

Footballers united in raising money for tsunami victims



United in sympathy: Wycombe Wanderers and Marlow players bow their heads during a minute's silence to remember the thousands of people who died from the tsunami

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WYCOMBE Wanderers and Marlow came together on Wednesday to raise more than £13,000 for victims of the tsunami disaster.

Chairboys legends like Simon Garner, Andy Rammell and Jamie Bates returned to play for Wycombe against a Marlow side

that also included former Wanderers Keith Scott, Mark West and Dave Carroll.

More than 750 fans paid to see the game at Oak Tree Road, which saw Marlow run out 2-1 winners but former Wanderers keeper Martin Taylor said that the score was unimportant.

He said: "At the end of the day, it wasn't about the result."

"I'm still alive and breathing. A lot of people aren't. You just don't really know what they're going through."

"A lot of them didn't have much money in the first place so this is a very good cause."

Bates said he had leapt at the chance to help out.

He said: "I saw the disaster on television. You don't expect these sort of things to happen."

"It's a great cause to help."

Marlow's player-manager Tim Cook even spoke to the FA so he could play after he was originally

not allowed to play the game because he faces a one-match ban.

Cook said: "We explained it was a big game for the club and for the area. They let me off and I'm very grateful."

Organiser and Marlow coach Jim Melvin: "Wycombe Wanderers did us proud and

Wycombe and Marlow fans did us proud."

The total amount of money raised is not yet known because organisers want to account for every penny so that all the money raised will go to help victims of the disaster.

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Stars return to raise cash for disaster fund

STARS of Wycombe Wanderers' epic FA Cup run to the semi-final returned to Bucks on Wednesday.

Jason Cousins, Jamie Bates, Martin Taylor and Andy Rammell all turned out for Wycombe as they took on Marlow in a friendly to raise money for victims of the tsunami disaster.

Simon Garner and Steve Brown also came out of retirement to help out, while Marlow featured former Chairboys favourites Mark West, Keith Scott and Dave Carroll in their line-up.

Garner said: "I said straight away I would do it. It just gave me a chance to help out."

As well as the chance to raise money, it was an opportunity for the old pros to meet up again.

Bates said: "I've not done anything serious since I retired. I've played with the kids in the park but that's my first game since the semi-final."

"You take how fit you are for granted when you're playing. Then you do this and it's really hard work!"

Taylor added: "It's like we've never been apart. The dressing-room banter was great. I coach at Burton so I've still got my fingers involved in football."

But the Blues glovesman admitted that the stars of the show weren't the players.

He said: "We've done nothing - it's the people who turned out who've done it. All it's cost me is my petrol money, which is nothing."



One Simon Garner: The Wycombe favourite shows fans his skills

Around 750 fans turned out to watch the game, with more than £13,000 raised from the event.

Marlow coach Jim Melvin and chairman Terry Staines managed to bring in around £7,000 just from sponsorship, while more cash came in from the raffle, with signed Celtic, Crystal Palace, QPR and Wycombe Wanderers shirts, as well as a signed Chelsea football, among the prizes.

Melvin said: "The reaction I got from the people of Marlow and High Wycombe is what I expected to be honest and people can be justifiably proud of themselves."

The final score was 2-1 but Chairboys boss John Gorman wasn't in the least bit bothered that his team lost.

He said: "The result was never important. It was all about raising money for such a good cause."

"I think the supporters enjoyed it as much as the old players did."

It was hard to keep track of the players on show, and even Sven Goran Eriksson would have raised an eyebrow at all the substitutions being made.

Marlow even had two players in number 12 shirts on the field, while Wanderers managed to have 12 players on the pitch at one point in the second half when Gorman brought himself on, to the delight of the crowd.

Understandably, a younger Marlow side showed most of the running, with Wycombe's players occasionally showing their age.

Garner said: "When you're a pro, you always want to win but it's hard when you're old."

"You can still do it in the mind but it's in the legs where you have a problem."

The first half finished goalless, with Scott guilty of ballooning a sitter over the bar after West had dragged his shot straight to him.

Robert Charles made it 1-0 to Marlow on 52 minutes after being played through by West.

Rammell showed he has not lost his predatory instincts when he tapped in from six yards to equalise. Marlow ended up on top when new recruit Jason Bowler grabbed the winner midway through the second half, though no-one seemed to care about the scoreline.

Carroll said: "It's a good cause - that's all it boils down to."

