

Vinny takes heart from defeat

CHRIS Vinnicombe reckons Wanderers should be included alongside big-spending Cardiff City as promotion favourites if Saturday's match between the sides is anything to go by.

The Blues defender took heart from Wanderers' encouraging performance in their 1-0 opening-day defeat in Wales and says if Cardiff are the bookies favourites, Wycombe should be as well.

He said: "If Cardiff are one of the favourites then we can class ourselves as one of the favourites as well on that evidence.

"They were nothing special. They caught us in the first 20 minutes and scored their goal but that was it."

He says Wanderers can take encouragement from the way they took the game to Cardiff in the second half to leave 17,000 Welshmen screaming for the final whistle.

And he believes Wycombe will get even better when strikers Andy Rammell and Jermaine McSparran, regain full fitness.

They were both playing only their second games of the summer following injuries and Vinnicombe said: "They're going to get stronger and better. Once they've got three or four games under the belt they will start banging in the goals.

"There were a lot of good things to come out of the game and a few things for us to work on, but we know if we play like we did in the second half we will bury Wrexham on Saturday."

Cardiff boss Alan Cork agreed that Wycombe could gatecrash the promotion race if they can add goals to their game.

Wycombe enjoyed a glut of possession at Ninian Park but, with the exception of set-pieces, scarcely troubled Neil Alexander's goal.

Cork, the former Chesham United boss was relieved to bank three points after his £2 million

spending spree spawned a summer of incredible hype in South Wales.

A bumper attendance of 17,403 - City's biggest opening-day turnout for 30 years - created a cacophony of noise which, when the teams came out, which was as loud as anything the combined voices of 70,000 Liverpoolians and Mancunians managed a mile down the road at the Charity Shield the following day.

The noise inspired City, while Wanderers acted like startled rabbits caught in the glare of headlights and Cardiff pulverised Wanderers in a blistering opening 20 minutes.

Every time Wanderers' defenders kicked the ball into touch to relieve the pressure, City's long throw expert Andy Legg immediately hurled it straight back to keep them under the cosh.

Wycombe bowed to the pressure on 17 minutes. They left Michael Simpkins unmarked out wide, keeper Taylor misjudged his cross and Daniel Gabbidon punished him with an overhead kick.

Ninian Park erupted. Everyone sensed the flood gates were about to be opened but Wycombe suddenly found their feet and took the game to Cardiff leaving Cardiff's millionaire owner Sam Hammam shuffling nervously behind Taylor's goal.

But for all their football and endeavour Wycombe never really looked capable of forcing an equaliser.

Blues boss Lawrie Sanchez said: "We were half an hour late starting the season but once we started we were the better team. We gave them too much respect at the start and allowed their crowd to affect us but when we started passing the ball and doing what we are good at we were the better side."

His former Wimbledon team-mate and Cardiff counterpart Cork said: "It's three good three points. It's been five weeks of incredible hype. It's been Cardiff, Cardiff, in the press and its a relief that it's over."



In with a chance: Chris Vinnicombe (pictured against Cardiff) believes Blues are in with a shout just like their opening day rivals

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