the face of racism' after being subjected to discriminatory abuse on Saturday [April 22].

The 22-year-old, who is currently on loan at Rochdale from the Chairboys, received the slur after the club lost 1-0 away at Stockport County in League Two.

The defeat confirmed Dale's relegation from the Football League after a 102-year stay.

The club can confirm that an alleged incident of racist abuse, directed towards D'Mani Mellor following yesterday's game, has been reported to the relevant authorities.

Taking to Twitter after the match, Mellor, who has featured in 17 games for the Greater Manchester side, said: "I completely understand the frustration and passion of supporters, but there is no room for racism in football, and nobody should be subjected to that kind of abuse.

"I am aware that people saw me smiling after full time, but this was as an instant reaction to the abuse I received, and in no way related to the matters on the pitch.

"I reacted in that way because I always smile in the face of racism."

Mellor, prior to his move to the soon-to-be National League side in January, played 12 times for Wycombe, scoring once.

He is due to return back to Adams Park this summer.

Rob Couhig on the 22/23 season

By James Richings

WYCOMBE Wanderers owner Rob Couhig has called the Chairboys' failure to not be in the promotion pack this season as 'disappointing' and that 'it's been hard to digest.'

The Adams Park club will finish in either eighth or ninth place this campaign, following last weekend's 2-0 home defeat against Lincoln City.

The loss at the hands of the Imps means it is now mathematically impossible for Wycombe to enter the top six.

And despite the season having mixed fortunes, Couhig firmly believes the future looks bright for the club.

Speaking on the failure of not achieving promotion, he told the Free Press and BBC 3 Counties: "It's been disappointing.

"There's no sugar-coating it, it's not how I expected the season to end.

"I was pretty upfront at the beginning of the year that we had a reasonable chance of reaching the automatic places, and I certainly thought we would have been in the play-offs.

"It's been hard to digest but we have to accept where we are.

"But we will always look at the positives.

"One of them being that for the first time since we have been affiliated with the club, we'll have a legitimate off-season.

"We've already started preparing for next year, which should help our pursuit of enhancement a little bit easier.

"Remember, last year we finished the season at the end of May, and we were back in play at the end of July.

"This time, we will have a bit longer and we'll have a lot of time to put things to good use."

It has been an eventful season for the Chairboys both on and off the pitch.

The campaign has seen an injury and goalkeeper crisis, the record sale of the club's best attacker, the sudden retirement of the club's most popular defender, a player collapsing on the pitch, and the exit of their long-serving manager.

This has been coupled with memorable results against Bolton Wanderers, Derby County, Ipswich Town, and Barnsley to name a few.

But with a clear off and pre-season, which will be Wanderers' first since 2019, the American owner is positive for the future.

He continued: "I'm not a guy that uses excuses.

"But if I was, I would start back in August when our striker (Sam Vokes) got injured and he missed the first two months of the season.

"There was a period of time we had something like seven of our outfield players missing due to injury.

"And it was the guys who would regularly start.

"This is a tough, competitive league, so when you have seven of your first team out, bad results will happen.

"We dug ourselves a hole and we never really got out of it.

"When we were getting out of it, Anis [Mehmeti] had an opportunity that he felt that he needed to take.

"That's just part of the game, he took it, and it hurt.

"We rebounded with that, but then Gareth [Ainsworth] felt that he needed to take the opportunity presented to him.

"And I think Matt [Bloomfield] has done a masterful job in taking over."

Rob Couhig spoke to the Free Press on April 22 (PA)

Adebayo Akinfenwa (Carol Mason)

The Beast wins EFL award

FORMER Wycombe Wanderers striker Adebayo Akinfenwa has been given the Sir Tom Finney Award at the 2023 Football League prize night.

The 40-year-old, who scored 61 times in 250 appearances for the Chairboys between 2016 and 2022, was given the prize in the evening of Sunday, April 23.

The award is regarded as the most iconic accolade at the ceremony, and is given to a player 'who has had an outstanding career and contributed an exceptional amount to the EFL and football in general.'

After winning the prize, Akinfenwa said: "It's humbling.

"My brother got me here on false pretences - I thought I was giving out an award!

"I am not normally stuck for words.

"Gareth Ainsworth knows how much he means to me; he is more than just a manager.

"The stars couldn't have aligned any better for him to come and give me my award.

"To be able to achieve a dream that you have as a five-year-old and to play the game for 22 years, it's decent.

"I am very unapologetically myself and I've done it my way.

"I signed for a club in Wycombe that were always punching above their weight and getting promoted to the Championship at the age of 38 was the pinnacle."

The Independent Series is published by Newsquest Media Group Ltd; 1st Floor, Chartist Tower; Upper Dock Street; Newport, South Wales NP20 1DW, a Gannett company.
Printed by Newsquest Oxfordshire, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0EJ. **Newspapers Support Recycling.** The recycled paper content of UK newspapers in 2020 was 67%.