

Reading reflections

We pick out the key stories from Tuesday's 1-0 win.



We take a deeper look at Tuesday's excellent 1-0 victory over the Royals at Adams Park.

Penalty drama

This was the second match this season where both sides have been awarded a penalty (it also occurred in the League 1 play-off semi-final at Fleetwood), and a rare occasion of two penalties in a match being missed or saved. There's been plenty of spot-kick drama in the past three months in particular; two awarded (and scored) at Barnsley, one converted against Coventry, a strong handball shout turned down against Queens Park Rangers, a successful 12-yard finish in the FA Cup against Preston, a contentious award for Brentford, one scored and not given to the opposition despite strong appeals at Huddersfield, one not awarded for a possible foul against Derby, and now two given and not scored against the Royals.

Stockdale's return

At the end of January, David Stockdale couldn't get a game – within two weeks he had two clubs desperate for his services, with loan club Stevenage and then the Blues suffering injuries to their regular no.1s and providing the opportunity for the former Fulham and Brighton man to step into action. He's performed heroics in both Wanderers appearances so far, added to his last-minute penalty save on his final appearance for Stevenage, racking up four clean sheets in his last five matches. Prior to Saturday's game at Millwall, he hadn't appeared in the Championship since May 2018.

Ryan's red

Ryan Tafazolli collected a third red card of his career with the tugback that led to the Royals' penalty last night, and faces a one-game ban as a consequence. Some have argued that the attacker may have been marginally offside, and that the foul may have taken place marginally outside the box, but the red card stands uncontested - and the penalty was missed, anyway. Tafazolli's return to the side from an ankle injury sustained in September has coincided with an upturn in fortunes for the Blues defensively (he missed the 7-2 defeat at Brentford) and has also created the opportunity for Josh Knight to move into a midfield position, with Tafazolli, Knight and Anthony Stewart being all fit and available at the same time.

Fred's goal this time

Fred Onyedinma was initially credited with the winner at Birmingham in November but had to wait for his first Championship goal, with that one at St Andrew's later being clarified as being an own goal. He netted against Preston and Tottenham in the FA Cup ties, but put his name on the scoresheet in the Championship for the first time in three years (a winner for Millwall at Birmingham, coincidentally) with that close-range finish from Anthony Stewart's knockdown against Reading.

Happy days

In the last eight months, Wycombe have won seven league/play-off matches on five different days of the week – Friday and Monday triumphs in the play-offs, plus two Tuesdays, one Wednesday and two Saturdays in the Championship. Next up is a meeting with Norwich City on Sunday...

One major scalp – now for another?

You probably have to go back seven years for the last time Wycombe won a league game against a side as many or more places higher than them in the table, at an advanced stage in the season. League 2 leaders Chesterfield lost 1-0 at Adams Park against a Wanderers side slipping towards the trapdoor into non-league. The victory over Reading trumps those against Sheffield Wednesday, Birmingham, Cardiff and Huddersfield based on the league position of the opponent, and gives confidence ahead of forthcoming games against promotion-chasing Norwich, Watford and Stoke.

Friends reunited

All eyes were on the quartet facing former clubs, and each were involved in significant ways. Uche Ikpeazu won Wycombe's penalty, but saw his spot-kick saved by the same keeper who'd performed heroics for Reading in the shootout success in the League Cup at Adams Park in 2019. Garath McCleary's cross started the move that led to the game's only goal, and Jordan Obita played his part in earning a third clean sheet in his seventh appearance at left-back. For Reading, former Chairboys youth-teamer Josh Laurent almost clinched an equaliser, but his low shot crept narrowly past the far post.

Digging in

Fans will often look to the subs' bench for the potentially match-winning changes that their manager can make if things aren't going their way, but the substitutions made by Gareth Ainsworth played a big part in shoring up the defensive unit. Dominic Gape and Curtis Thompson – usually the first names on the teamsheet when fully fit – bolstered the midfield, with Jason McCarthy providing extra defensive cover after Tafazolli's red card. Defending from the front is a key role when protecting a narrow lead, and Admiral Muskwe did an excellent job in his brief cameo, holding the ball up and winning free-kicks high up the pitch to alleviate the pressure.

The emergence of Anis Mehmeti

Former Norwich youth-team player Mehmeti was fast-tracked into the side as early as October, having been signed as a prospect for the future, and has now started each of the last five matches, playing 400 minutes in that time – more than his entire total before that stretch.