



Wolverhampton Wanderers

LONDON SUPPORTERS CLUB

founded 1966



NUNO MEETS LONDON WOLVES

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January 2018

FROM THE CHAIR



WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS LONDON SUPPORTERS CLUB

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Hi and Greetings to Everybody,

A Very Happy New Year to you all from our lofty perch, which at the time of writing sees Wolves twelve points clear at the top of The Championship, a totally different scenario to the last edition of our magazine.

The first half of the season has seen some marvellous performances, and one thing that has struck me more than most is the fact that I have not heard one of the usual abusive comments, even after the odd rare misplaced pass, something unheard of in the past.

The crowds are returning and a near full house is not uncommon. The atmosphere is phenomenal, with even The Steve Bull stand joining in the fun with a few chants.

Dare we hold our breath for a successful season?

Roy has organised a river boat trip for the match against Fulham, an event I'm really looking forward to, as I know many of you are after his successful Christmas lunch, photos of which are in this edition.

The sad and unexpected passing of John "Foz" Hendley was announced prior to the game against Brentford. "Foz" was the editor of Wolves' match day programme, and had given our club numerous publicity articles over the years, he will be sadly missed by all those who knew him.

Stuart

FEEDBACK

Please do write to us on all, or any, aspects which you feel would be of any interest or benefit to the Club from a supporter's perspective.

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Wolves' Mid-season Transfer Breakdown

In our previous edition of the newsletter at the end of last season we gave a breakdown of all the transfer dealings made in the pre-season transfer window by Wolves following the appointment of our new head coach Nuno Espirito Santo. All in all there were eleven arrivals, most of which have played a significant part in our unbelievable start to the season.

When the transfer window reopened on the 1st January Nuno made minimal changes to the squad, this was with a view of only bringing in players who would benefit the team in that final push towards promotion to the Premier League. All the details of the major additions and departures are detailed below.



Alfred N'Diaye

31st August 2017

The Villareal midfielder signed on a season long loan deal on the last day of the August pre-season transfer window. Alfred is a versatile performer who can play in the centre of defence as well as in midfield.

The Senegal international has had previous experience of English football, having had loan spells with Hull and Sunderland when both were in the Premier League. He made 15 appearances for Hull over the second half of last season, scoring one goal on his debut against Liverpool.

Alfred also boasts La Liga experience with Real Betis, for whom he played prior to joining Villareal in the summer of 2016.



Rafa Mir

3rd January 2018

The 20-year old forward signed on a four and a half year deal from La Liga side Valencia, with the fee estimated to be in the region of £2 million.

As well as Valencia, Rafa's former clubs include Real Murcia, Barcelona, Ranero and ElPozo Murcia. The young forward has previously worked with Head Coach Nuno Espirito Santo during his time with Valencia, and explained that Nuno played a big part in his Molineux move.

Rafa has been handed the 'number 9' shirt for the remainder of the season, he follows in the footsteps of two former Wolves legends who have previously worn the shirt, including Steve Bull and long-time friend of WWLSC John Richards (also our Honorary President).



Diogo Jota

30th January 2018

With the transfer window coming to its conclusion came the news that all Wolves fans were waiting for, the Portuguese "Magician" Diogo Jota would make his on-loan move from Atletico Madrid a permanent one in the summer.

Wolves already had an exclusive option to make the deal a permanent one, and could have exercised that option during the January window, but instead issued a statement saying the deal will definitely happen in the summer.

Diogo has starred for Wolves since moving from Spain in the summer and had scored 12 goals, making him joint-top scorer at the time of going to print.

Wolves have four other loanee's on their books and have exclusive options to buy all of them. Willy Boly, Leo Bonatini, Alfred N'Diaye and Ruben Vinagre have all played their part in Wolves march towards the Premier League, and have showed they could all be an integral part of Wolves future.

WOLVES' NEWS



Benik Afobe
31st January 2018

During the last day of the transfer window rumours were rife that Benik Afobe was on his way back to Wolves. However, as the transfer deadline reached its conclusion it seemed that the deal was dead and buried, a stalemate had ensued with Wolves unwilling to either buy Afobe permanently, or agree to a permanent deal at the end of a loan spell. But with half an hour to the end of the window Bournemouth caved in to Wolves demands and agreed to a loan deal worth to be in the region of £1 million.

It was a dream signing for both Afobe and the Wolves supporters, the striker enjoyed a successful year in Wolves colours between 2015 and 2016 after signing from Arsenal for £2m, the striker scoring 23 goals in 48 appearances.



Ben Stevenson
31st January 2018

There was one other signing on transfer deadline day, and that was the signing of 20-year-old Ben Stevenson from Coventry City. The youngster had been at the Sky Blues since he was eight years of age and the developing midfielder is regarded as one for the future.

It was reported that Wolves paid a small six-figure fee for Stevenson, and he was immediately loaned out to Colchester until the end of the season. It's expected he'll join up with the Wolves' under-23 squad when he returns.

Farewell David Edwards



With the new revolution under way at Wolves came the news that one of the old school players no longer had a future at the club. David Edwards left Molineux after nine-and-a-half years at the club to join Championship rivals Reading

Edwards arrived at Wolves from Luton Town of League One in January 2008 for a fee believed to be £675,000. Edwards was part of the Wolves teams that won the Championship in 2009 and League One in 2013, he also played three seasons with the club in the Premier League. He totalled 307 games and 44 goals for the club before transferring to Reading in a £1million deal last August.

Dave was sponsored last season by our very own Peter Woodfield and Dave Slape, and was the winner of the WWLSC Player of the

Year award in our 50th Anniversary Season (here we can see him receiving the coveted trophy from Peter Woodfield, Peter Abbott and Dave Slape).

We at London Wolves would like to say a big Thank You to Dave for his loyal service to Wolves, and wish him the Very Best of Luck at his new club.



Nouha Dicko
29th August 2017

Nouha Dicko joined fellow Championship club Hull City for a fee believed to be in the region of £3.5 million, he joined Wolves in the January of their League One title-winning campaign in 2014, going on to finish as the club's top scorer with 13 goals from 19 appearances.

Overall he made 108 appearances for the club during his three-and-a-half-year stay, netting a total of 35 goals. Unfortunately for Nouha he picked up a serious cruciate knee ligament injury in the first month of the 2015/16 season, which was to rule him out for over a year. Following his comeback he had limited opportunities under Nuno's management with appearances limited to Carabao Cup games.

WOLVES' NEWS



Jack Price

8th January 2018

The popular midfielder Jack Price sealed a move to MLS side Colorado Rapids for an undisclosed fee. Jack was Wolves through and through and had been at the club since he was seven years of age.

Having progressed through the Academy, Jack signed his first professional contract in March 2011, and made his Wolves debut against Gillingham in August 2013.

The 25-year-old went on to make 115 competitive appearances during his time at Wolves, scoring two goals. Jack played a crucial role in Wolves' promotion from Sky Bet League 1 in the 2013/14 season, making 30 appearances as Kenny Jackett's side amassed a record-breaking points total.

All of us at WWLSC wish this Wolves boy every success at his new club.

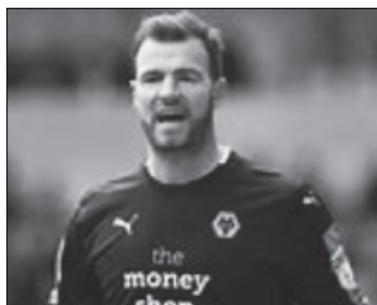


Lee Evans

10th January 2018

Lee Evans has left Wolves to join Sheffield United in a deal believed to be worth £750,000. Evans joined Wolves from Newport County in January 2013 and went on to make 67 competitive appearances during his five years at Wolves, scoring on three occasions.

After making his debut against Preston in August 2013, he played an important part in Wolves' 2013/14 Sky Bet League 1 promotion season, appearing 26 times and scoring two goals in the process. Lee was also heavily involved the following season as Wolves narrowly missed out on the Play-Offs during their first season back in the Sky Bet Championship.



Andy Lonergan

27th August 2017

Andy Lonergan joined Leeds United of a free transfer at the end of August 2017. After the emergence of Harry Burgoyne and the signings of goalkeepers Will Norris and John Ruddy, Lonergan was not allocated a squad number for the 2017/18 season, despite Carl Ikeme being out due to illness.

Lonergan joined Wolves on 9th June 2016 from Fulham on a two-year deal. All in all he made 11 appearances



Burton Bridge Pub

You may recall the summer and halcyon days of September when four pints of Burton equalled the four goal win and the welcoming pre-match hostelry was the Burton Bridge pub and brewery. Dave wrote to thank them for their hospitality with a Christmas card, which made the local press. Below is the article written by Burton Mail journalist Ben Waldron, who has kindly given us permission to reprint the article which quotes Dave Slape.



This Burton pub got a generous Christmas surprise from visiting football fans

Wolves fans had happy memories of their visit to the town and the pub

BY **BEN WALDRON** 13:00, 18 DEC 2017

[HTTPS://WWW.BURTONMAIL.CO.UK/NEWS/BURTON-NEWS/BURTON-PUB-GENEROUS-CHRISTMAS-SURPRISE-938946](https://www.burtonmail.co.uk/news/burton-news/burton-pub-generous-christmas-surprise-938946)

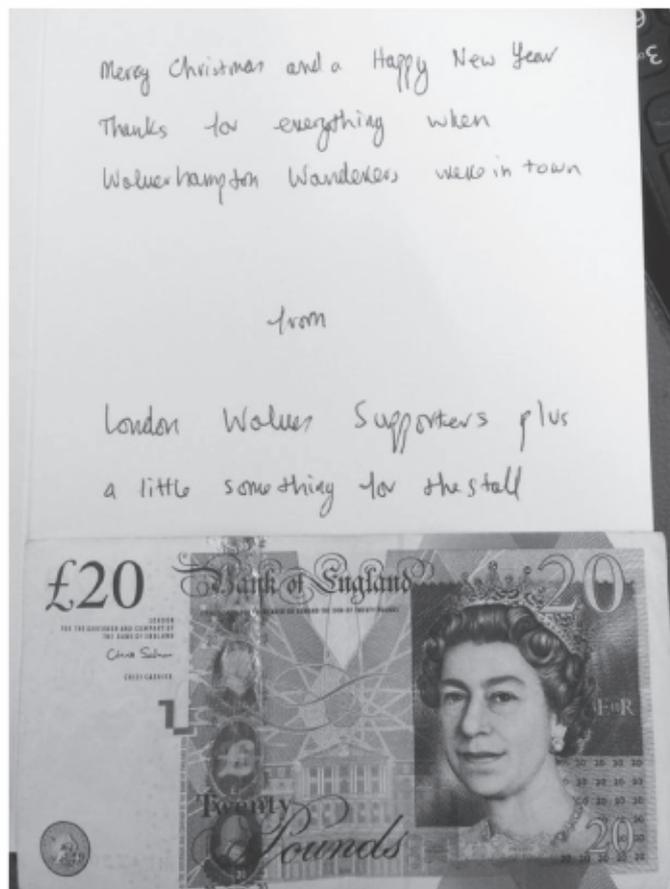
A Burton pub has received some early festive cheer after supporters from one of Burton Albion's rivals sent them a Christmas card – and a whopping tip for staff.

The **Burton Bridge Inn**, located on Bridge Street, played host to members of Wolverhampton Wanderers London Supporters' Club when the team played against **Burton Albion in the Championship** on Saturday, September 30.

Wolves beat the Brewers 4-0 on the day and members of the club celebrated at the **Burton Bridge Inn** after the match and have remembered the hospitality they received that day.

Almost three months later, the Burton pub clearly made quite the impression on the supporters, who decided to send a festive card and a £20 to spend on a **Christmas treat for staff**.

The card reads: "Merry Christmas and a happy new year. Thanks for everything when Wolverhampton Wanderers were in town. From London Wolves Supporters, plus a little something for the staff."



Pic: **The contents of the card sent to the Burton Bridge Inn**

SOCIAL NEWS



Mr Stout said: "I got a call from my wife on Saturday when I was at home, she said about a Christmas card coming through the post at the pub from the Wolves supporters club.

"They came in at the end of September, when Wolves were playing Burton, and the card just really thanked us for everything.

"I was absolutely gobsmacked to be honest with you, I didn't expect a Christmas card, especially with the money they put inside as well, saying to treat the staff.

"It is a fantastic gesture, I don't know if it's something they do as standard, and for other pubs, but either way we really appreciate it.

"Wolves fans always travel in great numbers. Some of our beers, particularly Stairway to Heaven, they serve in Wolverhampton and they love it so I think they made a beeline to the Burton Bridge.

"One of our regulars is actually a Wolves fan, so he always has friends come down in a coach to see the match.

"These guys from London, we knew they were in the pub, they obviously enjoyed the experience and the pub. We usually have supporters return after being here once the following season, we usually share a bit of banter, you know 'might not see you next year', but definitely nothing like this before." The card has been displayed at the pub on the notice board, and Mr Stout explained that it has been a talking point among staff and customers about the generosity of the supporters club.

David Slape, the secretary of Wolverhampton Wanderers London Supporters' Club said they decided to send the card and the gift after receiving excellent hospitality when they visited after their side's victory.

Mr Slape said: "We found it welcoming and the staff superb. The beers and pies are great, in fact everything about the pub is great, not to mention the Burton fans.

"Well done and I look forward to calling in again." **The card sent from an away team's supporters club**





Members Blog

Thanks to Gareth Ondrak for allowing us to share his blog with us.

The 2017 awards...

Well it's New years eve and about time the end of year awards were dug up from their shallow grave...

The Stephen Hawking complementary battery charger goes to Ruben Neves for re-defining the meaning of time...

The Trump coffee table wtf award to Steve Cotterill for his " If we didn't have goal line technology and had we had a shot on target and had that gone in then we would have won...nurse i'm feeling dizzy i need my medication" post match reaction to Wolves winning at St Andrews...again.

The Dallas "It was all a dream" shower curtain & rings to Paul Lambert for giving Wolves fans two cracking days out at Stoke & Liverpool. Otherwise it was all pubic hair in the plug hole...

The "Infamy infamy, they've all got it infamy!" Kenneth Williams memorial starched hankie to all our championship rivals and their fans who love getting their knickers in a twist over Wolves...

The "Ohhh missus" Frankie Howerd satin smoking jacket to all Wolves fans who now profess love for "Big Willy"

The Dali Lama ceremonial robe & hookah pipe to Nuno Espirito Santo for just being the coolest motherflipper around even when going apeshit at Bristol City...

The "Run away!" Jurassic Park dinosaur pewter mug to Warnock, Bruce et al for basically sticking to the same hoary old script both on and off the pitch...

The annual Pardew shaving brush & razor to Alan Pardew. The first sign of stubble and his days are numbered...

The School of Science second hand trackie & baseball cap ensemble to Tony Pulis for...well just being Tony Pulis.

The Nigel Farage man of the people gold plated jockstrap to Jose Mourinho for his constant whinging to anyone who gives him the time of day. Proving that not all Portuguese managers are cool as fuck...

The Jessie J gold plated "Price tag" disc to Fosun...it's not all about the money money money...but it helps.

And finally...

To all Wolves fans who at the moment feel like they're Jimmy Krankie waking up between Cindy Crawford, Naomi Campbell, Claudia Schieffer & Heidi Klum.

Happy Nuno Year to you all!

MEET THE PLAYERS



Meet the Players 2017-18

The annual London Wolves Meet the Players took place on Friday 23rd February 2018, the night before the Fulham match at Craven Cottage. It was held at the team hotel in the West London area. We at WWLSC would like to say a massive “Thank You” to Head Coach Nuno Espirito Santo for allowing his team to meet with approximately 40 of our members for a memorable get together, it was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. Also a big thank you to Wolves’ Club Secretary Matt Wild who in conjunction with Dave Slape made the whole event possible.

The players posed with members for photographs and selfies and signed numerous autographs. Also in attendance was managing director Laurie Dalrymple and executive chairman Jeff Shi, this shows that the close relationship made over the years between the football club and our supporters club is still as strong as ever under the new Fosun ownership.



Deputy Chairman Stef Leonard thanked Nuno, and praised the players for their performances this season saying “what you have produced this is season has been magnificent” and telling them that the increased Molineux attendance is purely because of them.

During this special occasion we usually take the opportunity to present the coveted WWLSC Player of the Season Award, as voted by our members. However, with another dozen or so games still to go the voting has not yet taken place. The winner will be announced in the end of season newsletter, and the presentation to the winner will take place at a future date.





Social Diary Season 2017-2018



London Wolves Entertainment Officer Roy Eagles has put together a diary of events since our last end-of-season newsletter.

Members are treated to some fabulous social events. If you haven't attended any of these functions then just ask the members who have to hear about what you're missing. We have more and more special guests including former players who attend these events, and booking places at these occasions is like getting tickets to Glastonbury. Details of all functions are available on the eNews emails sent by

Webmaster Peter Bartlett or by contacting any of the committee members.

After what promised to be a new revolution, when Fosun took over our beloved club and appointed Walter Zenga as the new manager, the season ended with a whimper as Wolves struggled to live up to the expectations of the Molineux faithful.

However, the social diary ended on a high as we enjoyed the Seagull Pie Lunch in the Bluebrick on Good Friday, and then on the last weekend of the season we enjoyed a fantastic meal at The Fox in Shipley on the night before our final game against Preston. To celebrate the end of another season we then joined in the Fans Flag Parade prior to the game on the Sunday.

Due to the outstanding success of our team following the appointment of new Head Coach Nuno Espirito Santo quite a few of our fixtures so far this season have been changed for the benefit of Sky Sports subscribers. This makes organising social events and the invitation of special guests (a complicated business in itself), nigh on impossible. However there have been two events worth a mention:

Christmas Lunch in the Bluebrick Pub (Saturday 9th December 2017)

Not much happened on the social front between August and December, as already mentioned due to the continuous fixture changes for TV screening. Over the previous years the planning of our Christmas Lunch has been a bit of a nightmare, however this year the last Saturday game at home before Christmas, against Sunderland was left at 3:00pm. So 40 places were booked at the Bluebrick Pub in early October. Booking early came with a promotion that an event organiser dreams of, a free bottle of Prosecco for every 4 people booked.

So to the day in question: This was the "Sixth" Annual Lunch at the Bluebrick, and it was great to see so many members participating, this included new faces as well as the usual suspects. There were 34 people who attended and 2 special guests. This year I invited ex Wolves defender Colin Brazier who was making his Bluebrick debut, Colin played for Wolves between 1975 and 1982 and made 78 appearances in the famous gold shirt. Our other guest was the ever popular and long-time friend Mel Eves who played in the same era as Colin and made 180 appearances, scoring 44 goals in the process. Old friends Terry and Sue Wharton, Phil Parkes and Neil Edwards sent their apologies and hoped to catch up with us at a future date.



SOCIAL NEWS



Proceedings started at midday with members and guests arriving ready to be seated and then served for a 12:30pm start. Once old stalwarts Peter Woodfield and Dave Slape arrived following their pre-match detour to the ground, service began. I kicked off with a small speech to welcome members, and of course to our special guests to whom I also gave special thanks for braving the icy weather conditions.

As usual the meal was spot on, and washed down with a series of alcoholic beverages. The Bluebrick has always provided excellent service and the food has always delivered on taste. During the meal I ran a small raffle and raised the grand sum of £65 which was duly passed onto Mel as a donation to his new charity SPA. After the main meal Mel gave a small speech which, as always, was delivered with humour and grace.



Following a couple hours of chatting and merriment it was time to put down that last spoon of dessert and finish off the last mouthfuls of alcohol ready for the game ahead. So we all made our way down to the Golden Palace for the game against Sunderland. I've always considered myself a Jonah when we go to a game after the Christmas Doo because we've never won, and the trend continued with a drab 0-0 draw against a team struggling in the relegation places.

Many thanks to our distinguished guests for attending the pre-match party, it is always a pleasure to welcome them into our company and I hope they will continue to attend our functions as special friends of all at London Wolves in the future.

Lastly I would like to say a big Thank You to Peter Woodfield, Peter Bartlett and Dave Slape for all their help.

The following day Mel Eves kindly wrote:

Hello Roy, once again it was an absolute pleasure to join yourself and the wonderful London Wolves family. Thank you so much for supporting the SPA with the proceeds of the raffle - it is very much appreciated.

*Thank you and UTW
Mel*

Lunch with Wolves Women at the Bluebrick Pub (Saturday 20th January 2018)



Due to the limited seating available at our very popular Christmas Lunch I was restricted to how many special guests I was able to invite. So I set a date aside for a lunch with the Wolves Women's team. Following our continuing support of the ladies team I decided to celebrate our sponsorship of Wolves Women with lunch at the Bluebrick before the Forest match on Saturday 20th January. Our special guests of honour were our own sponsored Player Captain

SOCIAL NEWS



Anna Price and right back and Communicator-in-Chief Claire Hakeman, who is sponsored by Mark Feehan. You may also have seen that, and not before time, Wolves have added a feature on the ladies team in the museum, and also recognised Anna and Amber Quick for their legendary service to Wolves, both have been at the Club since they were nine years of age!

With the Bluebrick the main venue for our social events, the format was now well known with members and guests arriving ready to be seated and then served for a 12:15pm start. With pennies still tight after Christmas the numbers were low with a dozen or so members attending to meet and dine with our two very special guests. There was no set menu for the lunch with everybody making their own choice from the regular menu. Again the drink was flowing and everybody enjoying each other's company. I started proceedings with a short speech welcoming our guests and congratulating them on their promotion at the end of last season. Both Anna and Claire said a few words and thanked London Wolves for their continuing sponsorship and support.



After being fed and watered we made our way down to Molineux for the game against Forest. The trend of Wolves not winning after one of my social events again continued with a poor performance and Wolves losing 2-0. I should perhaps consider holding our little shindigs after the game.



During the half-time interval I joined Mark Feehan at pitch side to present Claire and Anna with a cheque for £500 as part of our continuing sponsorship of Wolves Women.

(the official picture courtesy @wolves and Sam Bagnall)

As Entertainments Officer it would have been impossible to organise any of these functions without the help of all my fellow Committee members, and the support they have given me throughout the season so far has been invaluable, my gratitude goes to everybody concerned.

Finally without the constant support of all our members and our special friends there would be no functions, and I wouldn't have the privilege of working with such special supporters. All the best to the boys and ladies at Wolves for the rest of the season, and here's to a continuation of a successful season so far that will hopefully bring promotion.

Thanks Again and Up the Wolves

Roy Eagles
Entertainments Officer

MATCH REPORTS



ROME WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY

WOLVES 1-0 MIDDLESBROUGH

Saturday 5th August 2017



Millions spent on new players, yet another manager at the helm, and the optimism through the roof at Molineux culminating in a full house, the fourth biggest attendance since Molineux was rebuilt. And so the game went, it won't be remembered as one of the classics, but Wolves new look team came away with a 1-0 victory, and the early indications are that this team might just be the one to get us back to the Promised Land.

Wolves kicked off with seven debutants in their line-up and it showed in the early stages with the new-look team struggling to create any chances of real note. Then suddenly in the 33rd minute the season was well and truly under way when new striker Leo Bonatini opened his goal scoring account for Wolves.

The goal was completely out of the blue and all down to a real howler by Boro defender Daniel Ayala, he played a square ball across field just outside his own area, Bonatini intercepted the misplaced pass, said "Thank You Very Much" and moved forward a few steps before slotting the ball past the stranded Boro keeper.

Molineux erupted and suddenly Nuno's men had a spring in their step, passes were suddenly crisper and finding another gold shirt. However, right on the stroke of half-time Wolves were handed a massive let off. Christie delivered a cross from the right that found Braithwaite all on his own on the edge of the six yard box, but the Danish forward placed his header wide after coming under pressure from John Ruddy.

Wolves started the second-half on the front foot and went close to increasing their lead just six minutes after the break, Enobakhare went on a mazy run into the penalty area and he was only denied when

his shot was saved by the outstretched hand of Randolph. Bonatini was then sent racing clear of the Boro backline when Saiss threaded a lovely ball into his feet, but he couldn't quite find Jota with his attempted cross.

Suddenly Boro went all out in search of an equaliser, and as the game reached the last quarter Ruddy twice denied Assombalonga. Once in dubious circumstances with loud shouts from the Boro front line that he had handled outside the box as he blocked a bouncing through ball, and then with a superb save down to his right from the striker's angled drive.

Despite a few scares Wolves hung in there to start the campaign with a win, it wasn't pretty at times but it must be remembered Middlesbrough were locking horns with the best from the Premier last season and are favourites with the bookies to win the Championship title. Also, it's a brand new team at Wolves and it will inevitably take time before the players start to gel, but hopefully not too long.

Opinion: Not bad considering it's a brand new team.

Man of the match: Saiss

Team Rating: 7/10

Attendance: 29,692

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Douglas, Coady (capt), Boly, Miranda, Saiss, Enobakhare (Edwards 78), Bonatini (Dicko 58), Neves, Jota (Graham 84)

Unused Subs: Norris, Bennett, Bath, Ronan

Bookings: Miranda (28 – foul)

Referee: Darren Bond

NO AFTER EIGHTS LEFT IN THE BOX

WOLVES 1-0 YEOVIL TOWN

Tuesday 8th August 2016 (Carabao Cup 1st Rnd)

After their 8-2 drubbing at Luton on the first day of the season Yeovil were desperate there would be no repetition of that humiliation against Wolves, and they restored some pride by only losing 1-0 to a late Nouha Dicko goal. As usual these days with the early rounds of cup competitions Nuno Espirito Santo used this League Cup game as a run out for his fringe team players, he made nine changes to the team that beat Middlesbrough including Wolves debuts for Will Norris, Ruben Vinagre and Ryan Bennett.

Year after year Wolves always seem to struggle against lower league teams in the League Cup, and this game was no exception, with the opponents Yeovil Town from League 2. They eventually ran out as 1-0 winners, but it was an almighty struggle in Nuno Espirito Santo's first competitive game in charge at Molineux, with Yeovil on a damage limitation mission.

Yeovil set their stall from the off and that was to pack their defence and frustrate Wolves. As expected the home team dominated possession and their build-up play comprised of some neat passing, but with eleven men usually packing the Yeovil defence goal scoring opportunities were far and few between.

The best move of the half for Wolves came when Boly passed to Bonatini who then fed Jordan Graham, he then crossed to Bonatini but the Brazilian headed wide. That was basically it for the first 45 minutes, Ronan had two shots from range that went wide and Dicko hooked a shot over the bar. In fact, it was Yeovil who came closest to breaking the deadlock when Otis Khan forced Will Norris into a smart save with a powerful drive midway through the half.

Wolves started the second-half with a lot more urgency and Vinagre showed a lot of promise out on the left with some mazy runs and pinpoint crosses. He fired a shot into the side netting from a tight angle and then sent in a low cross which the keeper spilled, with Dicko just failing to reach when following up.



In a rare venture into the Wolves half Yeovil should have taken the lead in the 70th minute. Substitute Surrige was left completely unmarked between Bath and Boly in the area, but with only Norris to beat he screwed his shot wide of the post from 12 yards. It proved a crucial miss with Wolves going ahead just five minutes later, Graham sent over a corner from the left and Dicko headed home from close range.

MATCH REPORTS



That was that as far as finding the back of the net was concerned, Wolves played keep ball for the remaining quarter of an hour with Yeovil denied even a sniff of goal. Its Southampton away in the next round which will give a better indication of the potential of this new Wolves team.

Opinion: Golden opportunity missed for the fringe players to impress.

Man of the match: Vinagre

Team Rating: 5/10

Attendance: 9,478

Team: Norris, Bennett, Vinagre, Edward (Enobakhare 69), Batth (capt), Boly, Ronan (Saiss 81), Price, Bonatini (Jota 69), Dicko, Graham

Unused Subs: Burgoyne, Doherty, Coady, Miranda

Bookings: None

Referee: Robert Lewis

PRIDE RESTORED AT THE PARK

DERBY 0-2 WOLVES

Saturday 12th August 2017

I know its early days, and it's only the second game of the season, but we may be heading for something really special at Wolves. Just over three months ago Wolves left Pride Park having been totally outclassed, Cavaleiro was sent off for butting an opponent, and the 3-1 scoreline didn't reflect the real story of a game which Derby dominated from start to finish.

What a turnaround in fortunes... This new look Wolves outfit have added an exciting brand of football to their portfolio, and never looked like losing against a Derby side that has swept them aside in their last three visits to Pride Park, in fact Derby were lucky to escape so lightly as Wolves spurned several gilt-edged chances.

It was backs to the wall for the first quarter of an hour, but once they settled down the class really showed through from this new look Wolves team. Record signing Ruben Neves had their first real pop at goal when he watched his long range effort deflected wide in the 26th minute, and from the resulting corner Bonatini volleyed his shot wide.

Bonatini again went close when he shot just wide in the 29th minute, before the pressure finally paid off just three minutes later. Derby's defence failed to clear Enobakhare's cross from the right and



Douglas pounced on the loose ball to fire in a low shot that went in off Keogh. The goal was no more than Wolves deserved and they went into the interval a goal to the good.

Derby started with more urgency after the break with Davies heading over within a minute of the restart, and then three minutes later Russell forced Ruddy into a good save to his right from just inside the area. Wolves continued to look dangerous on the counter-attack, and on the hour mark Jota was clean through after a 30 yard sprint, but a last ditch tackle by Wisdom prevented a second Wolves goal.

Wolves were suddenly in control again and Bonatini played in Jota with a superb pass, and when his shot from the edge of the area came back off the post Bonatini leant back on the follow up and put the ball into orbit. It was attack after attack, and another chance went begging on the hour mark when Enobakhare released Doherty with a superb first-time backheel, but the Irishman wasted yet another opportunity when firing into the side netting.

If Wolves thought those misses would come back to haunt them, their fears were eased in the 76th minute when they scored a classic breakaway goal. Enobakhare played in Jota and he slipped the ball square to Cavaleiro who finished from three yards to seal a superb Wanderers victory.

Opinion: Great start, six points out of six against two quality teams.

Man of the match: Jota

Team Rating: 9/10

Attendance: 27,757

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Douglas, Coady (capt), Boly, Miranda, Saiss, Enobakhare (Ronan 81), Bonatini (Cavaleiro 65), Neves, Jota (Dicko 86)

Unused Subs: Norris, Bennett, Batth, Price

Bookings: None

Referee: Lee Probert

A POKE IN THE EYE OF THE TIGER

HULL CITY 2-3 WOLVES

Tuesday 15th August 2017

After the superb victory away at Derby just three days earlier Wolves came away with an equally impressive win at Hull City. That's three league wins out of three and that includes two wins against teams strutting their stuff in the Premier League last season.

Hull started the better of the two teams and in only the 2nd minute Grosicki sped down the left and cut the ball back across the area, but Douglas hacked the ball clear with Hernandez and Campbell just failing to get a touch on it.

However, just three minutes later Wolves stunned the home crowd into silence with a goal that was a piece of pure genius from Neves. The Portuguese ace picked up the ball forty yards out and then beat keeper McGregor all ends up with a pile driver that nearly took the back of the net out.



Wolves were making a statement of intent, and it was that man Neves causing havoc again in the 17th minute. He sent over a corner from the left which Bonatini flicked on, and when Miranda met the ball at the back post he somehow headed over from a yard out. That miss proved costly because on the half-hour mark Hull equalised. Grosicki crossed from the left, and when the Wolves defence failed to clear at the far post the ball fell to Dawson who headed home from two yards out.

Wolves put the setback behind them and continued to push forward, and they regained the lead three minutes before half-time. It was another majestic move as Enobakhare muscled his way past Clark on the right, he squared the ball across goal to the far post where Jota fired into the roof of the net from close range.

MATCH REPORTS



After the fast flowing football in the first-half the game became a cagey affair after the break, and it wasn't until the hour mark that things started to pick up again when Wolves almost increased their lead. Douglas floated over a corner from the right to the back post but Bonatini's powerful header was straight at McGregor.

With twenty minutes left Hull began to push forward in numbers, and they went close to an equaliser when a header from Hernandez came back off the far post following a corner. It was back to the walls stuff for Wolves, but they stood firm and then put the game out of sight in the last minute. In a break of lightning speed Cavaleiro played Dicko through from halfway, and the striker raced clear before picking his spot and slotting the ball under the keeper.

In the ninth minute of stoppage time the referee awarded Hull a dubious penalty for an alleged push, and Meyler scored with the resulting spot kick low down to Ruddy's right hand side. However, there was no time left for Hull to mount another attack and it was another impressive win for this new look Wolves side.

Opinion: Perfect start with nine points out of nine.

Man of the match: Neves

Team Rating: 9/10

Attendance: 17,145

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Douglas, Coady (capt), Boly, Miranda, Saiss, Enobakhare (Cavaleiro 60), Bonatini (Dicko 75), Neves, Jota (Bennett 85)

Unused Subs: Norris, Batth, Graham, Price

Bookings: Saiss (48 – foul), Jota (54 – foul), Neves (68 – foul), Cavaleiro (90+4 – foul).

Referee: Jeremy Simpson

TAFF AT THE TOP

WOLVES 1-2 CARDIFF

Saturday 20th August 2017

After their blistering start to the season Wolves had a reality check to the vigour's of playing in the Championship. Cardiff City came to Molineux and gave Wolves an insight of what to expect this season from teams managed by the likes of our old mate Neil Warnock. Wolves' new skilful passing and attacking style was nullified by the bullying tactics that Cardiff adapted, and so went the 100% winning start to the season.



Wolves' fans turned out in their thousands in hope of seeing a continuation of the open attacking game on show so far this season, but it was Cardiff who started the stronger. They were in Wolves faces from the off, and when a Wolves player did manage to beat his opponent with a bit of skill he was ruthlessly hacked down, continuously causing play to be help up.

Cardiff continually frustrated Wolves, and they nearly went in front with a quarter of an hour on the clock when Hoilett forced John Ruddy to save at full stretch with a low drive from just inside the area. From the resulting corner Hoilett crossed for Bamba, who rose above the Wolves defence and powered a header against the crossbar from close range.

Wolves improved as the half went on and the main threat came from Enobakhare, the young striker hit a curling shot from outside of the box that went just over the bar, and fifteen minute later he picked up the ball about forty yards out and rode a lunging tackle before firing a low shot across the face of goal.

The game developed into a running battle, and Wolves played right into Cardiff's hands by retaliating to some crude tackling and letting Warnock's side dictate the pattern of play. At one stage even the two managers went nose to nose following a shocking tackle by Damour on Saiss. The half ended goalless and the arguments continued between both sets of players as they left the field.

Having dictated proceedings in the first-half Cardiff went ahead 9 minutes after the restart, Zohore fed Hoilett on the left and his low cross was rolled past Ruddy at his near post by Ralls. Zohore then missed two good chances to increase Cardiff's lead when he was denied by Ruddy, and that proved costly as Wolves drew level moments later. Etheridge could only parry away a shot from Cavaleiro and Jota lofted the ball back across goal, Douglas pounced

and fired in a drive that was deflected home from two yards by Bonatini.

Wolves were suddenly on top and went looking for the winner, however Cardiff regrouped and restored their lead again in the 77th minute. Wolves former youth player Mendez-Laing latched onto a through ball from Zohore and drilled a drive past Ruddy, who would have been disappointed that he didn't do better. The game followed a familiar pattern thereafter and for all their huff and puff there was to be no equaliser.

Opinion: Will have to learn not to sink to the same level as opponents like Cardiff.

Man of the match: Coady

Team Rating: 5/10

Attendance: 27,068

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Douglas (Dicko 78), Coady (capt), Boly, Miranda, Saiss (Ronan 83), Enobakhare (Cavaleiro 58), Bonatini, Neves, Jota

Unused Subs: Norris, Bennett, Batth, Price

Bookings: Saiss (28 – foul), Douglas (61 – foul)

Referee: Scott Duncan

PLENTY IN RESERVE

SOUTHAMPTON 0-2 WOLVES

Wednesday 23rd August 2017
(Carabao Cup 2nd Round)



After being kicked all over the shop and tasting defeat for the first time this season against Cardiff on Saturday, it was back to winning ways for Wolves in this Carabao Cup 2nd Round tie. And what a scalp it was for Nuno's men as they took out Premier League side and last year's runners-up Southampton. What makes the victory even more impressive is that Nuno made eleven changes from the team that played against Cardiff, giving most of his expensive imports the night off.

MATCH REPORTS



Wolves started like a steam train and could have been three goals up in the first ten minutes, they had three glorious chances to take an early lead and they all fell to Nouha Dicko. However, it looked like he had his boots on the wrong feet as all three chances went begging.

Dicko's first chance came when Price sent him clear with an inch perfect lofted through ball, but the striker made a real mess bringing the ball down and fell over in a heap. A few seconds later Vinagre played in Dicko again, but he sliced horribly wide from a tight angle. Dicko saved the worst miss until last when Cavaleiro won the ball in the area and squared to him, this time he miskicked from a few yards out with the goal at his mercy.

Saints failed to make Wolves pay for those misses when Yoshida headed wide when left all on his own from a corner. Bednarek should then have scored when he also found himself unmarked, but this time headed straight at Norris from close range. However, when another free-kick was floated into the box Yoshida found his range and sent a header towards the top corner, but Norris pulled off a superb save. It was a good start to the second half for Wolves with half time substitute Connor Ronan at the heart of midfield adding a bit of creativity, however for all their possession chances were at a premium. Wolves finally made the breakthrough in the 67th minute, Cavaleiro sent over an in-swinging corner from the left and Danny Bath rose highest to head home past Forster from the edge of the six yard box.

Wolves continued to dominate and barely looked in trouble, and they secured the win with two minutes of normal time remaining. Donovan Wilson, only on the park a few minutes, collected the ball from Zyro and slid the ball past Forster for an absolutely superb victory.

Opinion: Great performance against Premier opposition.

Man of the match: Price

Team Rating: 8/10

Attendance: 17,931

Team: Norris, Vinagre, Graham, Edwards, Bath (capt), Bennett, Cavaleiro (Wilson 85), Price, Dicko (Zyro 74), Deslandes, Marshall (Ronan 45)

Unused Subs: Burgoyne, Pereira, Johnson, Armstrong

Bookings: Marshall (45 – foul), Zyro (75 – foul)

Referee: James Linington

JOTA IS THE BEES KNEES

BRENTFORD 0-0 WOLVES

Saturday 26th March 2017



It was honours even as Wolves and Brentford fought out a scoreless draw at Griffin Park. On the balance of play and the amount of goal scoring chances created a draw was a fair result with both teams committed to attractive attacking football. With rumours rife that Nouha Dicko is wanted by Hull, this game highlighted Wolves' need for another striker to start putting away the chances currently being created.

Wolves were back to full strength after the eleven changes made from the midweek EFL Cup win at Southampton, but it was Brentford who started the livelier, and when Sawyers let fly from 25 yards in the 10th minute Ruddy pulled of a great save to palm the ball away for a corner. Back came Wolves and this time it was Jota who shot from distance, but the ball was always travelling high and wide.

Wolves got better as the half progressed and Vinagre forced a smart save from Bentley after a one-two with Jota found him in the clear six yards out. Bentley was in the thick of the action again just five minutes later after Jota's superb ball sent Bonatini through on goal, but the Brazilian's tame shot was easily blocked by the keeper.

With half-time approaching Wolves had a massive let off when the Brentford version of Jota hit the foot of the post from eight yards when it looked easier to score. Maupay missed another gilt-edged chance for Brentford just before the hour mark when he scuffed a volley from three yards with the goal gaping.

Wolves continued to look dangerous on the counter-attack, and a slick move on the left ended with Vinagre sending over an inch perfect cross to the far post, but Cavaleiro wastefully headed the ball into

the side netting. Jota was instrumental in most of Wolves' moves, and when a poor clearance from Bentley ended up at the striker's feet ten yards out the keeper redeemed himself by managing to deflect the effort wide for a corner.

With two minutes left Doherty was left holding his head in his hands after blazing the ball over from eight yards after Dicko had squared the ball back from the byline. Neither team seemed satisfied with a point and both had chances to win it in stoppage time. Bjelland managed to head clear when Dicko's close range header went upwards instead of goalwards, and at the other end a superb tackle by Doherty denied Watkins a clear route on goal.

So after five games and the international break for World Cup qualifiers coming up Wolves are sitting 4th in the table after what looked on paper a difficult start to the season. If you would have offered me 10 points before a ball was kicked I would probably have snatched your hand off

Opinion: Couldn't have asked for a better start.

Man of the match: Jota

Team Rating: 6/10

Attendance: 10,351

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Vinagre, Coady (capt), Boly, Miranda, Saiss, Enobakhare (Cavaleiro 45), Bonatini (Dicko 79), Neves (Price 85), Jota

Unused Subs: Norris, Bennett, Bath, Ronan

Bookings: Doherty (43 – foul)

Referee: Tim Robinson

BUILD WITH SILVA AND COVER WITH GOLD

WOLVES 1-0 MILLWALL

Saturday 9th September 2017



Remember the name "Diogo Jose Teixeira da Silva", the player wears "Silva" on the back of his shirt and he is usually referred to as Diogo Jota. The season is only eight

MATCH REPORTS



games old but this boy is already looking a bit special. He is fast becoming a player who will have all Championship defenders quaking in their boots, and if he continues to play like he did here he could be instrumental in getting us back into the Premier League.

Wolves started brightly and went close to opening the scoring in the 8th minute when Millwall goalkeeper Jordan Archer had to pull off a smart save to deny Leo Bonatini following a cross from Doherty. But Archer could only watch on two minutes later as Wolves got their noses in front. The boy Jota won the ball on the halfway line, exchanged passes with Bonatini, and as the Millwall defence backed off him he let fly with an unstoppable forty yard shot that gave Archer absolutely no chance.

Wolves were dominant, they had the lion's share of the possession and were spraying the ball around as if they had been playing together for years. Millwall were chasing shadows and were lucky not to go further behind to another Jota effort that flashed across the face of goal in the 21st minute. For all their dominance Wolves failed to get that crucial second goal before half-time, the nearest coming from a Neves shot that flew just over the bar.

The importance of getting that second goal became more evident at the start of the second half when Batth made an important clearance from an O'Brien cross, and then Morison failed to hit the target with a free header when he was left unmarked ten yards out.

Wolves still carried the greater threat and almost doubled their lead in the 64th minute only for Archer to pull off a spectacular save to push away a deflected drive from Saiss. O'Brien made Millwall's task all but impossible a minute later when he was sent-off after collecting his second yellow card for pulling back Doherty, having earlier been cautioned for a horrific tackle on Jota.

Bonatini should have sewed up the game with ten minutes to go but shot straight at the keeper from ten yards. With the clock ticking down Saiss was denied by Archer, and when the ball rebounded back to Bonatini his shot was cleared off the line. Wolves survived a late scare when Ruddy did well to hold on to a stoppage-time strike from Williams.

Opinion: Would have lost this twelve months ago.

Man of the match: Jota

Team Rating: 7/10

Attendance: 24,426

Team: *Ruddy, Doherty, Vinagre, Neves (N'Diaye 77), Batth, Miranda, Jota (Cavaleiro 87), Saiss, Bonatini, Coady, Marshall (Enobakhare 59)*

Unused Subs: *Norris, Price, Ronan, Deslandes*

Bookings: Batth (57 – foul)

Referee: Andrew Madley

ROCKIN' ROBINS **STEAL A POINT**

WOLVES 3-3 BRISTOL CITY

Tuesday 12th September 2017



This game swung from one team to another and had more ups and downs than a fiddlers elbow. On a rainy night in front of the biggest midweek home crowd in three years supporters who turned up were treated to a six goal thriller. In the end the game finished 3-3, but Wolves are now starting to play some sexy football with the passing and movement at a different level to that seen in many a year at Molineux.

Wolves carried on where they left off on Saturday with the ball moving between the players at the speed of a squash ball, and Bristol could only look on as Wolves mounted attack after attack. And it was the hosts who finally broke the deadlock on the half-hour mark. N'Diaye passed to Cavaleiro who pulled the ball back across the area from the byline, and when Jota played the ball back into the six yard area Bonatini was on hand to tap the ball into the net.

Wolves continued to play some scintillating football, but some poor defending allowed Bristol back into the game on the stroke of half-time with their first serious attack of the game. Following a corner from the right the Wolves defence played pinball with the Bristol attack, and when the ball fell to Flint he fired in an angled shot that crept inside the right hand post via a deflection.

Wolves came out all guns blazing again after the break, and after three near misses, including two from the impressive Cavaleiro, who saw a shot deflected over and one kicked off the goal line, Wolves got their noses back in front in the 54th minute. From a Cavaleiro corner on the right Bonatini flicked on to Jota who slammed the ball home from close range.

However, the joy was short lived as Bristol mustered up another equaliser just four minutes later. Vinagre was adjudged to have handled in the area by referee Steve Martin, although the decision looked harsh, with the ball seeming to go to hand rather than the other way round. Despite the protests Diedhiou stepped up to make it 2-2 from the spot.

There were loud appeals from Wolves for a penalty of their own when Batth was flattened when going for a high ball with Bailey Wright, leading to furious remonstrations from Nuno on the sideline and sparking a scuffle between the benches, but the referee was having none of it. Wolves went again and were within a whisker of an equaliser when Jota smashed a half volley against the crossbar.

With eight minutes left the unthinkable happened and Bristol took the lead for the first time in the game. As with visitors first goal it was poor defending again, a corner from the left was headed against the post by Bailey Wright and Reid pounced to tap the ball into the net from the rebound.

However, this Wolves team is made of sterner stuff these days, and they upped the ante yet again in search of an equaliser. And when substitute Marshall sent over a corner five minutes before the end it was met by a powerful Batth header to make the scores level at 3-3.

Opinion: Need to start putting those chances away.

Man of the match: Cavaleiro

Team Rating: 8/10

Attendance: 23,045

Team: *Ruddy, Doherty, Vinagre, Neves, Batth (capt), Miranda (Saiss 76), Coady, Jota (Marshall 84), Bonatini, N'Diaye, Cavaleiro (Enobakhare 76)*

Unused Subs: *Norris, Zyro, Price, Deslandes*

Bookings: Jota (68 – foul)

Referee: Steve Martin

MATCH REPORTS



CLIMBING THE TABLE AT A RATE OF NOTTS

NOTTINGHAM FOREST 1-2 WOLVES
Saturday 16th September 2017



Wolves went joint top of the Championship with this win at the City Ground, they now lie in second place behind Leeds on goal difference only. It was the on-loan magician Diogo Jota who got both goals in the 2-1 win, making that four goals in three games. Forest had no answer to his speed as he ran them ragged all afternoon.

The first-half was a cagey affair although Wolves always looked in control, chances were far and few between, but what chances were created came via the boys in gold. Jota fired Wolves' clearest opening over the bar after he had been picked out by Cavaleiro's clever cut-back, but the best moment came when Bonatini fired in a powerful shot from ten yards that looked to be goal bound, but Worrall managed to get a foot in the way and deflect it over the bar. After a quiet end to the first-half there was a frenetic start to the second as Wolves took the lead within the first ninety seconds. With virtually their first attack Cavaleiro broke at speed and cut into Forest's defence like a hot knife through butter, he sent over an angled pass from the right and Jota was on hand at the far post to stick it into the back of the net from a few yards.

It seemed that would be enough to win the game until a real howler by John Ruddy allowed Forest back into it. Carayol collected the ball wide on the left-hand side and spotted Ruddy out of position on his line, he then let fly from 25 yards with a shot that went to the keepers right hand and into the net.

However, Wolves had been the better team all afternoon and still had a little bit of magic to conjure up, and it came just six minutes after Forest's equaliser. Bonatini

made a surging run down the middle and beat one player before clipping the ball inside to Jota, the Portuguese Maestro took the ball in his stride before sliding it past Smith to re-establish Wolves' advantage.

Wolves re-gathered and played out the remaining nine minutes plus five added on with relative ease. It was their fifth win in eight league games and everything is looking very rosy at the moment.

Opinion: Local derbies are never easy, so an impressive resolute steely performance.

Man of the match: Jota

Team Rating: 7/10

Attendance: 25,756

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Vinagre (Deslandes 61), Neves, Bath (capt), Miranda, Coady, Jota, Bonatini (N'Diaye 83), Saiss, Cavaleiro (Marshall 61)

Unused Subs: Norris, Price, Ronan, Enobakhare

Bookings: Cavaleiro (56 – foul), Marshall (90+1 – foul)

Referee: Geoff Eltringham

ONE BRIGHT SPARK IS ALL IT TAKES

WOLVES 1-0 BRISTOL ROVERS

After extra-time, 0-0 at 90 minutes

Tuesday 19th September 2017

(Carabao Cup 3rd Round)

Bright Enobakhare scored the only goal of the game in extra time, and it was enough to sink League 1 Bristol Rovers in this 3rd Round Carabao Cup game. You may think the result should be expected from high flying Wolves (2nd in the Championship), but the last time they progressed through three rounds of this competition was in 1995, that's 22 years ago.

Nuno made eight changes to the team that beat Forest on Saturday and one of those was the welcome return of Michal Zyro, who was making his first start in 17 months following a horror tackle against MK Dons that shredded his knee ligaments. And he was soon in the thick of the action, he drove over the bar in the 13th minute, and then lifted a close-range shot the wrong side of the post a minute later.

After Wolves had dominated the early play Rovers started to get a foothold in the game, and they twice went close towards the end of the first-half. Firstly Bodin cut in from the left and rolled a pass into the path of Nicholls whose shot was deflected over the bar. Sercombe then came even closer

in the 41st minute when he gave Miranda the slip and let fly with a fierce shot that Norris parried away.

Wolves started brighter after the break and went within a whisker of breaking the deadlock in the 52nd minute, Marshall sent in a deep cross to the back of the area and Enobakhare hit a first time volley that drew a superb save from Slocombe, diving full length to his left.

Wolves rang the changes in an attempt to win the tie, Douglas, Cavaleiro and Conan replaced Deslandes, Zyro and Marshall respectively, but it mattered not, if anything Rovers looked the more likely to go on and win. And in the 71st minute the League 1 minnows were only denied by Norris who made a superb stop when he tipped Bola's shot onto the post.

As the game reached its conclusion Enobakhare forced Slocombe into another decent save, and a Miranda shot bounced off the bar in the final minute as Wolves made a late bid to avoid extra time. But that was the last action of note and the score remained 0-0 at 90 minutes.

The game became a cat and mouse affair in extra time, but Wolves finally broke the deadlock in the 98th minute. Douglas fed Enobakhare just inside the area and the young striker hit a superb rising shot into the roof of the net. Instead of kicking on Wolves became complacent and had Norris to thank again when he pushed a Gaffney shot onto the bar, and then in the second period of extra time tipped over another Sercombe rocket.



Wolves hung on for victory, and Rovers misery was completed in the final seconds when Lockyear was red carded for dragging down Wilson as he raced clear. After the win the draw for the next round paired Nuno's men away to Man City, what a superb chance to see how we have progressed, against probably the best team in the Premiership at the moment.

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Opinion: Eight changes and not quite firing on all cylinders but we still won.

Man of the match: Norris

Team Rating: 5/10

Attendance: 12,740

Team: Norris, Rasmussen (Wilson 90), Deslandes (Douglas 62), Miranda, Batth (capt), Coady, Zyro (Cavaleiro 68), Price, Enobakhare, N'Diaye, Marshall (Ronan 68)

Unused Subs: Burgoyne, Gibbs-White, Hause

Bookings: Douglas (72 – foul), Batth (75 – foul), Price (102 – foul), N'Diaye (102 – ungentlemanly conduct)

Referee: Tony Harrington

ALFRED THE GREAT

WOLVES 2-1 BARNSELY

Saturday 23rd September 2017

Wolves remained in second place in the Championship table on goal difference, but it took a last gasp winner from substitute Alfred N'Diaye who scored in the 93rd minute to give Nuno Espirito Santo's boys a 2-1 victory against Barnsley. It seemed to have all gone pear shaped when Barnsley scored a last minute equaliser that cancelled out Bright Enobakhare's opener, but Wolves are made of stronger stuff these days and N'Diaye had the last say when he slid home a cross from 12 yards to send the Wolves supporters into ecstasy.

Despite the bumper crowd it was a subdued opening from both teams. The first sign of any action came in the 15th minute when Cavaleiro dinked past two defenders and sent a long cross to the far post where Jota was waiting, but he failed to keep the ball down and headed well over the bar. Wolves struggled to get going in front of the expectant crowd and allowed Barnsley to push forward, and the visitors missed a good opportunity when Bradshaw headed straight into the arms of Ruddy from close range.

After surviving a penalty appeal when Batth appeared to shove Bradshaw in the back Wolves went close to taking the lead just before the half-time break, Vinagre sent over a right-wing cross that fell inch perfect for Cavaleiro, but his low right foot shot went agonisingly wide of the post. That was it as far as chances go, in what had been a poor 45 minutes by both teams.

After the break Douglas was sent on for Vinagre, and the Scottish full-back immediately found himself in the thick of it

when he latched onto a reverse ball from Bonatini just inside the area and forced keeper Adam Davies into a smart save.

Bonatini then blazed a shot wide following a superb through ball from Jota before Wolves finally opened the scoring in the 80th minute. N'Diaye, who had been sent on as a sub just a few seconds earlier broke on the right flank, and sent over an inch perfect cross deep into the area where Enobakhare executed an exquisite left-footed volley into the corner of the net.



With time up and added time being played Barnsley must have thought they had snatched a point with a dramatic equaliser, Hamill's deep free-kick was headed back across goal where the unmarked Jackson lashed it in from ten yards. However, with 94 minutes on the clock Bonatini showed superb vision to pick out N'Diaye's run into the box, and the supersub poked it past Davies for that dramatic winner.

Opinion: Nuno seems to have the magic touch with substitutions.

Man of the match: N'Diaye

Team Rating: 6/10

Attendance: 28,154

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Vinagre (Douglas 45), Neves, Batth (capt), Miranda, Coady, Jota, Bonatini, Saiss (N'Diaye 80), Cavaleiro (Enobakhare 64)

Unused Subs: Norris, Marshall, Costa, Price

Bookings: Neves (47 – foul), Coady (57 – foul), Saiss (70 – foul)

Referee: Jeremy Simpson

NO NEVES OF STEEL

SHEFFIELD UNITED 2-0 WOLVES

Wednesday 27th September 2017

It was a bad day at the office for Wolves as they went down 2-0 to promotion contenders Sheffield United. Conor Coady who had been subject of a transfer bid by the



Blades became the villain of the piece when he was dismissed in the 15th minute for pulling back former Wolves player Leon Clarke, and ironically it was Clarke who went on to sink Wolves with both United's goals.

Wolves started the brighter in the torrential rain and had the first chance of the game in the 10th minute when Bonatini won the ball on the edge of the United area, but his resulting shot was too close to the keeper. United then had a chance of their own when O'Connell forced Ruddy to push his header wide of the post following a corner.

The game was then turned on its head in United's favour on the quarter hour mark, Clarke broke down the middle and Coady pulled him back as he raced towards goal, the referee had no hesitation and gave the Scouser a straight red card. It was also bad news for the Portuguese magician Helder Costa who was making his first appearance in 17 league games, he was the sacrificial lamb to make way for Saiss to counteract Coady's dismissal.

United seized on their opportunity and went for the jugular, Wolves frantically held on under intense pressure, but their resistance was finally broke in the 39th minute. Inevitably it was that man Clarke, in his time at Wolves he couldn't hit a cow's arse with a banjo, but when Stevens sent over a low left-wing cross the former Wolves man was there at the far post to slot home from close range.

Wolves started with a positive attitude after the break and went in search of an equaliser, and they were given a guilt edged chance to level the scores just six minutes into the half when they were awarded a penalty. Jota broke through in the box, and when he was dragged back by Cameron Carter-Vickers the referee pointed to the spot. Neves stepped up to take the spot-kick but held his head in his hands when his effort smacked against United's left-hand post.

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That really summed up Wolves' evening, thereon United relentlessly pushed forward, and the game was put to bed in the 58th minute. Duffy sent over a free-kick into the area and Clarke rose above the Wolves defence to place an unstoppable header past Ruddy. Wolves never threatened to get back into the game and were mainly restricted to hopeful, long-range efforts. Jota had a chance in stoppage time to reduce the deficit but his powerful shot was turned over by Blackman.

Opinion: A night better forgotten.

Man of the match: Ruddy

Team Rating: 3/10

Attendance: 25,893

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Douglas, Neves (Cavaleiro 64), Bath (capt), Miranda, Coady, Jota, Bonatini (Enobakhare 45), N'Diaye, Costa (Saiss 19)

Unused Subs: Norris, Marshall, Price, Vinagre

Bookings: Neves (61 – obstructing free-kick)

Sending's Off: Coady (15 – professional foul)

Referee: Peter Bankes

NO TYRED LEGS AT THE PIRELLI

BURTON ALBION 0-4 WOLVES

Saturday 30th September 2017

After the midweek car crash at Sheffield United, Wolves immediately bounced back with an impressive 4-0 demolition job away at Burton Albion. In stark contrast to the 2-0 Bramall Lane disappointment Wolves turned on the style as they carved up Burton with some stunning counter attacking football, and they now lie second in the table just one point adrift of leaders Cardiff.

Wolves kicked off to start what was probably their best opening first-half of the season, some of the football in this majestic 45 minutes was nothing short of breath taking. They tore into Burton from the off and it took just five minutes for Nuno's men to open the scoring, they broke with lightning speed from their own area and Cavaleiro put Jota through on goal with a peach of a flick, and the man in form slotted past Bywater from just inside the area.

There was no letting up and six minutes later it was 2-0, Neves sent over a free-



kick from the right-hand side of the area which looked to be straight into the arms of Bywater, but the Burton keeper made a real hash of collecting the ball and spilled it at the feet of Saiss who prodded it into the empty net.

Wolves continued to dominate and they attacked with pace as the midweek defeat at Sheffield was quickly exorcised from memory. The early quick-fire double had relieved the pre-match tension and allowed Nuno's talented troops to show off their silky skills. Although credit must be given to Burton who at least had a go, and this was typified when Allen forced Ruddy into a good save with a dipping shot from the edge of the area.

However, Burton were no match for Wolves, and the game was virtually put to bed four minutes before half-time when the lead was extended following another devastating break. Wolves broke with speed from their own area and Vinagre picked the ball up midway in the Burton half, he exchanged passes with Cavaleiro, and went through the Burton defence like a Swiss slalom skier before smashing the ball home from ten yards.

After the blistering pace of the Wolves play in the first-half, and the game already in the bag the tempo reduced somewhat after the break, although Wolves continued to create chances. The usually deadly Jota was guilty of wasting one of the best chances when he headed over from close range following an inch perfect cross by Bonatini.

However, Wolves didn't have to wait long for their fourth goal, and it came in the 62nd minute. In another rapid counter-attack Doherty combined with Cavaleiro down the right, the Irishman continued his run into the box to help Cavaleiro's return pass into the path of Bonatini, and the Brazilian made no mistake as he smashed the ball home from ten yards to complete the scoring.

Opinion: No "Brewers Droop" following Wednesday's "Hangover" ...

Man of the match: Cavaleiro

Team Rating: 9/10

Attendance: 5,080

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Vinagre, Neves (Price 72), Bath (capt), Bennett, Miranda, Cavaleiro, Jota (Ronan 76), Saiss, Costa (Bonatini 51)

Unused Subs: Norris, N'Diaye, Enobakhare, Deslandes

Bookings: None

Referee: Tony Harrington

JOTA FEASTS ON TERRY'S ALL GOLD

WOLVES 2-0 ASTON VILLA

Saturday 14th October 2017



Wolves went to the top of the Championship for the first time since 2009 with a stunning display against local rivals Aston Villa. Steve Bruce's team arrived at Molineux on the back of four straight wins, but they were outplayed from start to finish as Wolves put on a breath taking performance, straight out of the Top Drawer.

The 2-0 scoreline didn't reflect the dominance of a Wolves team that are now playing some of the best football seen at Molineux for many a year, and in Diogo Jota Wolves have a very special player who Fosun should break the bank to sign up permanently in the January transfer window. John Terry will be seeking therapy on Monday morning after the Portuguese wizard tormented him and the rest of the Villa defence with his blistering show of pace and silky skills.

As expected with Steve Bruce at the helm, Villa arrived at Molineux with a game plan, and that was to stifle the sublime free flowing football that Wolves are producing at the moment. Even though Wolves had the lion's share of the possession, Villa proved to be very stubborn and resolute as they

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defended in numbers in a first-half where chances were at a premium. In fact the only real save that Johnstone had to make in the first 45 minutes was when he palmed away a long range pile driver from Neves.

As the second-half got underway the trend continued with Wolves on the attack, and when the deadlock was finally broken in the 55th minute it just had to be that man Jota. Cavaleiro received the ball on the right flank and crossed the ball to the Portuguese Magician near the back of the area, as the Villa defenders rushed to close him down he flicked the ball past Elmohamady and lashed an unstoppable shot into the roof of the net.



Wolves continued to bombard the Villa goal and it was that man Jota again who was instrumental in the second goal in the 73rd minute. He went on a mazy run from inside his own half that took him into the Villa area before his attempted shot was blocked by Hutton, the ball fell to Bonatini who took the ball in his stride and crashed home from an acute angle.

It was party time as Wolves knocked the ball about with Villa chasing shadows, and the visitors had Johnstone to thank for keeping the score down with a superb double save in the final minutes, firstly clawing away Jota's header on the goal-line before somehow keeping out Bonetini's close-range follow-up. Villa went close late on when Snodgrass hit the bar with a 20 yard free-kick, but the night belonged to Nuno Espirito Santo's Wolverhampton Wanderers.

Opinion: On the brink of something very special.

Man of the match: Jota

Team Rating: 10/10

Attendance: 30,239

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Douglas, Miranda, Bath (capt), Coady, Cavaleiro (Marshall 73), Jota, Neves (N'Diaye 79), Saiss, Costa (Bonatini 45)

Unused Subs: Norris, Bennett, Enobakhare, Vinagre

Bookings: None

Referee: Andy Davies

HEY PRESTO

WOLVES 3-2 PRESTON

Saturday 21st October 2017

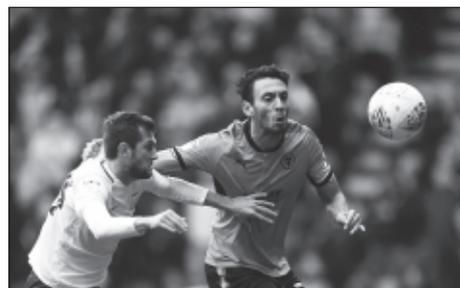
Wolves consolidated their place at the top of the Championship with a hard-fought win against Preston at Molineux. After a first-half where the visitors had the lion's share of the play Wolves finally took command with a Cavaleiro goal just before the break, and a Bonatini brace in four second-half minutes put Wolves in control. But Preston fought back to 3-2, and it led to a niggly final 15 minutes where the home side had to defend solidly to take maximum points.

Preston came to Molineux with a game plan, much the same as Cardiff did in mid-August. Where Cardiff came to kick Wolves off the park, the Preston strategy hinged on spending most of the game tugging at, and wanting to get hold of the Wolves player's shirts before the game was even over. With a poor referee not penalising or punishing these continuous infringements the brakes were partially put on Wolves attacking flair and silky skills.

All said and done Preston started the game at a high tempo and errors from Douglas and Miranda presented Johnson with a couple of chances. The first was a 20 yard strike that was tipped around the post by Ruddy, and that was followed by a gilt-edged chance when Barkhuizen crossed the ball into Johnson's path, but he blazed the ball over the bar from close range.

Preston continued to frustrate with their bully boy tactics and high pressing game, and the silky skills and free flowing football now associated with Wolves were continually negated in brutal fashion with whatever methods deemed necessary. However, Nuno's men finally managed to break the deadlock on the stroke of half-time, Doherty fed the ball to Douglas and his cross fell to Cavaleiro who bundled the ball home at the back post.

It was a different story after the break and the game looked to have been decided in four minutes around the hour mark. Firstly Doherty was upended in the area by a clumsy challenge by Harrop and Bonatini coolly slotted the ball home from the



resulting penalty kick. Bonitini then seemed to have put the game out of Preston sights when Jota's volley was saved by the goalkeeper's legs and the ball bounced off the intruding Bonatini and over the line for 3-0.

Just two minutes later Wolves allowed Preston back in the game when a lapse of concentration by the defence allowed Hugill to ghost into the area unmarked and head past Ruddy from six yards. Ten minutes later the nerves were put right on the edge when Barkhuizen crossed from the right and Coady inadvertently sliced the ball into his own net.

Preston were reduced to ten men in injury time when Browne was given a second yellow for another crude foul on N'Diaye, although he left the field before the card was shown. Referee Steve Martin then called him back from the dressing room to show the red card, subsequently Browne had to turn 180 degrees and walk back down the tunnel. After NINE minutes of added time the referee finally blew his whistle to end the contest.

Opinion: Shows we can also get stuck in when it's needed.

Man of the match: Neves

Team Rating: 5/10

Attendance: 27,352

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Douglas, Miranda, Bath (capt), Coady, Cavaleiro (Enobakhare 75), Jota (N'Diaye 83), Neves, Saiss, Bonatini (Costa 75)

Unused Subs: Norris, Bennett, Price, Marshall

Bookings: Douglas (73 – foul), Miranda (85 – foul), Saiss (90+1 unsporting behaviour)

Referee: Steve Martin

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MANC'NIFICENT

MANCHESTER CITY 0-0 WOLVES

(After extra-time, Man City Win 4-1 on Penalties)

Tuesday 24th October 2017
(Carabao Cup 4th Round)



We may be out of the Carabao Cup, but there was only one winning team in this 4th round tie and that was Nuno Espirito's Wolverhampton Wanderers. It was a magnificent performance against probably the best team in the Premier League at the moment. The 6,200 fans who travelled to the Etihad to witness the heroics watched on as their team became the first side to shut out City this season.

In the end Wolves lost 4-1 on penalties after the score remained goalless after extra time. The size of the achievement cannot be underestimated as City fielded a team that included Aguero, de Jesus, Sterling and Yaya Toure. Then during the game on came England regulars Kyle Walker and John Stones plus Leroy Sane and likely PFA player of the season Kevin de Bruyne.

It was a monumental effort by every Wolves player, and the teams couldn't be separated in 120 minutes of play as Nuno's Boys stood firm to keep City at bay. Aguero who was looking to score one goal to become City's all-time record goalscorer, and Leroy Sane wasted their best chances, and even when the defence was breached there was still Will Norris between the sticks standing as tall as the Hoover Dam.

Wolves created four clear cut chances of their own, but Bright Enobakhare shot at the keeper on three occasions, one of which was right at the end of normal time, and Helder Costa couldn't beat the keeper either when he found himself in on goal. The tie went all the way to penalties, but Alfred N'Diaye and Conor Coady saw their spot kicks saved as City won the penalty shootout.

In the aftermath of City failing to score due to a magnificent Wolves defensive display City manager Pep Guardiola blamed the ball for his multimillion team being unable to find the back of the net. "The ball is not acceptable to play with... at that level," the City boss said. "We play with a different ball. It's not Nike, Adidas I don't know, it's a different brand. It's unacceptable to play with the ball".

Yet another case of a foreign manager making ridiculous excuses to give himself anything to talk about rather than the shortcomings of his team being unable to score against a team from a lower division. There was no "Wolves are a good team and they made us battle all the way", it was probably a good job that Bright Enobakhare didn't score at the death, there would have been a full scale "Dodgy Ball" appeal to the FA, and demands for a replay!!!

Opinion: A magnificent display that made you proud to be a Wolves Supporter.

Man of the match: Norris

Team Rating: 10/10

Attendance: 50,755

Team: Norris, Vinagre, Hause, Price, Bath (capt), Bennett, Costa (Cavaleiro 79), N'Diaye, Enobakhare (Bonatini 90), Coady, Marshall (Ronan 72)

Unused Subs: Burgoyne, Doherty, Miranda, Deslandes

Bookings: Price (82 - foul), Bennett (84 - foul)

Referee: Kevin Friend

THE SLEEPY HOLLOW WAY

QPR 2-1 WOLVES

Saturday 28th October 2017

Sleepy Hollow was an American gothic supernatural horror film. This game re-enacted a horror show script in the form of Ian Holloways "Football Tactics for Dummies" learning guide, and it somehow helped his team end their run of seven games without a win. Holloway's philosophy seems to be "If you can't beat em... kick em", and that's what his teams generally do. Wolves succumbed to the bully boy tactics with a lack lustre performance against a team more interested in showing their ability to intimidate than exhilarate.

QPR set their stall from the off, knowing they had no chance of matching Wolves' sublime skills and passing game. They decided to play the "in your face game" and hopefully suffocate any kind of football



Wolves would try and play. This proved very effective and ultimately removed any chance that the supporters might have had of seeing something in the form of entertainment.

Wolves had to wait until the 25th minute for their first real threat on the QPR goal, Neves released Jota outside the area, but the striker's first time effort failed to hit the target. Even with home advantage QPR were happy to sit back and try to threaten on the break, and the alarm bells should have been ringing when Ruddy had to block a shot from Washington from close range.

The inevitable happened four minutes before the break and Wolves fell behind. Luongo went into a tackle with two feet in midfield, and as Saiss checked to see that his leg was still in one piece the ball broke to Washington, he went outside Bath and chipped the ball over the advancing Ruddy and into the net.

Falling behind seemed to wake Wolves up and instead of going into the break a goal down they immediately hit back to go level. The on-loan magician Diogo Jota went on a breath-taking run down the left wing leaving full-back Baptiste looking round wondering where he had disappeared to, Jota continued his run along the goal line before cutting the ball back to Bonatini who smashed it in from six yards.

Instead of using that late first-half equaliser as a springboard Wolves fell back into their shell after the break and almost immediately went behind again, Freeman seized on a defensive slip and then unleashed a shot from just outside the box that took a deflection off Doherty and crashed against the crossbar.

Just after the hour mark Wolves should have regained the lead after Jota waved his magic wand yet again. The Portuguese maestro linked up with his Brazilian counterpart Bonatini, exchanging dummies and a one-two that left the forward with the goal at his mercy just six yards out, but the dependable goal scorer forgot the last sentence of the script and blazed over.

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It had been a poor day at the office for Wolves and the day ended in the ascendance for QPR. Nine minutes from time Wolves only half-cleared a free-kick from the left, and Lynch quickly swept the ball back into the danger area where Smith got in ahead of Miranda and directed his header into the net. That was it for Nuno's boys, and there was to be no way back, no points for Wolves and a sad day for the football purists.

Opinion: Back to earth with a bang after the midweek heroics.

Man of the match: Jota

Team Rating: 4/10

Attendance: 16,004

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Douglas, Miranda, Bath (capt), Coady, Cavaleiro (Costa 56), Jota, Neves (Marshall 84), Saiss, Bonatini (Enobakhare 79)

Unused Subs: Norris, N'Diaye, Bennett, Boly

Bookings: Saiss (90+5 - foul)

Referee: Tony Harrington

BOLY'WOOD NETBUSTER

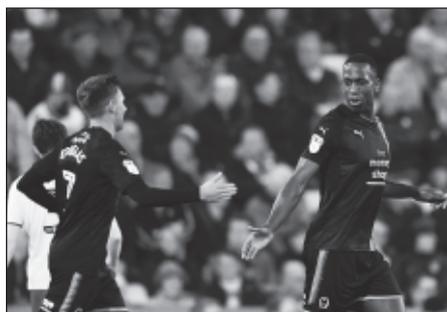
NORWICH 0-2 WOLVES

Tuesday 31st October 2017

After a poor display in their previous away game at QPR, it was back to winning ways for Wolves who gave an impressive performance to outplay Norwich and win at Carrow Road for the first time since 2007. The fact that it moved Wolves back to the top of the Sky Bet Championship made it a satisfying night all round.

After a scrappy start Wolves soon started to feel their feet, and in the 6th minute Neves set the stall when he fizzed a shot just wide from outside the area. In just the first ten minutes the contrast between the game at Loftus Road on Saturday and here was a million miles apart, here you had two teams going for a win and playing end to end football, whereas entertainment took a back seat at QPR.

On the quarter of an hour mark the home side went within a whisker of taking the lead, if Wolves need to improve one aspect of their game then its defending set pieces. This point was highlighted when a free-kick from the left found Watkins unmarked in the centre of the box, but fortunately for Wolves his header lacked direction and it only found Ruddy's right hand post.



Play then went up the other end as Wolves looked for an opener, and Neves went close when another long range exorcet pinged towards the top corner was tipped round the post by Gunn's finger tips. It was the third corner in as many minutes as Wolves pushed forward to get their noses in front. Douglas went over and swung in a perfect delivery from the right, and Boly who was all on his own two yards out headed the ball home to give Wolves a deserved lead.

It was a truly impressive half for Wolves, and they continued where they left off after their half-time cup of tea. N'Diaye had three decent chances to extend Wolves lead within ten minutes of the restart. Firstly he forced Gunn into a good save following a lightning break from his own half, he then failed to capitalise when shooting weakly at the keeper following a three on two, and then he failed to connect with Jota's low cross when all that was needed was a tap-in into an empty net.

However, as Wolves continued to push forward they did get that all important second goal with 18 minutes left. A Douglas free kick on the left was only half cleared, Doherty climbed above the Norwich defenders to win it in the air, and Bennett lobbed it into the path of Bonatini who smashed it home on the volley from ten yards.

With the two goal cushion in place it became a cake walk for Wolves, and they knocked the ball about the park with Norwich players chasing shadows. After the glitch in the last game Nuno's boys were back to their very best, and with a game against lowly Burton up next the new Head Coach will be looking to pile the pressure on the teams now lying just below them in the table.

Opinion: Great result after the QPR disappointment.

Man of the match: Bonatini

Team Rating: 9/10

Attendance: 26,554

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Douglas, Coady (capt), Bennett, Boly, Cavaleiro (Enobakhare 60), Neves, Bonatini (Price 75), Jota (Costa 84), N'Diaye

Unused Subs: Norris, Marshall, Vinagre, Hause

Bookings: N'Diaye (41 – foul), Neves (63 – foul), Douglas (73 – leaving the field of play), Bennett (80 – foul)

Referee: Darren England

TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

WOLVES 2-0 FULHAM

Friday 3rd November 2017

After the Loftus Road hick up Wolves are well and truly back on the winning trail. They may not have hit the same heights as their superb performance away at Norwich in midweek, but they still won by a country mile against a Fulham team who reached the play-offs last season, and were highly fancied to do well again this season.

For once it was refreshing to see an opposing team who wanted to play football and not employ a game plan that consisted of kicking our talented young players off the park, like Warnock's Cardiff and Holloways QPR. However, it was still Wolves who started the stronger and they opened the scoring in the 9th minute. Douglas sent over an in swinging corner from the right flank and Saiss stole a yard on his marker before sending an unstoppable header into the roof of the net.



Wolves continued to dominate and Jota went close when flashing a shot across the face of goal after a one-two with Cavaleiro. Although Fulham were on the back foot they still missed a glorious chance to equalise when Ruddy spilled the ball from a free-kick, but Wolves old boy Kevin McDonald wasted the opportunity when he ballooned the ball over the bar with the goal at his mercy.

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A few minutes later Wolves made Fulham pay dearly for that McDonald miss, Douglas delivered a peach of a cross from a free-kick on the right and Bonatini glanced a header into the left hand corner of the net to make it his seventh goal in six consecutive league games, and his 10th in total for the season.

Five minutes after the break Bonatini should have added to his ten goal tally for the season, but he scuffed his shot wide after Cavaleiro had put him through on goal with the deftest of flicks. Next up it was Fulham who broke at speed, and when Ayite found an opening in the Wolves defence he also shot wide when well placed.

Within a click of the fingers Wolves upped the ante, and with Neves pulling all the strings Fulham were chasing shadows. Just after the hour mark Douglas send over a corner and Bonitini sent a glancing header that looked a goal all the way, but somehow Button managed to get a hand on it and palm it away to safety. Shortly after another chance went begging, and this time Jota stumbled at the far post with the goal at his mercy.

It mattered not though as Wolves comfortably played out the remaining quarter of the game with ease, with the ball moving around the midfield like a ball bearing in a pinball machine. It's been a long time since we saw these kind of players at Molineux so let's milk the moment while we can.

Opinion: Dare we start talking "Promotion"?
Man of the match: Neves
Team Rating: 8/10
Attendance: 24,388
Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Douglas, Saiss, Boly (N'Diaye 79), Bennett, Cavaleiro (Enobakhare 75), Coady (capt), Bonatini (Marshall 87), Jota, Neves
Unused Subs: Norris, Costa, Bath, Vinagre
Bookings: Saiss (42 – foul), Douglas (53 – foul)
Referee: David Coote

IVAN THE GREAT

READING 0-2 WOLVES

Saturday 18th November 2017

Wolves continued their promotion charge with a hard earned victory at Reading, and this game proved that Wolves can be

resilient as well as play the champagne football seen this season. An early goal from Ivan Cavaleiro and a late effort from Matt Doherty made sure Wolves regained their rightful place at the top of the league, this after Sheffield United had temporarily taken the mantle with a win on the previous night.

If there were any thoughts that this game was going to be a comfortable three points then Wolves found out to the contrary within the first minute. Swift hit a long range daisy cutter that caught Ruddy by surprise, and when the keeper fumbled the effort he looked back on in relief as the ball came back off the post. Ruddy's shaky start continued when he tried to clear a back pass from Coady, and the onrushing Barrow charged down his clearance with the ball narrowly bouncing past the post.



It was an unconvincing start from Wolves, but they started to settle into a rhythm and opened the scoring in the 16th minute. Jota split the Reading defence with a superb pass, and Cavaleiro showed an exquisite touch as he rolled the ball under his studs and went round Mannone before tucking the ball into the net.

Reading attempted to respond, but the impressive Boly led by example and marshalled the Wolves defence superbly, this was epitomised when he put his body on the line to block a shot resulting from a corner. Wolves also looked dangerous on the counter attack and Cavaleiro went close to a second goal when his shot was deflected into the side netting just before the break.

Reading started the second-half on the front foot, and both Boly and Neves showed there was grit in their play along with the silky passing skills as both made vital goalmouth blocks. For all their pressure Reading rarely looked like scoring, and on the break Wolves went close when Vinagre shot across the face of goal

and Bonatini fired just wide from outside the area.



Ruddy kept Wolves in it with a superb save in the 80th minute when he blocked Barrow's shot from point-blank range, and then Boly was at full stretch to clear Aluko's follow-up shot off the line. Wolves settled all the nerves with the all-important second goal in the 88th minute, Costa went on a mazy run down the right and the ball eventually came to Doherty who buried a left-footed finish past the keeper.

Opinion: Grinding out wins when needed now.

Man of the match: Cavaleiro

Team Rating: 7/10

Attendance: 20,708

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Vinagre, Coady (capt), Boly, Bennett, Cavaleiro (N'Diaye 79), Saiss, Bonatini (Enobakhare 72), Neves, Jota (Costa 85)

Unused Subs: Norris, Bath, Price, Miranda

Bookings: Doherty (59 – foul), Bennett (64 – foul)

Referee: Roger East

GIVEN WHAT FOUR

WOLVES 4-1 LEEDS

Wednesday 22nd November 2017

All those who predicted that the Wolves bubble was about to burst should just watch the highlights of this game. Two goals in either half helped Wolves to a 4-1 victory and go four points clear at the top of the league, and on this form it will take a very good team to overtake this majestic Wolves side. It was champagne football all the way, and at times Leeds must have been looking to use their shirts as white flags to raise in surrender.

Leeds came into the game with an impressive 2-0 win over Middlesbrough, but they were no match for a Wolves side

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brimming with confidence, and driven on by a crowd of nearly 29,000. After a barnstorming start it was Wolves who opened the scoring in the 15th minute. Cavaleiro was upended by Cooper about 25 yards out on the right-hand side, Douglas took charge of proceedings and struck an unstoppable free-kick straight into the top corner, giving Loneragan absolutely no chance.

Surprisingly we had to wait another 11 minutes before Wolves increased the lead, but what a goal and well worth waiting for. Bonatini played the ball through to Doherty who was breaking forward, the born again full-back played the ball to Cavaleiro on the edge of the box and the on fire striker cut inside, he left his defender for dead and fired past the helpless Loneragan.

The passing and movement was lightning quick, and it was like watching the Portuguese national team as Neves, Jota and Cavaleiro ripped the Leeds defence to shreds. Cavaleiro nearly scored his second when he was played in by Jota, but his shot goalwards was just wide, Bonatini then almost added a third when Cavaleiro found him with a cross at the near post.

Despite all their pressure and dominance Wolves were caught napping at the start of the second-half and Leeds pulled a goal back in the 49th minute, Saiz floated over a ball from the left wing and it was met by a first time volley by Alioski that gave Ruddy absolutely no chance. It was the first goal Wolves had conceded for 326 minutes and suddenly Leeds were back in a game they had been outclassed in up to that point.

Suddenly Leeds tails were up and the Wolves passing machine was having a few hiccups, but the initiative was put right back into the Wolves court when a suicide lunge by Vieira on Jota saw the Leeds midfielder receive his second yellow followed by the consequent red card.

With Leeds down to ten men there was no chance of any comeback, they had struggled most of the game to keep pace with a full complement of players, now that they were a man down it was Wolves on the attack again, and they increased their lead in the 70th minute. Bonatini headed on a through ball to Jota who produced a sensational finish when he dinked the ball over Loneragan as the keeper tried to close him down.



The onslaught continued and a goalmouth scramble four minutes later ended when Bonatini was hauled down as he tried to round the keeper. It was a stonewall penalty and substitute Helder Costa stepped up and smashed home the spot-kick to Loneragan's left. It was game over as Wolves played out time and in the process put on a footballing exhibition, the home supporters celebrated and the Ole's rang out as the ball was pinged over every inch the pitch

Opinion: Amazing atmosphere and amazing display.

Man of the match: Cavaleiro

Team Rating: 10/10

Attendance: 28,914

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Douglas, Coady (capt), Boly, Bennett, Cavaleiro (Costa 68), Saiss (N'Diaye 80), Bonatini, Neves (Price 80), Jota

Unused Subs: Norris, Bath, Miranda, Enobakhare

Bookings: None

Referee: Geoff Eltringham

TROTTERS BEATEN BY A CANTER

WOLVES 5-1 BOLTON

Saturday 25th November 2017

Wolves roared to their biggest win of the season to go seven points clear at the top of the Championship table, it took their goal tally to nine in just three days after the midweek destruction of Leeds. Bolton arrived at Molineux on a seven match unbeaten run, but they were no match for this silky Wolves team who played them off the park for more or less the whole 90 minutes.

Man of the moment Ivan Cavaleiro grabbed himself a brace to make it four goals in three matches, and he continually skipped around the Bolton defenders as if they were wearing diving boots and not football boots.

It took Wolves just 13 minutes to break the deadlock and it was relatively straight forward considering some of the wonder goals already scored this season, Douglas sent over a pinpoint delivery from a corner on the right and Boly rose above the Bolton defence to powerfully head home from close range.



The second came 13 minute later and was sheer poetry. Neves hit a pass with the outside of his foot, it was superb vision and the technique way beyond the Championship. Jota collected the inch perfect delivery and clipped the ball past the onrushing Alnwick, all that was left for Bonatini to do was the simple task of nodding the ball into the empty net.

The game exploded on the touchline a minute before the break when the Wolves bench reacted furiously to a challenge by Bolton defender David Wheater on Jota. That sparked a heated response from their Bolton counterparts and the two groups furiously clashed. Once the dust had settled, referee Keith Stroud gave both Nuno and Bolton boss Phil Parkinson their marching orders to the stands.



What the two managers saw from their seats in the stands in the second-half was Wolves strolling to an easy victory. Just as the hour mark elapsed Saiss was upended mercilessly by Robinson in the Bolton area for a stonewall penalty, Cavaleiro stepped up and clinically dispatched it to the bottom right-hand corner to make it 3-0.

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That should have been the signal to storm forward and seriously up the goal difference, however some poor defending allowed Buckley to reach a through ball and poke past Ruddy to gift Bolton a consolation goal in the 75th minute. It mattered little as Wolves added a fourth with 8 minutes left, a poor clearance by Alwnick fell straight to Costa who then fed Cavaleiro just inside the area, the striker left his marker in a heap before despatching an unstoppable shot into the top of the net.

The icing was put on the cake three minutes from time when Ruddy's long clearance found Jota in Bolton's half, he raced into the area before slotting past the keeper to make the final score 5-1. That's the fifth straight win and eighth in the last nine for Nuno's boys, and on this form they look absolutely unstoppable.

Opinion: Just when you thought it couldn't get any better.

Man of the match: Cavaleiro

Team Rating: 10/10

Attendance: 27,894

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Douglas (Vinagre 88), Coady (capt), Boly, Bennett, Cavaleiro (N'Diaye 85), Saiss, Bonatini (Costa 72), Neves, Jota

Unused Subs: Norris, Bath, Price, Enobakhare

Bookings: Jota (58 – foul), Neves (64 – foul)

Referee: Keith Stroud

BLUES CRUISE

BIRMINGHAM CITY 0-1 WOLVES

Monday 4th December 2017

Wolves cruised to victory and four points clear at the top of the Championship with a 1-0 victory over Birmingham City at St Andrews. Wolves easily beat their local rivals who didn't manage one shot on target all night. Wolves are now ten points clear of third placed Bristol City and well placed having nearly reached the half way stage of the season

New Birmingham manager Steve Cotterill showed why he hasn't lasted long in charge of his previous eight clubs with his total lack of tactical nous. Blues hopes of a result appeared to revolve around kicking Diogo Jota as hard as, and as many times as possible. However, the Portuguese Magician kept picking himself off the floor to run rings round a hapless Blues team.



It was all Wanderers straight from the off and with Blues pinned in their own half it took just eight minutes for Wolves to get their noses in front. Grounds played a square pass across the park without looking and it fell to Cavaleiro on the edge of the box, his first time effort was saved by Stockdale, who then got back on his feet to deny Jota, but as the defenders continued to look on the keeper could do nothing to stop Bonatini scoring his 12th goal of the season.



Wolves took control and gave Blues a footballing lesson in keep ball, it was Wolves new trademark football, and the large following at the away end were cheering each pass as Blues players ran around like headless chickens. Frustration crept into Blues play and Roberts was very fortunate to avoid a red card for a horrendous tackle on Jota from behind.

For all their possession Wolves couldn't find a second goal before half-time, the nearest they came was when Cavaleiro forced Stockdale into a good save in the 24th minute after some neat interchanges between Jota and Bonatini had set him up.

Wolves went into the break 1-0 up and must have been disappointed they only had Bonatini's goal to show for all their dominance.

The game was a much tighter affair after the break with Blues starting to string a few passes together, although the Wolves defence still looked as solid as a rock, and for all Blues efforts Ruddy was still a spectator in the visitors goal. However, Wolves still looked dangerous on the break and when Gleeson lost the ball in midfield to Bonatini, he instantly put Jota through on goal, but the battered midfielder dwindled on the ball and Stockdale managed to smuggle the ball clear.

Stockdale was on hand again to save his side in the 64th minute, Wolves substitute Helder Costa was played in by the impressive Bonatini, but he tried one side-step too many and was denied in his attempt to dummy his way past the goalkeeper. With six minutes remaining any thoughts that Blues had of grabbing an equaliser went well and truly out of the window, Harlee Dean was sent off for petulantly throwing Jota to the ground and he subsequently received his second yellow card. Wolves easily saw out time to make it six wins in a row.

Opinion: Another good away win despite all the efforts to kick us off the park.

Man of the match: Jota

Team Rating: 6/10

Attendance: 19,641

Team: Ruddy, Doherty, Douglas, Coady (capt), Boly, Bennett, Cavaleiro (Costa 60), Saiss (Enobakhare 80), Bonatini (Price 75), N'Diaye, Jota

Unused Subs: Norris, Vinagre, Bath, Miranda

Bookings: N'Diaye (65 – ungentlemanly conduct), Jota (83 – ungentlemanly conduct)

Referee: Simon Hooper

TRAVEL DETAILS



Travel Arrangements until the End of the Season:-

Home Matches

Meeting place: Station concourse outside main ticket office, at least 20 minutes before train departure.

Fare : To be advised.

Tue 3/4/18 v Hull City
(k/o 7:45pm)

- ◆ Outward - Depart Euston 14:03 Arrive Birmingham New St 15:26
- Depart Birmingham New St 15:39 Arrive Wolverhampton 16:05
- ◆ Return - Depart Wolverhampton 22:45 Arrive Euston 01:13

Wed 11/4/18 v Derby
(k/o 7:45pm)

- ◆ Outward - Depart Euston 13:43 Arrive Wolverhampton 15:37
- ◆ Return - Depart Wolverhampton 22:45 Arrive Euston 01:13

Sun 15/4/18 v Birmingham
(k/o 12:00pm)

- ◆ Outward - Depart Euston 08:15 Arrive Stafford 10:08
- Depart Stafford 10:25 Arrive Wolverhampton 10:38
- ◆ Return - Depart Wolverhampton 16:45 Arrive Euston 18:36
(There will also be a 2-day trip to this match departing Saturday for a Geoff Castro Special, if you are interested then please contact Travel Secretary)

Sat 28/4/18 v Sheffield Wed

- ◆ Outward - Depart Euston 09:43 Arrive Wolverhampton 11:37
- ◆ Return - Depart Wolverhampton 18:45 Arrive Euston 20:53

Away Matches

Fri 30/3/18 v Middlesbrough
(k/o 5:30pm – Live on Sky)

No Official club trip arranged. Any member wanting to go to this game please contact Travel Secretary.

Fri 6/4/18 v Cardiff
(k/o 7:45pm)

No Official club trip. Any member wishing to go to this game please contact Travel Secretary

Sat 21/4/18 v Bolton

- ◆ Outward - Depart Euston 09:30 Arrive Preston 11:38
- Depart Preston 11:50 Arrive Horwich Parkway 12:18
- ◆ Return - Depart Horwich Parkway 17:14 Arrive Preston 17:35
- Depart Preston 17:58 Arrive Euston 20:15

Sun 6/5/18 v Sunderland
(k/o 12:30pm)

- ◆ Sat 5/5/18 Outward - Depart Kings Cross 13:21 Arrive Sunderland 16:50
- ◆ Sun 6/5/18 Return - Depart Sunderland 18:12 Arrive Kings Cross 21:44

TRAVEL SECRETARY - PETER WOODIFIELD

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MEET THE PLAYERS

