



# Cambridge United Website

## Match Report

**The points were shared at the Cledara Abbey Stadium as a late barrage of pressure saw Cambridge United claim a deserved 1-1 draw against Sky Bet League One promotion-chasers Wycombe Wanderers...**

After an evenly-matched start to the game, the U's were undone against the run of play when Cameron Humphreys drilled home. Mid-way through the second half, the Chairboys were reduced to 10 men when Sonny Bradley received a straight red card, but a saved penalty kept the lead intact. Nonetheless, the hosts continued to plug away to ensure a point apiece courtesy of a sublime Josh Stokes curler.

Adamant to showcase an instant response from the comeback defeat at Rotherham United four days earlier, Garry Monk named two changes to his starting XI as Kell Watts and Elias Kachunga made way for Paul Digby and Dom Ballard, who made his first start for the Club. Elsewhere, fellow new signing, Ben Stevenson, was named on the bench.

The U's orchestrated the first chance of the afternoon on the 4<sup>th</sup> minute when, after calmly advancing play, Digby – on his 200<sup>th</sup> start and not long after picking up an early booking – was presented with the opportunity to pull the trigger from an angle in the area, but it was comfortably caught by Franco Ravizzoli.

Two minutes later, the Chairboys caused a scare when Ipswich Town loanee Humphreys floated a delivery towards Daniel Udoh inside the six-yard box, but the forward perhaps should have done better as his header sailed off target.

Hearts were in mouth on 14 when Wycombe looked to unlock the home defence with a pass, but Jubril Okedina's sliced clearance almost backfired and trickled back towards goal – fortunately for the U's it bobbed out for a corner.

With the attempts accumulating in the opening stages, Stokes tested his luck with an ambitious shot on the volley from 20 yards out, which generated enough power but not the accuracy as it flew just over the crossbar.

Ballard embarked on a driving run on the 26<sup>th</sup> minute, showcasing strength to outmuscle his man and trickery to dance into the box, but just as he was about to pull the trigger play was brought back for a foul.

Heading into the half hour mark, United had been on top and were agonisingly close to taking the lead when a pinpoint, lofted ball from Jordan Cousins was met by Ballard, who showed intelligence to make the run, touch it down with his chest and then strike with venom from a tight angle which rattled the crossbar.

Against the run of play, Sam Grace's side drew first blood 34 minutes in when Beryly Lubala recycled play down the left flank and opted for the near post. It was matched by Jack Stevens but fell invitingly to Humphreys, who fired home past a sea of defenders.

The visitors had now flipped momentum and almost extended their advantage during the next attack when Udoh skipped past a man and teed up Humphreys from close distance, who drilled just wide of Stevens' left post.

Five minutes from the break, set piece specialist Luke Leahy was awarded a free-kick from 20 yards out when Fred Onyedima was fouled, but the full-back fired it off target.

Whilst they were behind heading into the second half, United were still in the contest, but were forced into an important stop on 49 when Onyedinma's cross was powered at by the head of Declan Skura from a matter of yards – which was importantly denied by a rooted to the spot Stevens, with Lubala firing the rebound wide.

As the match progressed, Monk's men were yet to up their tempo and felt quite limited by an imposing Chairboys outfit who were dictating well. However, the hosts felt aggrieved not to have been awarded a penalty when Ballard was wrestled to the ground inside the penalty area when touching down Michael Morrison's long ball.

A double substitution on 62 immediately raised the stakes as Elias Kachunga played in an advancing Liam Bennett - whose strike went out of play for a corner - which caused Bradley to receive his marching orders and the U's a penalty after a clash with Morrison. Stokes stepped up from 12 yards and struck towards the top corner, but Ravizzoli got a firm hand to deny and keep the lead intact.

Although the save initially rocked United, they still had time and a player advantage on their side as they began to enjoy more possession where it mattered.

On the 76<sup>th</sup> minute, a deep cross from James Brophy was met by striker Ryan Loft at the back post, who couldn't get his angles right as it flashed past the post with his back to goal.

Continuing to turn the screw and bombard forwards, Ben Stevenson almost netted on his debut when Morrison headed back into the mixer, but the central midfielder could only direct it onto the roof of the net.

On the 82<sup>nd</sup> minute, the pressure paid off and the U's were level when Stokes shrugged off his marker and unleashed a delightful curler from 25 yards to raise the roof.

Desperate to turn the game on its head and provide extra drama, Bennett picked out Esapa Osong with a delivery, which found its way to Kachunga for the final touch, but the shot on goal was weak and claimed by Ravizzoli.

During the six minutes of additional time, where only one winner looked likely with the Wanderers out to protect the point, space opened up for Brophy to pull the trigger from distance down the right, which was well denied by the reflexes of the visiting goalkeeper.

Ultimately, there was not enough time to secure maximum points as Cambridge were forced to settle for a point, which extended their improved form to just one defeat from their last four in the third tier.

Up next, the U's make the journey to Sincil Bank next Saturday (8<sup>th</sup> February) to pit their wits against Lincoln City.