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## SPORT

## More threat need up top?

WYCOMBE boss Gareth Ainsworth has admitted that the 'quality going forward could have been better' in their 0-0 draw away at Lincoln City.

The Chairboys only mustered up five shots during the contest with one of their attempts being on target.

The Imps managed to create 11 goal-scoring chances but only forced one save from Max Stryjek in the Wanderers goal.

Overall, Garath McCleary, Anis Mehmeti, and Brandon Hanlan were all kept at bay by a stubborn Lincoln defence, with their boss Mark Kennedy opting for a back five versus Wycombe.

Speaking on his attacking players, Ainsworth said: "I said to the forwards that at times, they will be like seagulls feeding scraps.

"Lincoln stopped some of our key attacking players in Garath McCleary and Anis Mehmeti, but we have also stopped their players too and that is a testament to Lincoln and the work they have done on us.

"The quality going forward could have been better so when we get those openings, we have got to make them count.

"But we're buoyed by that point today as defensively, we are solid and we'll take that positivity into next week's game against Ipswich."

Wycombe are unbeaten in their last eight games against Lincoln.

## Positive point on the road

GARETH Ainsworth believes his side's 0-0 draw away at Lincoln City is a 'great point' on the road.

In a game of few chances at Sincil Bank, Brandon Hanlan came closest to scoring for the Chairboys when his effort in the second half hit the post.

Speaking on the performance, Ainsworth said: "We had plenty of corners, hit the post, and their keeper made a fantastic save from their own defender.

"But it's an excellent point to take home and that point may mean something come May.

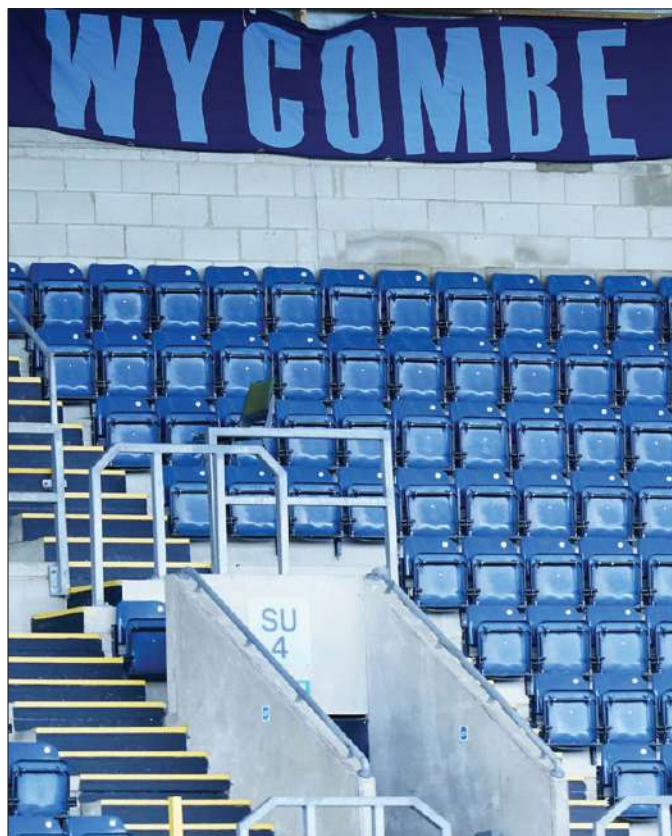
"Everyone is saying that we're having a bad season, but we're four points off fourth which is brilliant.

"I think we'll be in the play-off pack come the end of the season and hopefully, we'll look back on Lincoln away as a great point.

"We cancelled each other out as Lincoln didn't have a real clear-cut chance which I am really proud about."

Wycombe's final away game of 2022 will be against Plymouth Argyle on Thursday, December 29.

# Chairgirls beaten by league leaders



The Chairgirls lost 2-0 at home to league leaders Abingdon United, one week after they beat Oxford City 4-3 in Oxfordshire (PA)

A BITTERLY cold afternoon at the Burnham 1878 stadium survived a pitch inspection as the Wycombe Wanderers Women lost 2-0 at home to top-of-the-table Abingdon United.

Coming off the back of a much-improved performance last weekend where they defeated Oxford City 4-3 in Oxfordshire, there was renewed confidence and expectation this week.

However, several absentees saw Wycombe lose some key players.

Despite this, the team gave a great account of themselves against a strong Abingdon side.

The Chairgirls' Achilles heel came back to haunt them again as they let in an early goal on just three minutes after a shaky start.

The girls, shaken by this early setback failed to settle and a second goal soon arrived for Abingdon on the 12th minute.

The players did finally settle and started to create some chances of their own but could not get any goals back going in 2-0 down at half time.

The second half provided a much-improved performance.

A tweak in personnel at half-time provided some more creativity in midfield and Wycombe continued to press for goals coming close on a few occasions.

Despite further changes, the girls could not fight their way back in to the match and final-

ly fell to defeat.

Manager Carl Simon said: "Our Player of the Match was Emily McCartney who was faultless.

"She continues to improve and impress with each game.

Emily epitomises the player development pathway we have created this season and is a great example to all players."

Assistant Coach Dan Weber added: "We played well against good opposition however the players need to believe more in themselves.

"They are a new team this season but have shown in patches that they can compete against anyone in this division but that extra bit of belief that comes from some wins is missing.

"I am sure we will turn that around and they can be a force in this league."

The first team now have a break till the new year, but the Reserve team are at home next Sunday vs East Oxford Ladies. Kick off 1:30pm.

The Reserve and Under 18s did not have a match on December 12, as their respective fixtures were called due to the cold weather.

To read more about the latest news regarding Wycombe Wanderers, visit [www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/sport](http://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/sport) or follow James Richings on Twitter by going to @James\_BFP



Jack Grimmer (pictured against Bristol City in December 2020) has been praised by Wycombe Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth (PA)

## Grimmer the Great after solid performances

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth praised the performance of right-back Jack Grimmer following the Chairboys' 0-0 draw away at Lincoln City.

The 28-year-old, who has started the last four league games, denied the Imps' Jamie Robson and Joe Walsh any joy on the flanks, as Wanderers kept their eighth clean sheet of the league season.

The result has moved them up to ninth, just two points off the play-off places.

Speaking on Grimmer's display at Sincil Bank, Ainsworth said:

"Jack has got the bit between his teeth.

"I think Jack has played consistently well all season, and he's keeping Jason McCarthy out of the team which is no mean feat.

"We defended really well and I'm pleased with the clean sheet."

Since moving to Adams Park in the summer of 2019, Grimmer has played 116 times for the club and has scored two goals.

He has so far played in 20 matches this campaign, which includes making 18 appearances in League One.





Saint Lucia's assistant manager Francis Lastic (left), Chris Forino (centre) and Saint Lucia's manager Stern John (right) outside Adams Park

## Forino for Saint Lucia

WYCOMBE Wanderers defender Chris Forino has confirmed his international allegiance to a Caribbean country.

The 22-year-old, who has scored two goals in 16 games so far this season for the Chairboys, will represent the Saint Lucian national team after meeting with the country's manager, former Premier League striker Stern John, and assistant manager, Francis Lastic.

Forino is of English, Saint Lucian, and Italian descent, and after signing for Wycombe in April 2021, he has gone on to play 35 times for the club and has scored four goals.

Prior to his move to Adams Park, the centre back had dropped out of Loughborough University to pursue a career in professional football.

Saint Lucia's next batch of fixtures are in March 2023.

Other Chairboys players that have played for their countries in the current squad include Ali Al-Hamadi (Iraq), Sam Vokes (Wales), Daryl Horgan (Republic of Ireland), Sullay Kaikai (Sierra Leone), Tjay De Barr (Gibraltar) and Garath McCleary (Jamaica).

Ex-Wycombe players that have represented their countries include Uche Ikpeazu, Josh Parker and Andre Burley.

## Alan Parry's Previews: Tractor Boys are in town



Ipswich Town are in Bucks (PA)

WYCOMBE are about to embark on their toughest month of the season as they face the current top three teams in League One, starting with the visit of leaders Ipswich Town to Adams Park on Saturday, December 17.

The festive fixtures will provide the supreme test of Wanderers' improved form which has seen them take an impressive eighteen points from the last ten games.

Since the beginning of October, Gareth Ainsworth's team have recorded five wins, three draws and only two defeats, and they now sit just two points behind the play off places.

The excellent home victory over Portsmouth was followed by a creditable draw at Lincoln City, who are unbeaten at home this season and are the only team to win at Portman Road, home of Wycombe's next opponents, Ipswich.

With the league leaders having sold out their allocation of almost 3,000 tickets, Saturday's game should see the biggest attendance of the season at Adams Park, and the Chairboys will need all the vocal support they can get.

Ipswich are enjoying a wonderful start to the campaign, and they have a formidable away record, their only defeat coming at previous leaders Plymouth Argyle in September.

They invested heavily on new players in the summer and their squad is valued at over £6m, a sizeable chunk of which was spent on leading scorer Connor Chaplin, who scored twice in last week's win against Peterborough United to take his total for the season to ten goals.

The clubs have played each other only four times with Ipswich winning twice and the other two games finishing as draws. The last meeting ended in a 4-1 win for Ipswich at Adams Park just over a year ago, Wycombe's heaviest defeat of the 2021-22 season.

David Wheeler gave the Chairboys the lead in that game and he also scored in the only other encounter between the clubs at Adams Park, a 1-1 draw on New Year's Day, 2020.

An omen for Saturday, perhaps?

# Ainsworth happy with Lincoln point



Gareth Ainsworth (not pictured) was happy with Wycombe's point away at Lincoln on December 10 (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth has praised his former club Lincoln City following the recent 0-0 draw between the two clubs at Sincil Bank.

The fixture on December 10 was a game of few chances, as the Chairboys recorded their third clean sheet in four matches, whilst the Imps remain unbeaten at home in their 10 league fixtures so far this season.

It was also a positive return for the 49-year-old who spent just over two seasons with Lincoln during the 1990s as a player.

Between the 1995/96 and 1997/98 campaigns, Ainsworth featured 97 times for the club and scored 41 goals.

He was also named Lincoln's Player of the Season in both 1996 and 1997.

Following the stalemate at Sincil Bank, Ainsworth said: "Teams will shut up shop against us but Mark [Kennedy] is a good guy with a good team, so I am considering this a good point away from home."

"Lincoln are a very good side and I think they are very unsung in this division."

"We are very similar-sized clubs and even though they get more fans than us, we have got very similar histories."

"We've got to respect this as we can't win every game we play, but this is a top club and I'm pleased with the point we have got, so you have to credit

By James Richings

Lincoln.

"It's always a pleasure to be back here as I love this place, but I wished the travelling fans would have seen some goals."

"They have come up a long way, with some sacrificing the England game [against France in the World Cup] to follow their beloved Chairboys and I can't thank them enough."

Speaking on Lincoln being in League One for a second consecutive season following their promotion to the division in 2021, Ainsworth continued: "They have got a brilliant young manager who will go onto big things."

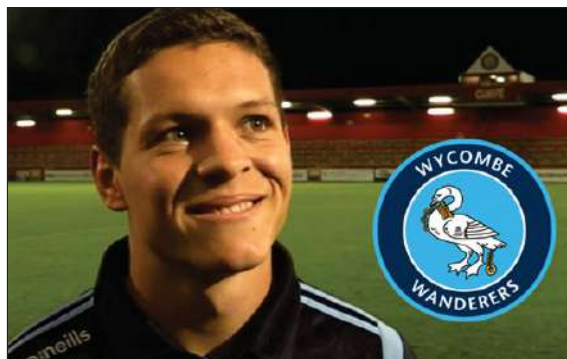
Ainsworth and Kennedy were teammates during their respective spells at Wimbledon during the late 1990s.

**Wycombe's next fixtures:**

Dec 17: Ipswich Town (H)  
Dec 26: Bristol Rovers (H)  
Dec 29: Plymouth Argyle (A)  
Jan 1: P'borough United (A)  
Jan 14: Sheffield Wed (H)  
Jan 21: Bristol Rovers (A)  
Jan 24: Oxford United (H)  
Jan 28: Fleetwood Town (H)  
Feb 4: Port Vale (A)  
Feb 11: Derby County  
Feb 14: Accrington S (A)  
Feb 18: Bolton Wanderers (H)  
Feb 25: Shrewsbury Town (A)  
Mar 4: Exeter City (H)  
Mar 11: Burton Albion (A)  
Mar 18: Barnsley (H)  
Mar 25: Charlton Athletic (A)



# SPORT



Tjay De Barr has been with Wycombe since 2021 (YouTube)

## Wanderers' De Barr named one of the most valuable in Europe

A CURRENT Wycombe Wanderers striker has been named as one of the most valuable players in Europe.

Tjay De Barr, who is in his second season with the Adams Park club, has topped the list as the highest-valued Gilbertian with the news being revealed on December 12 through the Copa90 Twitter account.

The popular football media outlet decided to conduct a ranking of each European country's highest-valued player based on their stats through TransferMarkt.

After collecting all of the forward's information based on games played, goal involvements, goals scored, assists, tackles won and more, it was confirmed that the 22-year-old

is currently valued at 150,000. This is the equivalent to £128,000.

Since moving to Wanderers from Lincoln Red Imps in the summer of 2021, De Barr has played 12 times for the club, where he has scored one goal.

His solitary strike was versus Stevenage in the League Cup 16 months ago, with his header coming in the final

few seconds of injury-time.

This levelled the game at 2-2 and took the tie straight to a penalty shoot-out which Wanderers won 5-3, with De Barr scoring the winning spot-kick to send Wycombe through, which set up an away trip against then-current League Cup holders, Manchester City.

So far this season, De Barr has played four times.

# Can Wanderers beat Ipswich?

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Gareth Ainsworth believes that Ipswich Town are 'beatable', as the Tractor Boys prepare to visit Adams Park on December 17.

In what will only be the fifth meeting between the two teams, Kieran McKenna's side will arrive in Buckinghamshire as the league leaders in League One.

The club have picked up 45 points from their 21 games so far this season, with Ipswich winning 13 of those matches.

Additionally, they have only lost twice in the league since July, with McKenna only being defeated just nine times in all competitions since taking over at Portman Road one year ago.

Speaking ahead of the Christmas clash, Ainsworth said: "The mood around the camp is great.

"We're really strong and the spirit is really good after two solid performances and results, but we know how hard of a test this game is [against Ipswich].

"Ipswich are a huge club, and with the money that they have spent, it is not a surprise to see them at the top of the table but they are beatable.

"We know that and we're hitting form at the right time so I'm looking forward to how we take them on."

The final fixture for Wanderers before Christmas is expected to see Adams Park achieve its highest crowd of the season so far, as around 3,000 travelling supporters are

By James Richings

planning to make the trip from Suffolk to Buckinghamshire.

The increase in away tickets will see the Ipswich faithful not only fill out the away end, but also parts of the Frank Adams and the PreSonus stand respectively.

Ainsworth continued: "They are a huge side, they have backed Kieran and they get around 20,000 fans a week at home which drops a huge amount of money into the football club.

"Compare that with us who get around 5,000 a week, it shows the gulf in terms of the size of the clubs.

"I'm not complaining about it as we know what we are, but it's brilliant that Ipswich are coming to us because a few years ago, people would be saying that this would be a huge game for Wycombe.

"Now, we're on a level playing field and we've had a couple of good draws against them in recent years.

"We're only separated by a few points in the table and I'm hoping for a good game.

"I know that we're trialling with the extra away supporters coming, and of course, we don't want to give too many away but at the same time, we don't want to miss out on any extra financial gains which are very important.

"It'll be a balanced game but I think we can beat them."

The game will kick off at 3pm.



Chairboys boss Gareth Ainsworth is feeling positive (PA)



Many changes in the EFL (PA)

## Bosses are on the move

TWO of Wycombe Wanderers' EFL rivals have had a change in managerial appointments.

Championship side Queens Park Rangers have confirmed that Neil Critchley is their new boss, following Michael Beale's move to Scottish side Rangers.

Ainsworth and on December 9, it was reported by Sky Sports News that the West London side had put the 49-year-old as one of their top targets.

However, the former Premier League club opted to hire the ex-Liverpool and Aston Villa coach in Critchley on December 11.

Ainsworth spent seven years as a QPR player between 2003 and 2010.

On the same day, Wanderers' Buckinghamshire neighbours in Milton Keynes confirmed that they had parted ways with their boss, Liam Manning.

Manning had guided the old Wimbledon to a third-place finish in the 2021/22 season but was defeated by Ainsworth's Chairboys in the play-off semi-finals across two legs.

So far this campaign, the north Buckinghamshire club have lost 13 of their 20 league games, and following Saturday's 2-1 home defeat against Fleetwood Town, with the Cod Army's winner coming in stoppage time, the club decided to relieve Manning of his duties.

In the time that Gareth Ainsworth has been in charge of Wycombe (September 2012), MK have nine separate managers (six permanent and three caretakers).