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## Blues face defender shortage

### WYCOMBE MAY AGAIN BE SHORT OF FIT CENTRE-BACKS FOR DAGGERS

BLUES emerged from their midweek win at Morecambe without any fresh injury concerns but, just like they were on Tuesday, they could again be without two of their three centre-halves tomorrow.

Gareth Ainsworth admitted Anthony Stewart is unlikely to make it as he continues to battle a knee injury while fellow central defender Danny Rowe will not be risked if his groin injury hasn't fully cleared up.

But the Blues boss, who has so far been unable to pick the same side two matches running, says he would have no qualms continuing with right-back Sido Jombati as an emergency centre-back after the Portuguese ace produced a five-star performance in that role at Morecambe.

A dip into the loan market is not ruled out either.

Ainsworth said at the previous week's fans forum: "Premier League clubs are reluctant to loan their players to League Two clubs but we have a couple of clubs that possibly could."

## Money is not key to promotion

### PLAYERS BELIEVE BIG SPENDING IS NOT GUARANTEE TO BRING SUCCESS

BLUES duo Matt Bloomfield and Joe Jacobson reckon spending money may not be the key to League Two success this season.

Wanderers have had to look on with envy as the likes of Luton, Portsmouth, Cambridge and Oxford have invested heavily in their squads this summer in a bid to climb out of the division, while Wycombe have the smallest squad in the league.

But speaking at last Thursday night's fans' forum, the two players argued that spending big might not be the best policy and the early league table with Leyton Orient, Wycombe and Hartlepool sharing top spot, suggests they may have a point.

Jacobson said: "There are teams in this league that are desperate to go up this season and who have really been throwing money at it to have a quick fix and I'm not sure that's the best way to do it."

Bloomfield added: "These teams that have spent a lot of money will have all the expectation and pressure on their shoulders while we are the underdogs."

Meanwhile, and sticking with the theme of spending money, Jacobson revealed that he is studying on a finance course in his spare time.

He told the audience: "I'm studying on a finance course. I did an A level in finance and am doing some work experience next week."

# Ainsworth hails team after breaking record

### WANDERERS 'OOZING PRIDE' AFTER RECORD-BREAKING VICTORY

BLUES chief Gareth Ainsworth hailed his heroes after they set a new club record for the best start to a Football League season with Tuesday's 1-0 win at Morecambe.

His side overcame a defensive injury crisis to make it three straight wins with no goals conceded thanks to a second-half headed winner from centre half Aaron Pierre.

And on a night when the Blues were down to their last fit central defender it was fitting that he should come up trumps with the 70th-minute winner.

Ainsworth said: "What a start to the season! Records like that are great. I didn't tell the boys before the game because I didn't want to put any pressure on them but when I said after the game 'you've just become record breakers as the first Wycombe team to win three in a row at the start of the season' you could see the pride oozing out of them."

They did it despite enduring a five-hour plus coach journey on the day, despite again not having enough players to fill the bench and having to change their defence for the fourth match running because two of their three centre backs were injured.

But Sido Jombati performed like a thoroughbred as he was brought in from his usual right-back berth to play as a central defender and you will be hard pressed to see a better performance in that position from anyone in League Two all season.

He read the game like a continental sweeper and was calmness per-



Sido Jombati performed like a thoroughbred despite being played out of position. Picture: ANITA ROSS MARSHALL

sonified in the heat of a battle.

Ainsworth said: "Sido can play anywhere along that backline. He's as cultured on the ball as you would expect from the Portuguese, he reads the game really well and is improving all the time. To get him from Cheltenham a year ago was an absolute snip and to extend his contract by three more years is good business for Wycombe Wanderers."

While Jombati strolled through the most difficult of tests with ease, it was his central defensive partner Pierre who headed the winning

goal from Joe Jacobson's free-kick.

Ainsworth said: "That's what he's got in his locker. He's solid at the back and he's always got a goal in him and it won't be long before he starts turning some heads as well."

Similar to their win at Barnet on Saturday, Wanderers had to soak up an awful lot of pressure, with both Michael Harriman and the bandaged Joe Jacobson both having to clear off their own line and the Blues having to defend numerous corners, but their confidence in these difficult situations was

summed up by an outrageous free kick from 30 yards which Paul Hayes scooped up for Jacobson, who was standing next to him, to thud a volley just wide.

Ainsworth said: "It wasn't a game for the purists but sometimes you have to grind out results. It was a game of two halves and I told the guys that the onslaught they took in the first half they had to give back to Morecambe in the second half."

"There's a lot of football still to be played yet but it's great to be unbeaten for the first three."

## WANDERERS: Thompson's goal for Holloway Aiming to help out young striker

GARRY Thompson opened his Wycombe account with a double in Saturday's win at Barnet – but says nothing would give him greater satisfaction than seeing young striker Aaron Amadi-Holloway beat him to 15 goals this season.

Thirty-four-year-old Thompson scored 12 times for Notts County in the league above last season and has set his sights on topping that but he is also carrying another ambition.

He said: "My target is to better my goal return from last year but the manager has given me extra responsibility to help the young lads as well and if I could help Aaron Amadi-Holloway to 15 goals I'd see no greater achievement because he can be a very special player."

It is another indication – as if any

were needed after his performances in Wanderers' opening matches – that Thompson has fully embraced the club's one-for-all attitude.

Thompson said: "I love it here. They're a great set of lads and when we went to France in pre-season that really bonded us and helped us new lads settle in. Everyone wants to work hard and you can't beat that type of atmosphere."

He is working towards his coaching badges and was delighted when boss Gareth Ainsworth asked him to take Amadi-Holloway under his wing.

Amadi-Holloway would have learned a lot from watching Tommo's masterclass at Barnet. His first goal was out of the very top drawer when he received the ball with his



A thoughtful Garry Thompson. Picture: ANITA ROSS MARSHALL

back to goal, before creating a yard of space and bending a fierce left-foot shot into the back of the Bees net; his second was a coolly-con-

verted injury time penalty when he waited for the keeper to commit and slotted the ball the other side as he completed lesson one.