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Shops evacuated as man hurt in stabbing



By Isabella Harris

PART of High Wycombe's Eden Centre was closed off two days before Christmas after a man was stabbed. Police swarmed the town centre on Tuesday after reports that a man had been stabbed at the Swan Car Park. He suffered a serious injury to his abdomen and was rushed to hospital. White Hart Street and a section of The Eden Centre was shut, as well as an area outside the Swan Car Park which had a number of emergency vehicles parked outside.

Full story: Page 5



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SPORTING YEAR AHEAD



England will be hoping Harry Kane and Jude Bellingham will be in top form at the World Cup finals



Scotland will compete in their first World Cup finals since 1998



Snowboarder Charlotte Banks will be one of Team GB's big medal hopes at the Winter Olympics in Milan

The hopes and dreams of 2026

ENGLAND will be hoping to dominate the sporting landscape in 2026 by ending 60 years of hurt and winning the World Cup.

Thomas Tuchel's side will head to North America as one of the favourites to win, with the German boss vowing to "put a second star on the shirt".

England's crop of generational talent will be hoping to come good in the United States, Mexico and Canada in June and July.

Jude Bellingham is set to star while Harry Kane might only have one chance left as England aim to get the better of the likes of Argentina, Spain, France and Brazil, having been drawn against Croatia, Ghana and Panama in their group.

The newly expanded 48-team tournament kicks off in Mexico on June 11 with the showpiece in New York on July 19.

Scotland will also be there to take on five-time winners Brazil, Morocco and Haiti in the group stage as they enjoy their first World Cup outing since 1998 while Wales or Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland could qualify through the play-offs.

It will also be notable as almost

By PA Sport
sport@ngnw.co.uk

certainly providing the final tournament of Cristiano Ronaldo's illustrious career.

While temperatures will soar on the other side of the Atlantic, there will be fun in the snow as the Winter Olympics take place in Milan.

The Games take place between February 6 and 22 with the Paralympics happening a month later.

Team GB will be hoping to improve on their lowly medal count of two in Beijing 2022 with snowboarder Charlotte Banks, ski halfpipe star Zoe Atkin, and freestyle skier Mia Brookes among those targeting the podium.

England will be hoping to get their hands on some silverware as they head to India and Sri Lanka for the World T20 in February and March.

The 2022 champions will be hoping for a third title and face an intriguing group game against Italy.

They will hope to travel to the

subcontinent in a post-Ashes glow, with the climax to the Test series in Australia coming in the first week of January.

Then the women take centre stage as their version of the T20 World Cup takes place on these shores in June and July, with Nat Sciver-Brunt's side aiming to win the title for the first time since the inaugural 2009 edition.

Elite sport comes to Scotland in the summer as Glasgow hosts the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

The Scottish city stepped in after the state of Victoria in Australia, which was the original host, pulled out.

The enthralling rivalry of Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner looks set to dominate tennis with the pair resuming battle at the first Grand Slam of the year in Australia at the end of January.

Novak Djokovic is, in all likelihood, entering the final year of his career and will be hoping to add to his record 24 Grand Slam singles titles.

In golf, Europe will be hoping to regain the Solheim Cup from the United States as they host the event in the Netherlands.



Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner are set to dominate tennis once again

Sport

Greens slip to yet another away day defeat

HOLMER Green slipped to their sixth away defeat of the season as they lost 2-1 away at Stains and Lammas.

The Greens started strongly down the slope towards the clubhouse, and two long throws in the first six minutes created apparent opportunities close to the home goal.

On 24 minutes Ryan Hennessy had rounded Money in the Staines goal and netted after racing onto a Peck pass.

He was just a couple of yards past the last but one defender as the ball was released forward. Play switched to the other end, and a ricocheted ball sat up nicely on the edge of the penalty area for a header which caught

Neilon Pascall just the wrong side of his man.

He needed to be careful with his challenge, but the Referee considered that his actions were a foul, and the attempted shoulder charge had not been administered correctly.

Voinea sent Sam Bell the wrong way from the spot, but Holmer was level within two minutes.

An Ollie Saunders free-kick found Holbrook 10 yards out in line with the near post.

He made a clean connection with his head, and the ball flashed into goal via the underside of the bar.

The hosts were the better of the two sides in the second half, as they got their goal with seven minutes left.



Holmer Green play their games at Watchlet Lane in the village (NQ)

Rams earn win in last game before Christmas

BEACONSFIELD returned to winning ways with a 1-0 win away at Welwyn Garden City, showing great fight and spirit to claim the points, written by Arran White.

The game was played on a very soft pitch, which meant it was a slow, scrappy game at points.

The first half saw limited efforts on goal, with the main talking points coming when two Welwyn players found themselves through on goal only to be denied by a fantastic save from Beaconsfield keeper Tommy Dymott.

There were further saves from Dymott to keep his side in the game as the half ended.

There was a controversial point just before the break when Josh Marcon appeared to be pulled back whilst through on goal, he stayed on his feet and the referee waved the appeals away to see the half end 0-0.

The second half started with Welwyn on top.

A sustained period of pressure saw consecutive corners cleared off the line by Beaconsfield players. First Alex Peapell cleared a header off the line, before Dymott once again saved his side, tipping an effort away.

There was further controversy when Jamie Davies went past his man to see himself bearing down on goal.

Despite coming past his man to steal the ball the linesman flagged for offside, sparking protests from the Beaconsfield bench. Manager Sam Togwell was booked for challenging the decision.

The frustrations seemed to spark a response from Beaconsfield who came close soon after when Zak Fraser - Grante beat 3 players before being robbed off the ball as he tried to get a shot away.

Beaconsfield had the chance for the breakthrough moments later, Josh Stranks stole the ball on the edge of the box and went past the defender before being pushed over. This time the referee pointed to the spot. Up stepped captain James Dobson to slam home the penalty and give Beaconsfield the lead in the 71st minute.

Beaconsfield had to show real grit and fight to see the game out, with heroic defending from a number of players.

There were relieved celebrations from Beaconsfield players and staff at full time as they took much needed points to climb the table to 12th place.

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Runner, 78, defies the odds by finishing race in Qatar

A 78-YEAR-OLD triathlete from Aylesbury hailed the greatest day of his career as he clinched a world age-group title in Qatar.

Richard File produced an incredible performance to win the T100 Triathlon World Championship Open 75-70 category, pipping compatriot Keith Greenough by eight seconds as he finished the course in five hours 31 minutes and 45 seconds.

File is an experienced triathlete, having completed over 250 events since picking up the sport while working in Cyprus, but admitted his victory in Qatar topped the lot.

"I emptied the tank in the biggest way in my triathlon life," he said. "That's an underestimated skill."

"I was 78 last month and it is probably the best day of my 30-year career. It feels fantastic. I have worked incredibly hard."

"The guy I was racing against today beat me by 18 minutes in London. I had 18 minutes to find."

"I decided I would find nothing on the swim - he is a better swimmer than me - three minutes on the transition, eight minutes on the bike and eight minutes on the run. I found more than that on the bike and less than that on the run."

The retired meteorologist was one of over 250 triathletes to take to compete in the T100 Age Group World Championships, as part of the T100's finale in Qatar which had seen the professionals battle it out the day before.

Kate Waugh and Hayden Wilde were crowned world champions before the stage was set for the best amateurs to race over

By James Reid

100km amidst hot conditions in Lusail.

File has plans to return to the 80-84 category in two years' time, with plenty of plans to continue competing as a way of keeping fit and healthy.

"This was the toughest because I am in my fourth year in the age group. A year older doesn't make much difference at 55 or 60 but it does at 75 or 80," he added.

"Doing things like sit ups or squats, doing a few stretches is wonderful for anyone over 70."

"Everything slows down but you have got to keep going or throw in the towel. When you do make the effort and keep fit, it doesn't half make a difference."

"I can still go on holiday at 78 and go up the church tower and see the view, and that's a big thing for me."

"It started off as a fun sport but as time has gone on it has become more motivating and it defines who I am."

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Richard File won the T100 Triathlon World Championship Open 75-70 category



Wanderers end 2025 on a high with 'gutsy' home win

WYCOMBE Wanderers head coach Michael Duff described his side's 2-1 home victory against Bolton Wanderers as 'gutsy and dogged', as they ended a run of five games without a win in all competitions.

The Chairboys went into their bout versus the Trotters without a win in a month, in which they had failed to score in four of the last five games.

And their final game of 2025 got off to the worst possible start when Thierry Gale scored on 16 minutes to put the Greater Manchester outfit one goal ahead.

However, in the last five minutes of the opening period, strikes from captain Jack Grimmer and Armando Junior Quitirna turned the game around and gave Wycombe their seventh victory over Bolton in 11 games.

Speaking at full-time, Duff said: "They are a top team, which is why we changed shape.

"We flattered out our midfield and respected the opposition, as they have very good players and a top manager and as a team, they could hurt you.

"The key today was that when we had a period of dominance, we scored two goals.

"I was comfortable with the second half, even though they had loads of territory, but the way we set the team up, we got them on the break and scored twice.



Anders Hagelskjær (pictured against Fulham) played the full 90 minutes in the win versus Bolton on December 20

"We could have scored more but for a few good blocks, and we were unlucky in some aspects, so to deliver that sort of performance was very pleasing, as we did make a few tweaks.

"From that, we built momentum, and the last 25 minutes of the second half, we were excellent.

"It was a good, gutsy and dogged performance, and I am very pleased."

For Bolton, the loss in

South Buckinghamshire ended their unbeaten league run of seven matches, with their last defeat coming two-and-a-half months ago at Burton Albion.

The Trotters looked good on the ball, but rarely threatened Will Norris in the Wycombe goal when 2-1 down.

Their best chance of the contest fell to ex-Wycombe man Xavier Simons, who forced Wanderers shot-

stopper into a good save on the hour mark.

Manager Steven Schumacher said: "I thought the game got away from us in a 10 to 15 game period.

"For large parts of the game, I thought we were in control but then for times we lost concentration, especially at the end of the first half.

"We got punished for it.

"I did think parts of our game were really good,

but we were missing that last bit of quality in the final third, as to only hit the target once from 15 shots is just not good enough.

"The majority of the game was fine – it was going the way that we wanted it to.

"But the way our opponents passed the ball in the final 15 minutes of the first half stretched us."

The two teams will meet again in March.

Junior jumping for joy in festive victory

WYCOMBE Wanderers ended a run of five games without a win in all competitions as they defeated Bolton Wanderers 2-1 at Adams Park.

In what was the Chairboys' final game of 2025 at their humble abode, they were fortunate not to go behind inside two minutes, when Thierry Gale struck the post from point-blank range.

He managed to connect a teasing ball from Amario Cozier-Dempsey, but struck the woodwork from less than a yard out as Wanderers cleared their lines.

Bolton continued to boss the opening exchanges, which eventually led to their goal on 16 minutes through.

A brilliant long diagonal cross from Josh Sweeney found the striker, who smashed home on the volley.

Wycombe eventually woke up and peppered the Trotters with numerous attacks, which saw them take the lead just before half-time.

Dan Harvie's cross was knocked down by Jamie Mullins who found Jack Grimmer.

The Scotsman smashed home his third of the season on 40 minutes, and two minutes later, the Chairboys turned it around through Armando Junior Quitirna.

The Bissau-Guinea native, on what was only his third league start since joining from Crawley Town in the summer, beat three players before firing past Teddy Sharman-Lowe.

It was his second goal of the season, and his first since August which came in a 1-1 draw away at Doncaster Rovers.

The second period saw both teams enjoy the ball with Bolton having the better of the chances.

Most notably through former Wycombe man Xavier Simons, who forced Will Norris into an awkward save on the hour mark.

Simons spent the second half of last season on loan with the Chairboys from Hull City, where he played 16 times.

The result is Wanderers' first in any capacity since the 3-2 victory against Lincoln City on November 22.

Additionally, out of the 11 games between the two clubs since their first meeting in August 2019, Wycombe have beaten Bolton on seven occasions.

Three have ended in wins for the Trotters, whilst one draw has been recorded.

That draw came exactly one year to the date as to when this fixture was played, a 0-0 draw at Adams Park.

Over the festive period, the Chairboys will travel to Luton Town on Boxing Day, before heading to the South West to face Plymouth Argyle on December 29.

They will begin the New Year at home to Cardiff City.

Goalscoring winger back in the frame

WYCOMBE Wanderers winger Armando Junior Quitirna received high praise from head coach Michael Duff following his stellar showing in the club's 2-1 home victory against Bolton Wanderers.

The 25-year-old, who joined the Chairboys on a free transfer from Crawley Town in the summer, started for only the third time in the league this season in the triumph against the Trotters.

He marked his first start since August with a fantastic solo effort to put Wycombe ahead just before half-time, after the Adams Park side had initially gone 1-0 down.

In the early stages of the contest, when the score was 0-0, the Bissau-Guinea native saw a fierce low shot of his go wide, moments before Bolton took the lead through a Thierry Gale volley on 16 minutes.

Wycombe equalised five minutes before the break thanks to a Jack Grimmer strike, and 120 seconds later,

Junior put the ball on his left foot and fired home, low and hard, to give Wanderers the lead, as well as the eventual win.

Speaking at full-time, Duff said: "I thought Junior was good.

"He got a bit leggy, and with the way the game was panning out, the other two [Fred Onyedinma and Sam Bell] were probably more secure on the ball.

"He has been unlucky [not to start in recent games], as the other two have probably been our best players, and he has had to wait.

"He nearly started last week [at Burton], but I didn't think he trained well enough, and I told him that, as he came off it on a couple of days.

"You have to be at it, and this week he got his rewards.

"He is a fan's favourite as he is a bum off seats type of player, and if I were to watch a game of football, it would be to watch players like him.

"It's good competition for places."



Junior (right) has scored two goals since joining in the summer (PA)

SPORT

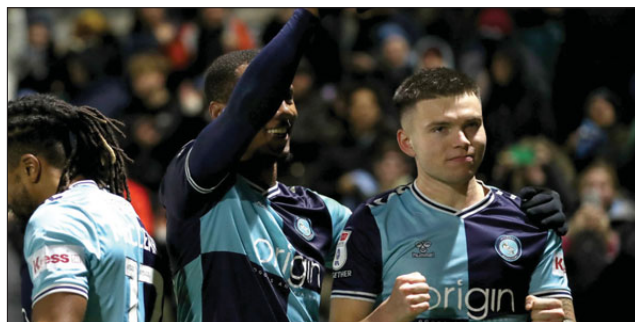
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Chairboys could make move for fan favourite Morley



Morley scored two goals for Wycombe in the 2024/25 season. (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers could make a move for Bolton Wanderers midfielder Aaron Morley, who is set to leave the club in January.

The 25-year-old, who enjoyed a very fruitful half-season with the Chairboys during the 2024/25 campaign on loan from the Trotters, hasn't featured for the latter since their 4-0 away thumping at Swindon Town in the second round of the FA Cup at the start of the month.

He has since missed the last three fixtures in which he has failed to make the matchday squad.

Despite this, he was seen warming up on his own at Adams Park ahead of the recent league match between

Wycombe and Bolton, which the former won 2-1.

Morley, who played 23 times and scored on two occasions for the Chairboys, was spotted talking to his former teammates before and after the game on December 20, as well as members of the club's board.

The Free Press understands that Luton Town are also interested in capturing his services.

After his successful loan spell in South Buckinghamshire 12 months ago, Wycombe offered to extend the deal until the end of that season, but this was rejected by Bolton.

His last game for Wycombe came on January 1 this year, in which he scored a last-minute penalty against Exeter City to secure a dramatic 2-1 win for the Chairboys at Adams Park.

This victory put Wanderers top of the League One table with 50 points.

He was recalled by Bolton that evening, and just 72 hours later, he would incredibly score another stoppage-time winner against Exeter to seal another 2-1 victory, this time, for his parent club.

It is believed that the asking price for Morley's services is around £500,000.

Duff wants Wycombe 'to be at it' on Boxing Day

By James Richings

WYCOMBE Wanderers head coach Michael Duff has admitted his side 'need to be at it' for when they face Luton Town on Boxing Day.

The Chairboys will travel to Kenilworth Road for the first time since October 2020, off the back of a hard-fought and well-earned 2-1 win over Bolton Wanderers.

The victory ended a run of five games without a win in all competitions, whilst ending the Trotters' seven-match unbeaten streak in the league.

For Luton, who are now under the stewardship of ex-Arsenal fan favourite Jack Wilshere, following Matt Bloomfield's sacking in October, who left Wycombe to join in January, they will be hoping to end their current slump.

The Hatters have not won any of their last four games, and last tasted three points in the league at the end of November, when they defeated Huddersfield Town 2-1 in Bedfordshire.

Wycombe last faced Luton when both sides were in the Championship during the 2020/21 season, with the ex-Premier League not losing any of their last five versus the Chairboys.

Duff, who was spotted watching Luton in action during their recent 3-2 away loss at Reading on December 20, said: "Luton brought on some good players off the bench, they have a good starting 11, so

overall, they have top, top players.

"I also went and watched them play against Huddersfield a few weeks ago.

"They played two different shapes, so we will prepare the way we always do, as we know we have to be at it.

"If we're not, we will get beaten."

Following their visit to Luton, Wycombe will then head to Devon to end the year against Plymouth Argyle – the third meeting between these two clubs since November 1.

Speaking about the club's timetable over the Christmas period, Duff said: "They [the players] will get Sunday [December 21] and Monday [December 22] off, and then it turns into a normal week, apart from the fact that everyone is eating and drinking.

"It is probably the one time of the year when it's hard being a footballer, as you have to stay disciplined.

"But the clue is in the name – they are professional footballers, and that's what they have to be – professional.

"They do get time off but it is another week for us."

Michael Duff has won 10 of his 20 games in charge of Wycombe since his arrival in September. Image: PA



Ex-Chairboy re-joins his old outfit as player/coach

FORMER Wycombe Wanderers midfielder Max Kretzschmar has departed Non League Wealdstone to join one of his old clubs.

The 32-year-old, who spent nine years with the Chairboys, three of which were in the first team between 2013 and 2016, left the Stones on December 19 to re-sign for Hampton & Richmond Borough as a player-coach.

The ex-Southampton youth team player spent the 2017/18 season with his new side, scoring 20 goals in 48 games.

Wealdstone manager, Sam Cox, said: "Max has displayed these and many more traits throughout his time as a Wealdstone player and deserves all the respect and gratitude afforded to him now and in the future.

"He has a wonderful opportunity in the next stage of his football career and leaves us with our thanks and best wishes for what comes next for him."

He spent three-and-a-half seasons with the Stones, scoring 25 goals in 131 games.

One of those appearances came against Wycombe, when the two sides met in the FA Cup second round at Grosvenor Vale in November last year, which the Chairboys won 2-0.

Speaking on his move back to Hampton, over seven years since first left, Kretzschmar said: "I've been driving around the last week or so just smiling and buzzing to come back as a player and in my other role as well.

After leaving Wycombe in 2016, Kretzschmar spent a year with Woking before joining Hampton in 2017.

His one season saw the club reach the National League South play-off final, where they lost to Braintree.

He would leave Hampton to rejoin Woking, spending four years there, before joining Wealdstone in 2022.

During his time at Adams Park, Kretzschmar scored nine goals in 85 games.