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HUNT FOR THIS DRIVER

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OAP LEFT WITH THIS FOR A YEAR

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See Page 2

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Making AP more of a fortress

NEW banners were erected across the Adams Park terrace ahead of Wycombe Wanderers' season opener against Exeter City.

Members of the 1887 Club, who are a group of supporters that aim to improve the atmosphere around the stadium, visited the Hillbottom Road venue on August 4 to put several decorations around the vicinity.

This comes after weeks of constructive and positive talks with the club's delegates along with several supporters to try and make Adams Park more 'homely'.

Additionally, Wycombe fans have collectively donated £1,500 for the banners to be produced, with additional flags to arrive at a later date for various other sections of the stadium.

This is one of many projects to try and make the club's presence more dominant in the town, with the Hour Glass pub on Chapel Lane decorating its establishment in Wanderers shirts, scarves, flags and pennants.

The Flint Cottage opposite the train station has also become the away day boozer for travelling fans.

Speaking on Twitter, the 1887 group said: "When this group first started, we never dreamed this would happen."

Making amends after error

WYCOMBE Wanderers goalkeeper Max Stryjek admitted that he needed to 'save his a*se' after he conceded a penalty in the Chairboys' 3-0 home defeat against Exeter City.

Matt Bloomfield's side were 2-0 down inside four minutes following goals from Jack Aitchison and Will Aimson.

The disastrous start nearly got worse when the 27-year-old fouled Demi Mitchell in the penalty area, but the Polish shot-stopper denied a third goal for the Grecians with a save from a Sam Nombe spot-kick.

It's the second time in as many seasons that Stryjek has saved a penalty which he has conceded.

The previous occasion was in Wanderers' 1-0 away victory at Oxford United in October 2022.

Speaking on his save, he said: "I caused the penalty so I had to save my a*se basically.

"I just thought, 'I have to save it'.

"I was pretty confident and I guessed the right way."

The games are getting longer

There has been an increase to the amount of minutes being added on at the end of games in the EFL Image: PA

ROTATIONS to the Wycombe squad will be a common theme this season due to the increasing length of some fixtures across the football pyramid.

Officials have been told to clamp down on any form of timewasting, with those lost seconds and minutes being added on at the end of each half.

This has seen several games up and down England go on for more than 100 minutes, with Wanderers' recent 2-0 away EFL Cup victory against Milton Keynes having 12 additional minutes (three in the first half and nine in the second).

Matt Bloomfield told the media at full-time: "I never planned to hand out seven debuts on the opening day but due to how things turned out, it was forced.

"Also, my belief is that with all this added time, there will be the equivalent of about another eight games this season.

"It's going to be a squad game and I'm preaching this to the boys, and I believe five subs will be used for most games as fatigue will set in.

"These aren't 90-minute games, these are 100 to 110-minute games due to the added times so we've got to adjust."

On the fitness of some of the players, he added: "For some of our boys, this is their pre-season.

By James Richings

"The changes we made on the hour mark were planned as Josh [Scowen] did 45 minutes on Saturday [against Exeter].

"I wanted him to do an hour so that we can build him up quickly and safely as we possibly can.

"We had a couple of other changes planned but we abandoned them as we had a couple of knocks.

"This is an indication of where we are and whilst some of behind on their fitness, I was really pleased with the way we played.

"We had to show our fighting spirit and show the fans we mean business."

The boss also praised his defence in the victory over Milton Keynes, as the club enjoyed their first clean sheet of the season.

He added: "Chris [Forino's] pre-season has really been hampered by injury and Ryan [Tafazolli] has had few knocks going on, but Joe [Low] came in and performed really well.

"It also was great to see Chris' goal too and the clean sheet was important too."

To read more about the latest Wycombe Wanderers news which includes reports, interviews and features, *go to www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/sport or go to Twitter and follow James Richings at @James_BFP.*

The result means Wycombe remain winless on a Saturday under Matt Bloomfield Image: PA

A terrible start after a summer of promise

WYCOMBE Wanderers' opening match of the season ended in disappointing fashion as they lost 3-0 at home to Exeter City.

Prior to kick-off, there was a sense of optimism and excitement around Adams Park following a summer of huge progress in terms of new signings, facilities, décor, kits, catering and memorabilia, with the team sheet even getting a new font.

But inside seven minutes, the Chairboys were 2-0 down and conceded a penalty in what was a disastrous start.

And it began when Jack Aitchison put Exeter ahead inside 24 seconds.

A well-worked move down the right found the former Forest Green Rovers man who slotted the ball under Max Stryjek on his Grecians' debut.

Three minutes later, it was two as Will Aimson capitalised on some very poor Wanderers defending.

Things got worse as on seven minutes, Wycombe conceded a penalty.

Demi Mitchell was fouled by Stryjek but the Polish keeper made up for his error with a brilliant save to deny Sam Nombe's spot-kick.

Wanderers improved but inside the final 10 minutes, substitute James Scott made it 3-0.

Where will Wycombe finish in 2023/24? This supercomputer believes it'll a top 10 finish Image: PA

Predicting the future

A supercomputer has predicted where Wycombe Wanderers will supposedly finish at the of the 2023/24 season.

Conducted by BonusCodeBets, they believe that the Chairboys, who have signed nine new players so far this summer, will push for a play-off spot but will ultimately end the campaign in 10th one place lower than what they did the year before.

They also believe that Derby County will win the league, Bolton Wanderers will finish in the second automatic spot whilst Reading, who have just had their second transfer embargo in as many seasons lifted, are expected to be the 2024 play-off winners.

Barnsley, Peterborough United and Portsmouth will supposedly finish fourth, fifth and sixth respectively, whilst Blackpool, Charlton Athletic, Oxford United and Wycombe will all miss out.

At the bottom, the supercomputer believes Cambridge United, Cheltenham Town, Stevenage and Carlisle United will all be relegated to League Two.

To read more about the latest Wycombe Wanderers news, visit James Richings' Twitter account (James_BFP).

Derby day win in the north of Bucks

Matt Bloomfield was very pleased with Wycombe's performance as they defeated MK 2-0 in the EFL Cup Image: NQ

By James Richings

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield believes his side's 2-0 win over MK in the EFL Cup was needed to 'right the wrongs' from Saturday's opening day defeat against Exeter City.

The Chairboys went into the Buckinghamshire derby off the back of a poor display versus the Grecians which they defeated 3-0 at Adams Park.

But goals from Brandon Hanlan and Chris Forino in the final 20 minutes of the contest ended a run of four competitive games without a win.

Really good chat with Bloomfield.

He spoke about Wanderers 'needed to right the wrongs' from Saturday and he was very impressed with debutant, Joe Low.

Bloomfield said: "I'm so pleased as we needed to right the wrongs from Saturday as I really disappointed with that.

"I told the boys that they needed to stay calm, and they shouldn't overreact due to one result.

"We needed to show the fans and everyone around us that we needed to put in a performance and we did that tonight [August 8].

"We had a really good pre-season and we're really happy with where we are in terms of cohesion and the evolution of the group.

"Also, this was a derby and our fans travelled really well, so we needed to give them a showing and get a result."

The 39-year-old made five changes to the squad following the opening day defeat, which saw Josh Scowen, Sam Vokes, Chris Forino, Ryan Tafazolli and Joe Low all come into the starting 11, with the latter making his Chairboys debut.

He impressed throughout the contest, most notably with his positioning, as he helped Wanderers keep their first clean sheet since April 10.

The fixture also saw Tafazolli make his first appearance of the season, but he was replaced after 78 minutes after suffering a 'knock'.

Bloomfield continued: "Joe came in on trial with us and we thought a lot of him from the way he played against us last season for Walsall when we were at Colchester, and he's proving to everyone how good of a player he is."

On Tafazolli, he continued: "He got a couple of knocks and was cramping up.

"He hasn't had a full pre-season and he's another one that we have to be wary of.

"It's tough at the minute because any team selection, we've got to try and do it with a responsible head-on, so we'll manage the boys correctly as the season goes on.

"It was important to have the legs to get us about on the big pitches and I was really pleased with Freddie [Potts] as I wanted him to go forward a bit more, which he did for the first goal.

"Dale [Taylor] looked sharp, Kian is finding his feet a bit so whilst it'll take a bit of time for them to settle, these are promising signs."

Up next is Lincoln City away for Wycombe.

The return of Alan Parry's previews

Wycombe take on Lincoln this

WYCOMBE fans wouldn't normally get too excited about winning a first round Carabao cup tie against lower division opposition, but the midweek victory at MK Dons was important for so many reasons.

After the disappointing result against Exeter City in their first game of the season in League One, it was vital Matt Bloomfield's new look team put on a good performance against their county rivals in midweek and they delivered in style.

The defeat against Exeter was a huge setback after the crop of new players signed in the transfer window had everyone looking forward to the season opener.

There is truth in the old football cliché that the season is a marathon not a sprint, but whatever the distance it helps to get off to a good start and the performance against Exeter was disjointed right from the start.

However, conceding two goals in the first four minutes would have knocked the stuffing out of an experienced team that had been playing together for years, let alone a side containing seven debutants.

The other cause for concern was the poor attendance at Adams Park.

The crowd of 5,369 – which included over 700 Exeter fans – was the lowest in League One and smaller than the crowds at half the games in League Two and even two National League matches.

Yes, a lot of people were on holiday and yes, the lunchtime rain showers didn't help, but that didn't deter people from turning out in larger numbers at every other game in Wycombe's division.

With a new manager and new players, Wanderers need new fans to complete the picture and hopefully more results like that at MK Dons will see attendances rising.

Next up is the visit to Lincoln City on Saturday, August 12.

The Imps finished only two places behind Wanderers last season and they had a formidable home record, suffering just two defeats at Sincil Bank.

They drew no fewer than 14 of their 23 home games including a goalless stalemate against the Blues last December.

Lincoln won the reverse fixture 2-0 at Adams Park in April, a defeat that ended Wycombe's hopes of reaching the playoffs.

SPORT

Hanlan scored on Tuesday night (Image: PA)

Hanlan steals the headlines as Wanderers defeat MK in the cup

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Matt Bloomfield has praised striker Brandon Hanlan following his performance in the recent 2-0 win over Milton Keynes.

The 26-year-old came off the bench to put the Chairboys ahead in the 72nd minute of their EFL Cup victory against their Buckinghamshire rivals, as they progressed to the second round for the third consecutive year.

His goal was his first since March, and the manager believes that if the ex-Bloomfield told the Free Press: "I love Brandon to bits.

"He's one of the best professionals you'll ever meet as he works hard at his game.

"He came back to pre-season in top shape as he worked hard over the summer, and I really want him to get those rewards.

"He got a knock over the weekend so he didn't even train yesterday [August 7] so it was a late decision that he would be involved.

"Brandon is a great lad, and we want him to add more goals to his game.

"I thought his work off the ball was as good as when he was on the ball which is what we've been working on.

"He is one of life's good guys and I really want him to do well.

"Brandon is a goal scorer of good goals as they are usually individual efforts.

"But we want him to get in between the posts more so he can get the tap ins.

"If he does that, then we've got a really good goal scorer on our hands."

Alterations are almost certain

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Matt Bloomfield has revealed that changes to his starting 11 this weekend against Lincoln City' are 'quite possible'.

The Chairboys made five alterations to the side that lost 3-0 on the opening day to Exeter City for their League Cup tie against Milton Keynes on Tuesday night.

The difference in personnel worked as Wanderers defeated their Buckinghamshire rivals 2-0 at Stadium MK to progress into the next round.

Additionally, the boss also spoke about some of his main players 'are nursing a few knocks' from the derby victory, but hopes that his team will be 'ready to go' for when they make the trip up to Sincil Bank this weekend.

He said: "It's quite possible that there might be some changes.

"These early stages of the season have been quite stop-start for us and a few of our lads are still in their pre-season stage.

"I think it's inventible with the fixtures coming in thick and fast that we need to make sure that we have a team that's fit and ready to go.

"We'll count the bodies today [August 10] and try and pick a team that's ready to play for the lengthy time that the games are now on for."

Both centre backs picked up knocks in the cup victory, but it's hoped they'll be fit for Saturday's match.

Bloomfield continued: "They're ok but are nursing a few knocks from the game on Tuesday night.

By James Richings

"We're still less than 48 hours away from when the final whilst was blown so we're still having a look at the boys to see how they are.

"There are a couple of lads who have already done 90 minutes this season, so we need to see how they are, as a couple of others also suffered a few kicks during the game.

"We'll give them a couple of days and we need to make sure we're ready."

On Forino's goal in the Buckinghamshire derby, he concluded: "With Chris, he has got so much strength, aggression and quality in both boxes and he's a brave boy.

"His goal was a great award for him as he's been working very hard in the last few weeks."

Finally, on facing Lincoln, Bloomfield: "We had a tough game against Lincoln at the back end of last season where we lost, and I think Mark has done a brilliant job.

They are a fit and sharp team and they showed us that on that day, and they also have a very good goal threat about them.

"They are a well run club and they'll be a stern test.

"They lost on the opening day but won on Tuesday night just like us so we know it'll be a tough game.

"I try and not take too much notice of stats or records or stuff like that as we need to take every game in its individuality and know this will be a tough test.

"We respect them as a team."

Chris Forino suffered a head injury in Wycombe's 2-0 away win at MK (PA)

Sutton at home in the cup

Wycombe will take on Sutton

WYCOMBE Wanderers will take on Sutton United at home in the next round of the League Cup.

The draw was concluded at the end of Burton Albion's 2-0 defeat against Leicester City on August 9 at the Pirelli Stadium, with former Foxes captain Wes Morgan pulling out the home teams, whilst ex-Chairboys boss Martin O'Neill took out the away sides.

The fixture means it will be the second consecutive season that Wanderers will be at Adams Park for the second round, and it'll be the first-ever meeting between the two sides in the competition.

Additionally, the cup tie will see the return of the former fan favourite Scott Kashket who is now on the books at Gander Green Lane.

The match will take place the week commencing Monday, August 28.

Speaking on the tie, manager Matt Bloomfield said: You always hope for a home tie or one close to home and we're glad to be at home.

"We played against Sutton last season at Colchester and they're a really good team.

"It'll be a good but tough game.

"We're looking forward to it but there are a few games in between now and then."

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