

# Opposition View: Sheff Wed

Alicia Povey gets the lowdown from James Mappin.



**It's 23rd versus 24th tomorrow night as Wycombe make the trip up to Sheffield Wednesday in the Championship. Both teams will be hoping to get a crucial three points on the board in what could be a very tight game at Hillsborough.**

In the lead up to tomorrow night's match, Alicia Povey has been talking to [James Mappin](#) of the [Wednesday 'Til I Die Podcast](#) about what to expect from the Owls this time round.

**Both Wycombe and Sheffield Wednesday are coming into this fixture off the back of losses, but what has recent form been like more generally for the Owls?**

Since Tony Pulis was sacked at the end of last year, Neil Thompson has stepped up and results have started to pick-up. We've picked up four wins from six and before the defeat to Millwall, we were one of the in-form sides in the league. That's promotion winning form.

The difference in the style of play from what it was like under Tony Pulis is vast. Thompson has got the lads playing with a lot more freedom and attacking intent. One of the main differences we've seen is that we're starting to score more goals and pick up more points.

**It's bound to be a tight game like it was at Adams Park in October which ended 1-0 to the Chairboys; What will Sheffield Wednesday be looking to put right after that meeting?**

We had all of the possession but just couldn't capitalise on it. Up until recently we've struggled to hit the back of the net with us being (up until recently) the worst team in terms of goals scored, but Callum Paterson has now scored five in his last eight and bagged in each of his last two so hopefully he can get on the scoresheet once again.

**The Owls have still managed to bag 25 points this season compared to Wycombe's 16. Who have been the key players in getting those points on the board?**

I'd say that Barry Bannan has been the most influential player and has been ever since he joined the club. He's probably the most under-rated player in the league in not only my

opinion but from national pundits too. He has the ability to pick out a pass that no-one else can see and turn a game with a moment of brilliance.

The other player has already been mentioned, which is Paterson; our leading goal-scorer with six league goals to his name so far this season. His goals have been key this season since we signed him in the summer. Not counting the Millwall game last time out, each of the goals he has scored has led to a Sheffield Wednesday win and his work rate is second to none - always chasing down lost causes and not being afraid to put his head where it hurts.

Another player that I have to mention is goalkeeper Kieran Westwood. Westwood has been in and out of the side during his six years at the club due to reasons that only he and the former managers will know, but Thompson has stuck with him since he's taken temporary charge and I think he's one of, if not the best goalkeeper in the league for not only his shot-stopping but also his ability to command the area and organise his defence. It's something that we severely lack when he's out of the side.

**The Championship fixture calendar is looking pretty daunting in the next couple of months. Will Neil Thompson be rotating the squad? Who could we see more of that we might not have before?**

I would say so yes, but he's not done that so far. In fact, we've only made one change in the last three outings, something that we haven't seen throughout this season. If Thompson was to rotate the squad then I'd be looking at the likes of Andre Green, Kadeem Harris and Liam Shaw to come into the side. Andre Green was signed on a free in January and made his debut vs. Coventry, Harris was a regular in the side last season but has been used recently as more of an impact sub, and Shaw is a youngster that has broken into the squad but suffered a minor setback with injury. He came on as a sub in our game against Millwall so he would be one that we could see make a start on Tuesday night.

**What weaknesses do you think the Chairboys will be looking to exploit on Tuesday?**

If we go behind then we struggle to overcome a deficit. The last time that we came from behind to win was over a year ago so an early goal for Wycombe could prove vital. And on the flip-side, we struggle to finish teams off. If we go 1-0 up then we never push on for that second goal. We naturally sit back and invite the opposition onto us always giving the opposition a chance to get back into the game.

**Similarly, how do you think Sheffield Wednesday will try to break Wycombe down?**

One thing that we've seen since Thompson has taken charge is that he likes to play on the front foot and take the game to the opposition. This worked well against both Bournemouth and Preston in recent weeks, forcing them to make mistakes, one which directly led to the first goal being scored against Bournemouth last week.

If he decides to play with five at the back with wing-backs, which looks to be his favoured formation, then you'll see the likes of Liam Palmer and Matt Penney get forward and support in the attacks.

Callum Paterson, by his own admission, doesn't score 'worldies' and that rings true in that all of his goals so far this season have come inside the 18-yard box. But he'll be looking to be in the right place and the right time once again and he'll be hungry to add another goal

to his tally.

**Any early team news for the Owls that we might have missed?**

Osaze Urhoghide was dropped for the last game vs. Millwall presumably due to the high number of fixtures that we've been playing, so he could be one that comes back into the starting XI. I'd be expecting a few changes due to the fixture stack, but then again, I said that for the last two or three games and that never happened.

**In this battle at the bottom, who do you think will come out on top? What's your score prediction?**

I'm going to have to go for a win for the Owls. This is a massive game which we just have to win if we're going to have any aspirations of staying up this season. This is the 'game in hand' which we've been talking about and a win will put us level on points with both Birmingham and Derby County, and putting more pressure on the other clubs above who'll be looking over their shoulder.

I'm going to go for a 2-0 win for the home side.

I just want to finish off by personally thanking those 500 or so Wycombe fans that came to Hillsborough the last time we met back in 2012. I can't believe that it has been so long since that memorable game for us. That day and that game will always be remembered, for obvious reasons, but the Wycombe fans sang for the full 90-minutes - Oh, and one fan took a decent video of us singing 'Hi ho Silver Lining' before the game which has racked up a fair few views on YouTube over the years!