

Ladies get off to winning start

Wycombe Wanderers Ladies record 5-3 victory in opening league game.

Tara Woodward scores twice to help Wanderers to victory, writes Sam Hayward. Photos by PRiME Media Images.

Wycombe Wanderers Ladies 5 – 3 Alton Ladies

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Author: Sam Hayward (Assistant Manager)

A superb comeback in their first league game of the Regional Women's Football League Division One season secured all three points for Wycombe Wanderers Ladies against Alton Ladies after a start that can certainly be described as 'shaky'.

Starting at a significant pace, Alton were two goals up before Wycombe were out of the changing rooms. A mix-up at the back gifted the first and a controversial refereeing call creating confusion in the Wycombe defence presented the Alton forward with an easy finish. Wycombe had a bit of a mountain to climb after only 10 minutes of the game being played.

It seemed Wanderers were struggling to deal with the fast pressing nature of Alton's game and meant that settling in to their familiar patient, passing style was proving difficult. The first 20 minutes of the game were dominated by Alton and Wycombe were becoming more frustrated as the half drew on.

All of a sudden however, something seemed to click. Wycombe's passing became crisper, hitting their target and stretching the previously authoritative Alton midfield. Gaps were starting to open up and the Blues relaxed and were finally playing their game.

Wycombe dominated the final 25 minutes of the half and the breakthrough they'd been threatening eventually came on 40 minutes as Emma Dean played in Tara Woodward and the ever-calm, diminutive forward went round the keeper superbly before slotting in. Wanderers were back in it and from this moment you could feel the game was there for the taking if they wanted it enough.

The second half started as the first ended. Wycombe pressed Alton back and within five minutes of the second half, the tireless Chante Inniss had struck twice to put the home side 3-2 up. The first, a through ball played by Newberry followed by Inniss cutting in and firing a rasping drive in to the top corner. The second, a wonderfully composed left foot curling shot that left the away team's keeper rooted to the spot.

Moments later however, Alton scored out of nowhere as a speculative effort was hit from well outside the box and sailed over Amy Batkin's arms in the Wanderers goal. 3-3. Wow.

Wycombe weren't rattled in the slightest however and with just under 10 minutes left, a corner from 2017/18's Players' Player of the Year Christina O'Connor evaded everyone but the face of captain Char Bagshaw and the ball found the back of the net. Wycombe were deservedly back in front and it felt that this time they'd stay there.

With only a couple of minutes left, last season's top scorer Woodward was through on goal again and tucked the ball past the keeper to secure the three points to spark huge celebrations from the Wanderers players and staff.

Wycombe Wanderers: Batkin, Dean, (Lennard), Hudson, O'Neill (Hall), Newberry, Todd, Bagshaw (c), Messitt, (Southby), O'Connor, Inniss, Woodward.

Meanwhile, Wycombe Wanderers Under 18s recorded a fantastic 6-1 victory over Tilehurst Panthers, as Andy Baker reports.

On a difficult pitch, which was hard, undulating and with lots of grass cuttings left on it, the girls dominated the game from start to finish.

The girls played some good attacking football, dominating possession and created numerous chances first half, and after missing a number of chances, eventually went 2-0 up.

Tilehurst did look threatening at times in the first half in terms of counter attacking and taking advantage of Wanderers' self-inflicted mistakes by a little bit of over playing or failing to move the ball quickly in the defensive third. Tilehurst scored to make it 2-1 before half-time, with a really good individual break-away goal.

So when Yas scored direct from a corner on the stroke of half time it was a big relief, well deserved but also a key goal in the context of the game.

Wycombe dominated the game even more in the second period, and were camped in the Tilehurst half for the majority of the second half. Again they created many chances and eventually ran out 6-1 winners.

And a second WWFC U18s team drew 3-3 with Wycombe Saints U17s; Lily Chowdhry grabbing a hat-trick.







