



Reading lost ground in the battle for League One survival, losing 2-1 at home to Wycombe Wanderers in the Berks-Bucks Derby.

The Chairboys dominated the first half and took the lead through Nigel Lonwijk's speculative scissor-kick, but Reading responded in the second half and deservedly equalised through Sam Smith. However, Wycombe had a late sting in the tail as Clinton Mola fouled Chem Campbell in the box and Beryly Lubala slotted past David Button from the spot to earn victory in front of the Royals' largest gate of the season of over 15,500.

After the last home game saw Reading trailing by two goals to Shrewsbury Town inside nine minutes, many had expected to have witnessed the worst first half of the campaign to date. Unfortunately, the opening 45 minutes against the Chairboys surpassed that as Ruben Selles' men failed to lay a glove on the mid-table visitors. Wycombe were organised, well-drilled and dangerous when given the opportunity, even if they were a tad slow to restart from goal kicks and set pieces.

It took 16 minutes for the visitors to edge in front and in some style. A deep cross wasn't dealt with in and box and sat up nicely for centre back Lonwijk, who acrobatically found the bottom corner with an overhead kick. Reading's midfield proved anonymous and the aimless long balls toward Sam Smith failed to trouble the backline. Kieran Sadlier would have expected to double the lead before the half-hour mark, firing wide along with a deflection, while it took 32 minutes for Kelvin Ehibhationmhan to register Reading's first shot on target, a tame effort after cutting in from wide.

Even in possession, Button's goal wasn't safe as a throw-in deep in Royal territory was overturned and the keeper was forced to push away a dangerous effort from out wide. Sadlier really should have made Reading pay five minutes before the break, connecting fiercely with McCleary's cross on the edge of box but firing inches wide.

Making two changes at the break, with Charlie Savage and Ben Elliott coming on at the break, Reading improved greatly and were the better side for most of the second period. Within three minutes the woodwork had been clattered, with Tyler Bindon's header centimetres from nestling in the net. Counter-attacks were the order of the half from the visitors, content with running down the clock and hoping to pick the Royals off through McCleary and Sadlier out wide.

Bindon came close again midway through the half, this time his header missing the frame, but it had the feeling of 'one of those days' as chances came and went. That was until 15 minutes from time when a smart corner routine allowed Azeez plenty of space to dink a cross into the box ready for Smith to thunder in and power home a header to lift the roof off the stadium.

Reading continued to huff and puff, looking for the winner that would lift them up to 14th, but chances passed them by. With minutes to go, having offered next-to-nothing in the second half, Clinton Mola took down Chem Campbell in the box and the referee pointed to the spot. Stepping up himself, he coolly sent Button the wrong way to spark a mass exodus in the home ends.

Despite having seven minutes of stoppage time to work an equaliser, the Royals failed to do so and were condemned to a second successive home defeat. Travelling to high-flying Derby County on Tuesday, Reading remain firmly in the bottom five with nine matches remaining.