



# Exeter City Website

## Match Report

City start the season with a blinder

### **Exeter City began the 2023/24 in style with a rampant and convincing 3-0 at Wycombe Wanderers.**

Jack Aitchison's strike after 28 seconds set City on their way, before Will Aimson's prod made it two by the 4th minute. James Scott added gloss in the final ten minutes as the Grecians set Adams Park alight.

Manager Gary Caldwell named a starting XI which included six new signings making their full competitive debuts, with a further two more on the bench, alongside Kyle Taylor, who would come on for his first league minutes in 16 months.

It was a fantastic start to the season for the Grecians as they took the lead after only 28 seconds. A header won by Alex Hartridge was headed up high causing an issue for the Wycombe defence, leading to a miss kick at the back. Jack Aitchison latched onto Demetri Mitchell's ball, slotting past Max Stryjek with ease.

Minutes later and a corner into the box from Pierce Sweeney pinballed around the six-yard box before City captain Aimson scrambled the ball home to make it two, barely 180 seconds into the match.

Everything was going City's way in the opening ten minutes; this time City were awarded a penalty. After beautiful link up play between Sam Nombe and Mitchell, the latter was felled in the box by Stryjek. Up-stepped Nombe but his strong penalty was met by the even stronger hand of Stryjek to send it away for a corner, as City missed the chance to take an incredible lead.

There was an early un-planned change for City as Mitchell was taken from the field with a suspected injury, being replaced by debutant Vincent Harper for his first outing in a competitive City fixture.

After a period of fireworks courtesy of the Grecians, the game finally started to settle down halfway through the first half, but the game was starting to frustrate Wycombe with two yellows for the home side, coming by way of Kane Vincent-Young and Harry Boyes for two late challenges.

As the half was ticking on City kept the pressure on the home side, this time it was Tom Carroll aiming to turn provider as he sent a free kick into the Wycombe box. It was only cleared as far as Rankine who smashed a rocket of a strike straight down the neck of Stryjek who gathered it up.

It was a much stronger start to the second half for the home side as they were seeing more of the ball in the attacking third. Their first chance came via Boyes who sent a looping cross to the back post but a fantastic diving header interception from Hartridge cleared the ball away.

There was an early second half booking for Sweeney as City's Irishman took one for the team stopping what could have been a promising attack for the home side, but City were still in

charge of the game with a quarter left to play, showing their strength from set pieces, whether that be from Carroll or Sweeney.

It was a Carroll delivery which caused a problem for the Wycombe defence next up, but it was Stryjek with a strong punch to clear away whilst also clearing out a few of his own players.

It was a double change for City on the 72<sup>nd</sup> minute as Gary was looking to keep City on for a win. Leaving the pitch were Rankine and Carroll, to be replaced James Scott and another City debutant in Reece Cole.

City made it 3-0 with eight minutes of normal time remaining as another defensive mistake for Wycombe had the ball find kindly to Scott, who took his opportunity. As he spun round, he rifled the ball into the top right-hand corner, right in front of the travelling Grecian support.

Straight after the goal, City made a double change with goal scorer Aitchison and Jules replaced by Cheick Diabate and Taylor, with the latter getting a raucous round of applause after a 16 month lay-off.

The next game for City is the return of the Carabao Cup, as the Grecians take on Crawley Town on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August at St James Park.