

Wycombe Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth proud after losing to Reading on penalties in the Carabao Cup

By [Nicholas Tunney](#) Sports reporter

Wycombe Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth hailed his side's excellent performance as they narrowly lost to Championship side Reading in the first round of the Carabao Cup on Tuesday night.

With the sides locked at 1-1 at the end of normal time, Reading scraped through 4-2 on penalties with Danny Loader slotting home the decisive spot kick and Nick Freeman and Fred Onyedinma saw their efforts saved.

Alex Samuel had given the Blues the lead with a delightful header before George Puscas equalised for the visitors.

Substitute Adebayo Akinfenwa almost won it at the death when his superb header crashed off the crossbar but Ainsworth was extremely proud of his players' efforts.

He said: "I was proud man before the penalties, a proud man during the penalties and a proud man after the penalties.

"The boys performed out of their skins but they are doing that every week in training. It is awesome. We haven't lost a game yet in 90 minutes from coming back in June and what pleased me most was how we got to grips with the game.

"We have taken a Championship side right to the edge and we almost won it in the last few seconds. A header off the bar is agonising to see.

"I thought in large periods we were the better side but credit to Reading, they are a good side. They needed a win and they got a win on penalties and I have a lot of respect for them.

"Some outstanding performances tonight. Giles Phillips and Jamie Mascoll were excellent and I want to keep these expectation levels where they should be and that is just improve on last season.

"Sometimes it is burning bright. We are playing some great stuff."

The whole side performed admirably against a side in the tier above them but Ainsworth also praised midfielder Dominic Gape, who was captain on the night in the absence of Adam El-Abd and Matt Bloomfield.

He added: "He is a future captain without a doubt. He is a very intelligent boy.

"He took his penalty with a real captain's prowess and it is fantastic for Dom to do what he did."