

O'Nien a key player: boss of Chairboys



Signed up: Luke O'Nien

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth believes tying Luke O'Nien down to a three-year contract is a big positive for the club.

The 21-year-old put pen to paper on his new deal, which will keep him at the club until 2019, on Friday.

Such is Ainsworth's confidence in O'Nien he feels the former Watford man is one of a cohort of youngsters he can build his team around for the next few seasons.

"You have your O'Niens, [Michael] Harrimans, [Aaron] Pierres and [Danny] Rows and those are the sort of players you can build your club around," Ainsworth explained.

"I don't want to miss anyone out because all the players are important to me, but we have a group of young players here who really epitomise what we are about.

"Luke is huge [for us]. I made my mind up after five minutes of seeing Luke O'Nien and he was everything we want at the club."

A knee injury has put a halt to an impressive debut campaign at Adams Park and O'Nien has not featured for the Chairboys since the end of March.

His five goals this season make him the club's second most potent midfielder behind Harriman and his energy has been sorely missed in the heart of Wycombe's midfield.

Time heals injuries though, and the sense at the club is time will be a precious commodity for O'Nien as he continues to develop as a player.

Ainsworth, in particular, is eager to continue working with O'Nien and believes he still has some rough edges to smooth out if he is to fulfil his potential.

"Luke is not the finished article by any means and he has a lot to learn. He does try to take on everybody's jobs and thinks he can do everything," said Ainsworth.

"Sometimes we need to teach young players what they can do and get them to stick to doing that well.

"I think he is a great signing who is one of the few players to slip through the net at under-21 level. I am really excited to continue working with Luke.

"The three-year contract gives us plenty of time to work with him, and gives him plenty of time to blossom into the player I believe he can be, which is a superb attacking midfielder."

Getting the deal done ahead of the end of the season represents a further plus for Ainsworth, as O'Nien's strong showings will certainly have made him a target for other clubs in the summer transfer window.