



# Wolverhampton Wanderers

**LONDON SUPPORTERS CLUB**

founded 1966



## 2014-5 Match Retrospect

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**Interim 2015**



# FROM THE CHAIR



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First of all, please accept our sincere apologies for the missing Christmas and summer editions of our newsletter. Printing difficulties played a part, but Stef also had quite a few extreme personal issues to contend with which contributed to the postponement, and then cancellation of those publications. Steve Ray was elected at the AGM to take the editor role on and will produce a double bumper edition at Christmas. In the meantime, we've assembled his 2014-15 match reports for this interim e-edition in the hope this keeps you going until Xmas. *Cover picture: Pam's grandson Alfie, Mascot at The Cottage*

As far as the 2014/2015 season went, apart from that November blip, it was really good. The team finished higher than most of us would have anticipated. Many of us, no doubt, would have been happy for a consolidating mid-table finish. It was great to see our winning ways continuing from our previous successful season. Having said that, we were so near yet.....! A three goal lead squandered at Millwall is just one instance that springs to mind that, had it been held, would have seen us into the play-offs. However, it was not to be and in the end it was the smallest of goal differences that was our downfall. Our heartiest congratulations go to Kenny and the Team for their sterling efforts. Onwards and upwards for 2015-2016 please!

During the season we were all hit by the sad news that Sir Jack Hayward, a long-time friend of London Wolves, passed away after a long fight against illness. He often travelled on our train from Euston Station, and on one of my rare excursions from there since upping sticks to Norfolk, I was privileged to spend the entire journey with the then Wolves owner. He was a great man, a modest man, a man of Wolverhampton, who saved our great Club from near extinction. We'll forever be in his debt. We will include a full tribute in the Christmas edition.

As regards our 50th Anniversary Dinner. Stef and I have been putting our plans into action. The venue and hotel have been booked - Charlton Athletic's ground, The Valley, and a nearby Blackheath hotel. With an anticipated sell-out at Charlton, we've moved from the previous Millennium Lounge to the larger North Bank and taken most of the rooms in the hotel. As of going to print, all the hotel rooms booked so far have been snapped up. So, if you are planning to attend, please don't delay in booking your place for what we hope and expect, will be our best ever function. The guest list is extensive, with many famous names already spoken to and others on our wish list and we are hoping to surprise you with a star-studded line-up on the night. A booking form is enclosed and is on the website. More details will be in the Christmas edition.

*Up The Wolves.*

*Stuart*



# LONDON WOLVES 1966-2016



## Golden Anniversary Dinner

Saturday 16th July 2016

### Booking Form

Please complete the form and send it with your cheque for the deposit amount made payable to WWLSC to

**Stuart Earl, WWLSC, 21 ~~Watton~~ Road, Great ~~Crossingham~~, Norfolk IP25 6NQ**

Please send your bookings directly to Stuart – not to Peter or Dave. You may also submit a booking by email (on line) but to retain your reservation Stuart should receive your cheque within eight days. Ticket prices will be confirmed soon. A limited number of double rooms are available at a special rate of £100 per night for Saturday night including breakfast.

**Please note that all deposits are non-refundable**

Please enter the number of member tickets and the number of non-member tickets you wish to reserve. A deposit of £20/ticket is required. Please also say how many hotel room reservations are required at a deposit of £30 per room for the Saturday night.

	Quantity		Total
Quantity of member tickets		@£20 deposit =	£
Quantity of non-member tickets		@£20 deposit =	£
Quantity of rooms (Saturday night)		@£30 deposit =	£
		<b>Total deposit</b>	<b>£</b>

### Your details

Your name(s)	
Your email address	
Contact telephone number	
Your address	
postcode	
Any special requirements	

# MATCH REPORTS



## VANTASTIC

### WOLVES 1-0 NORWICH CITY

Sunday 10th August 2014



Wolves picked up exactly where they left off at the end of last season's superb League One campaign with a 1-0 win against a Norwich side who were parading their skills in the Premier League last season. The game was settled with a solitary goal from Dave Edwards who headed home in the second half shortly after Norwich defender Olsson was sent off following a foul on Wolves new boy van La Parra.

Attacking the South Bank End and backed by their army of loyal supporters Wolves kicked off to a deafening roar, and the game was less than a minute old when Sako crossed from the left and found Edwards who shot just over the bar from ten yards. The stall was set and although Wolves continued to play at a high tempo and dominate possession genuine goal scoring chances were at a premium. However, this wasn't for the want of trying by Wolves new boy Rajiv van La Parra, the Dutchman was a revelation on the wing and he ran the Norwich defence ragged with his bursts of pace and silky skills.

Right on the stroke of half-time Dicko almost broke the deadlock when Sako whipped in a low left-wing cross, but a despairing lunge from Martin cleared the ball with the Wolves striker ready to pounce. Then with the last kick of the half Sako was denied by a desperate block by Johnson and the ball was deflected out for a corner.

Wolves continued to take the game to Norwich in the second half and Dicko was only inches away from connecting with a glorious left-wing cross by Sako. After that near miss Norwich had their best spell with Wolves old boy Surman seeing his shot blocked and then Ikeme denying Grabban

with a smart save just a minute later. Norwich saw their hopes of taking anything from the game disappear when Olsson was given a second card for hacking down van La Parra who had tormented the centre-half all afternoon. The resulting free-kick was well saved by Ruddy, but the Wolves pressure finally paid dividends four minutes later when man of the match van La Parra floated over a cross from the right-wing and Edwards placed his header into the top left-hand corner of the net. Sako had a glorious chance to finish off the game with eight minutes left but he shot straight at Ruddy after Dicko had played him in.

**Opinion:** Great result to start with.

**Man of the match:** van La Parra

**Team Rating:** 7/10

**Attendance:** 22,053

**Team:** *Ikeme, Golbourne, Doherty, Evans, Bath, Stearman, van La Parra (Henry 85), Evans, Dicko (Clarke 87), Edwards, Sako (Jacobs 81)*

**Unused Subs:** *McCarey, Ricketts, Price, Ebanks-Landell*

**Bookings:** None

## A LOAD OF OLD COBBLERS

### WOLVES 2-3 NORTHAMPTON

Tuesday 12th August 2014  
(Capital One Cup 1st Round)

For the second year in a row Wolves went out of the Cloth Cap Cup in the 1st round to lower league opposition. This time it was Northampton Town from League 2 who came to Molineux and plundered a 3-2 win, although the Cobblers would have considered themselves fortunate after Wolves virtually dominated the entire game and had three goals disallowed in the process.

After a pre-match downpour Wolves made all the running in the wet conditions but failed to convert any of the chances that went begging, and when Clarke did eventually put the ball in the net with a header on the half-hour mark the goal was disallowed for offside. Clarke then slid the ball home again following McAlinden's cross from the left, but he must have thought he'd killed a robin as like earlier it was again ruled offside. A minute later McAlinden suffered the same fate as Clarke when he too was given offside after converting Henry's cross.

Wolves continued to dominate after the break, but after being on the back foot for most of the game the Cobblers suddenly



scored against the run of play in the 58th minute when D'Ath's shot from just outside the area squirmed past the unlucky McCarey. As if that wasn't bad enough Toney then headed home a second just five minutes later following a corner on the right.

As soon as the second goal went in Kenny Jackett immediately introduced Sako and Dicko from the subs bench, and they made an instant impact as Wolves scored two goals within two minutes of them coming on. Firstly Dicko turned home McAlinden's left wing cross in the 66th minute and then Ricketts drew Wolves level with a 25 yard daisy cutter a minute later.

However, after getting themselves back on level terms Wolves' hard work was undone following some sloppy defending in the 74th minute, it was D'Ath who benefitted again when he was given a free header eight yards out, and even though he mistimed the ball and it hit him on the top of the head the ball luckily dropped over the outstretched hand of McCarey into the net.

Wolves laid siege on the Northampton goal for the remainder of the game but were unable to score the goal that would have taken the game into extra time. The reward for the Cobblers was a seaside trip to Bournemouth in the next round.

**Opinion:** Another Capital One Cup early exit.

**Man of the match:** Jacobs

**Team Rating:** 4/10

**Attendance:** 6,171

**Team:** *McCarey, Doherty, Ricketts (capt), Evans, Ebanks-Landell, Stearman, Henry (Sako 64), Price, Clarke (Dicko 64), McAlinden (Edwards 84), Jacobs*

**Unused Subs:** *Ikeme, Bath, McDonald, van La Parra*

**Bookings:** None

# MATCH REPORTS



## NO GRINDING DOWN THE MILLERS

### ROTHERHAM 1-0 WOLVES

Saturday 16th August 2014



Wolves will be kicking themselves for not taking anything away from this game. They had nearly 70% of the possession and dominated for long periods, the only thing missing was that ruthless touch in front of goal. In the end they paid the ultimate price for a host of missed chances as Rotherham weathered the storm and scored an underserved late winner against the run of play.

It was all Wolves from the kick-off and the first real clear-cut chance came in the 15th minute. And Sako will still be wondering how he failed to hit the back of the net after Rotherham keeper Collin scrambled across the line to save his close-range effort, and then get off the floor to block the follow up before the ball was booted clear. In a rare Rotherham attack Taylor almost grabbed a goal out of nothing when he ran onto a long clearance and hit a goal bound shot from the edge of the area that Ikeme tipped onto the crossbar.

In the 33rd minute another glorious chance went begging for Wolves, Dicko charged down Collin's attempted clearance and when he finally crossed for van La Parra the winger's weak effort from ten yards was easily cleared off the line by Arnason. Three minutes before the break Dicko missed yet another chance to open the scoring when like Sako and van La Parra before him he failed to hit the target when clear on goal, the striker tried to be too clever and chipped his effort with the outside of his foot when a straight forward shot would surely have been the better option.

Wolves continued to apply the pressure after the break and although they laid siege on the United goal they didn't really create a goal scoring chance that would be considered clear-cut, Sako typifying

this when twice missing the target while in good dead-ball situations. In the 75th minute Wolves fell to a real sucker punch, ironically they were on the attack when a goalmouth scramble ended with the ball being booted clear deep into their half and Derbyshire forcing Golbourne to concede a corner. The resulting corner was kept out by Ikeme but when Edwards tried to clear the ball he inadvertently booted it against Hall and it rebounded back past Ikeme into the net. Wolves rallied to the end and came close to a late equaliser through Henry, but those first half misses proved very costly.

**Opinion:** Cannot afford to be so wasteful at this level, three points thrown away.

**Man of the match:** McDonald

**Team Rating:** 6/10

**Attendance:** 10,752

**Team:** *Ikeme, Doherty, Golbourne, Evans, Bath (capt), Stearman, van La Parra (Jacobs 77), Edwards, Dicko, McDonald, Sako (Henry 77)*

**Unused Subs:** *McCarey, Clarke, Ricketts, McAlinden, Ebanks-Landell*

**Bookings:** Bath (26 – foul), Golbourne (39 – not leaving field of play after treatment)

## A LARGE HELPING OF COTTAGE PIE

### FULHAM 0-1 WOLVES

Wednesday 20th August 2014

When the fixtures were released in June, to say that Wolves opening games we're going to provide a tough introduction back in the Championship was an understatement. With Wolves having to face the three relegated Premiership teams in the first four games it would provide a big indicator as to how Kenny Jackett's team had progressed over the last year or so. And so far his new look young team has passed with flying colours as Wolves went to big spending Fulham and deservedly came away with all three points.

Wolves showed their intentions straight from the kick-off and played a high tempo passing game that had Fulham chasing around like headless chickens, and Edwards was the first to go close when his cross-shot flew across the face of the goal after McDonald had put him through. Van la Parra then had Fulham keeper Joronen diving at his feet to block his shot before Wolves finally took the lead in the 15th minute. A low corner on the left was dummied by Edwards and as two defenders followed him that left the space for Sako to



hammer the ball into the bottom corner of the net. Wolves continued to dominate and went within a whisker of increasing the lead just before the break when Bath got his head on the end to Sako's free-kick only to see the ball go agonisingly wide.

Carl Ikeme had to wait until the 53rd minute before he was called upon to make his first save, such was Wolves' dominance, and even then it was a long range speculative effort that he easily pushed around the post. In response Doherty missed a glorious chance to extend the lead just two minutes later, McDonald floated over an inch perfect cross but the young defender headed over the bar from six yards when it seemed easier to score.

With the game won Wolves missed a glorious chance to put the icing on the cake in the second minute of time added on, Dicko was tripped in the area but unfortunately for Sako his spot kick was tipped onto the post by Joronen, It didn't really matter as Wolves easily played out the final few minutes to take all three points. Forget all the rubbish printed in the cockney newspapers about big spending Fulham being in turmoil, they were second best all night to the boys in Gold and Black.

**Opinion:** Great performance and let's not forget the die-hard supporters who provide the magnificent support for the team every week.

**Man of the match:** McDonald

**Team Rating:** 8/10

**Attendance:** 18,627

**Team:** *Ikeme, Doherty, Golbourne, Evans, Bath (capt), Stearman, van La Parra, Edwards, Dicko, McDonald, Sako*

**Unused Subs:** *McCarey, Clarke, Ricketts, McAlinden, Ebanks-Landell, Jacobs, Henry*

**Bookings:** None

# MATCH REPORTS



## CRÈME DE LA PREM TREBLE

### WOLVES 1-0 CARDIFF

Saturday 23rd August 2014



With only four Championship games under their belt Wolves have already completed a superb hat-trick of wins over the sides relegated from the Premiership last season. The 1-0 win was the result of an own goal from Cardiff defender Mark Hudson after he sliced the ball into his own net from a Kevin McDonald cross in stoppage-time.

As with the previous game Wolves tore into their opponents from the off with some slick passing and high tempo approach work, and the early pressure almost paid off in the 13th minute when they came within a whisker of taking the lead. Wolves forced two corners in quick succession, and from the second Sako whipped in a vicious cross that flew over the outstretched hand of Marshall but bounce to safety off the inside of his far post.

As the Gold and Black tidal wave continued Cardiff were again lucky to stay on level terms when van La Parra's 20th minute shot was deflected just wide for a corner. In a rare Cardiff break Le Fondre ran the full length of the field before pulling his shot across the face of Ikeme's goal. However, it was brief respite from the onslaught and van La Parra should really have made the pressure pay off on the half-hour mark, but he failed to hit the target with a header following a pinpoint cross from Golbourne. The Dutchman then tested Marshall from long range and right-back Matt Doherty fired into the side-netting as Cardiff's goal continued to lead a charmed life.

Wolves' failure to take advantage of their dominance in the first-half became more apparent as Cardiff looked a far better team after the break, and the introduction of Kenwyne Jones gave the Wolves defence a lot more to think about as he

usually does when he plays against us. Wolves remained in control of the game but finding clear-cut chances more elusive, and they had to wait until the 71st minute for their first real chance of the second-half. A superb through ball by McDonald found van La Parra in the clear, but as he shaped to shoot Fabio slid in from behind and just managed to put him off.

As the game reached its conclusion Jones almost snatched a winner for Cardiff in the 85th minute, Whittingham's cross dropped perfectly for him but Ikeme made a superb block from his thunderous volley from point-blank range. With injury time being played and the game looking like finishing goalless Wolves had a massive slice of luck when McDonald's low cross was sliced into his own net by Hudson to give Wolves the win.

**Opinion:** No more than Wolves deserved after such a dominant first-half.

**Man of the match:** Evans

**Team Rating:** 7/10

**Attendance:** 21,221

**Team:** *Ikeme, Doherty, Golbourne, Evans, Bath (capt), Stearman, van La Parra (Henry 87), Edwards (Jacobs 66), Dicko, McDonald, Sako*

**Unused Subs:** *McCarey, Clarke, Ricketts, McAlinden, Ebanks-Landell*

**Bookings:** Evans (77 – foul), McDonald (84 – foul)

## SAK SHOWS THE KNACK IN THE WOLF PACK ATTACK

### WOLVES 3-1 BLACKBURN

Saturday 30th August 2014

Wolves ended their first month back in the Championship with a record of four wins from their five games. It was another of the promotion favourites Blackburn who were comprehensively beaten 3-1 by Kenny Jackett's boys as they moved up to third place in the league. It was Bakary Sako who stole the show as he single handily ran Rovers ragged, he played a key role in Dicko's opener before helping himself to the other two goals.

The Sako show began after just 13 minutes, he charged down Williamson's clearance and fed the ball to McDonald whose inch perfect cross was glanced into the net by Dicko's neat header. However Rovers quickly responded to the early setback and Wolves had Carl Ikeme to thank for keeping their noses in front. Firstly he threw himself to his right hand side to palm



away a rebound off Marshall after he had blocked a clearance from Bath, and then he denied the same player ten minutes later when he pushed his 25 yard free-kick around the post.

On the balance of play Wolves were still edging matters and after Robinson had just got away with spilling a long range effort from Evans he was then beaten again in the 33rd minute. Wolves were awarded a free-kick when Edwards was fouled on the right hand edge of the penalty area, Sako stepped up to the plate and hit a low curling drive through the crowded goalmouth and into the bottom left-hand corner of the net.

It could easily been 3-0 right at the start of the second half when a deft back heel by Dicko set up Doherty whose first effort was well saved by Robinson, and the keeper must have breathed a sigh of relief to see the right-back's second effort drift agonisingly past the post.

Blackburn were struggling to get any kind of foothold in the game, but referee Keith Stroud gave them a large helping hand on the hour mark. The whistle happy ref gave them a more than questionable penalty after he ruled that Rhodes had been bundled over by Bath, the striker picked himself off the floor to send Ikeme the wrong way from the spot. The goal gave Rovers the lift they needed even though Wolves still looked the more likely to add a third, and nine minutes later that's exactly what happened. Dicko broke clear down the right wing and delivered a cross that Sako side footed into the bottom corner from 12 yards.

**Opinion:** Great start, couldn't ask for any more and enjoy it while it lasts.

**Man of the match:** Sako

**Team Rating:** 8/10

**Attendance:** 21,260

**Team:** *Ikeme, Doherty, Golbourne, L. Evans (Saville 79), Bath (capt), Stearman, van La Parra (Henry 45), Edwards (Rowe 89), Dicko, McDonald, Sako*

# MATCH REPORTS



**Unused Subs:** *McCarey, Jacobs, Clarke, Ricketts*

**Bookings:** van La Parra (24 – foul), Saville (90+5 - foul)

## BLACKOUT

### BLACKPOOL 0-0 WOLVES

Saturday 13th September 2014



This game had all the hallmarks of “Banana Skin” written on it with bottom club Blackpool without a point in their opening six games the opponents for Kenny Jackett’s boys. And so it turned out to be as Wolves were held to a goalless draw in a scrappy and uneventful afternoon.

The game started at a lively pace with Wolves playing the better football against a Blackpool team still looking for their first point of the season. Jacobs had Wolves first real goal bound effort when a powerful header from the centre of the area was brilliantly tipped over the bar by Blackpool keeper Lewis. Blackpool’s only chance of the half came on the half-hour mark when a low cross from the right flew across the six yard area, but there was nobody on hand to tap the ball into the net. Apart from that minor blip it was all Wolves as they dominated possession, and with 37 minutes on the clock van la Parra almost gave Wolves the lead, some great build-up play ended when the winger’s shot from the right came back off the left hand post. And it was Wolves who ended the half on top as Batth drilled an effort just wide.

Blackpool started the better of the two teams at the start of the second half and as the half progressed Wolves became their own worst enemies with some poor passing giving the initiative to the home team. Jackett made a double substitution ten minutes after the break with van la Parra and Jacobs making way for Sako and Henry but they made little impact. And it was Blackpool who nearly took the lead when Ranger’s chip over Ikeme came back off the crossbar. The closest Wolves came to scoring was when Sako seized on

a loose ball in the Blackpool area but Clarke got in a timely block to divert the fiercely struck volley over the bar.

As the game drew to a conclusion it was Blackpool who looked most likely to score, although Lewis needed to rush off his line to save from substitute Leon Clarke and stop Wolves stealing it at the death.

**Opinion:** Never easy playing teams at the bottom.

**Man of the match:** Batth

**Team Rating:** 5 /10

**Attendance:** 12,233

**Team:** *Ikeme, Doherty, Golbourne, Saville, Batth (capt), Stearman, van La Parra (Sako 55), Edwards, Dicko (Clarke 72), McDonald, Jacobs (Henry 55)*

**Unused Subs:** *McCarey, Evans, Ricketts, Ebanks-Landell*

**Bookings:** None

## NOTHING LIKE A HOT BATTH

### CHARLTON 1-1 WOLVES

Tuesday 16th September 2014



Looking at Charlton’s home form this season you would have settled for a point before the game, but Kenny Jackett will be bitterly disappointed that his Wolves team didn’t set off back down the motorway with all three points in the bag. It was a far cry from the performance against Blackpool on Saturday and hopefully they can keep the momentum from this game going.

The game started at a high tempo and Charlton created a couple of half-chances in the opening exchanges but nothing to really concern Ikeme. Wolves took control from then on and Henry went within a whisker of giving them the lead when a clever overhead kick had Henderson in the Charlton goal frantically back-peddling before getting a hand on it and tipping it over the bar. Evans was next with a 25 yarder that flashed just wide as Wolves pushed for the breakthrough.

With 25 minutes on the clock disaster struck as Charlton went in front against the run of play when Bikey-Amougou volleyed past Ikeme from a corner on the right. It was a real kick in the teeth for Wolves and it was almost 2-0 within a minute when a loose pass from Evans ended up with Tucudean dragging his shot wide after being put clean through with only Ikeme to beat.

Wolves unfazed at going behind continued to push on and just before the break Saville pounced on a ball from Clarke and his first time shot hit the inside of the post and agonisingly flew back along the goal line to safety. Wolves somehow went in at half-time a goal down, however the performance much improved following the cross served up the previous Saturday.

The second half began at a slower pace but it was still all Wolves, the passing was crisp and you would have thought the game was being played at Molineux rather than South-East London on a Tuesday night. The chances continued to go begging, Henderson denied Sako with a good save eight minutes after the restart, and then Clarke had a couple of chances but failed to find the target with either. Henderson again denied Sako by pushing his angled drive over the bar, but from the resulting corner Wolves finally got their just rewards as Batth rose above the Charlton defenders to head home the equaliser.

Wolves pushed forward in search of a second and almost took the lead through McDonald whose volley from the edge of the area sailed just over the bar. Henry then went even closer when his volley rattled the Charlton woodwork for the second time. In the end Charlton hung on for a point and Wolves will be disappointed not to have won, however Kenny Jackett can take lots of positives from a great away performance.

**Opinion:** Quality striker wouldn’t go a miss on this showing.

**Man of the match:** Sako

**Team Rating:** 8/10

**Attendance:** 15,973

**Team:** *Ikeme, Doherty, Golbourne, Saville (Dicko 45), Batth (capt), Stearman, Henry (Jacobs 87), Evans, Clarke (Edwards 81), McDonald, Sako*

**Unused Subs:** *McCarey, Rowe, van La Parra, Ricketts*

**Bookings:** None

# MATCH REPORTS



## THERES ONLY ONE WANDERERS

### WOLVES 1-0 BOLTON

Saturday 20th September 2014



With eight games gone Wolves moved up to third in the table with three points at home against Bolton. Wolves dominated the first half forcing a hatful of corners, but not for the first time this season they couldn't turn their superiority into goals. Even though they did manage a goal just before half time they had Carl Ikeme to thank for the win following a string of superb saves in the second half.

After a relatively quiet start Wolves suddenly exploded into life in the 17th minute when Sako forced a corner on the right, Henry duly sent it over and Batth's powerful header was brilliantly tipped over the bar by Lonergan. However Bolton did occasionally delve into the Wolves half and Davies missed a good chance when he was clean through and shot weakly into the arms of Ikeme.

Lonergan continued to be in the thick of the action by twice denying Dicko from close range as well as holding on to a wicked low cross from Sako. But the keeper and his defender Dervite were to blame as Wolves went into the lead three minutes before half-time, they left a deflected cross by Henry to each other and Dicko nipped in between them to nod home from a tight angle. Wolves should have increased their lead immediately after the interval but Golbourne wasted a glorious chance to put his team 2-0 up when he missed with a far-post header when it looked easier to score.

After being outplayed for most of the first half Bolton were enjoying a lot more of the ball in the second half and were suddenly given a chance to level the scores on the hour mark when they were awarded a penalty. Batth made a clumsy tackle on Beckford in the penalty area and the referee had no hesitation in pointing to the spot,

but Ikeme came to the rescue when he brilliantly saved Garvan's penalty and then held on the follow up.

It was then left to Ikeme to keep Bolton at bay, he made three more important saves to make sure Wolves claimed all three points. He somehow managed to get a hand onto Mason's cross-shot and tip it onto the bar, he then stood tall to block Feeney before being in the right place to foil Beckford in the dying minutes. But it was no more than Wolves deserved as they moved nicely into third spot in the table.

**Opinion:** Need to be more ruthless and kill off games like this when in total control.

**Man of the match:** Ikeme

**Team Rating:** 6/10

**Attendance:** 22,695

**Team:** *Ikeme, Doherty, Golbourne, Edwards (Saville 65), Batth (capt), Stearman, Henry (Rowe 77), Evans, Dicko (Clarke 45), McDonald, Sako*

**Unused Subs:** *McCarey, van La Parra, Ricketts, McAlinden*

**Bookings:** Batth (51 – foul)

## TO THREE OR NOT TO THREE

### READING 3-3 WOLVES

Sunday 28th September 2014

This game started as a typical Sunday afternoon game, no atmosphere and supporters really wanting to be in their local pub having a couple of beers before toddling off home for a Sunday roast and getting ready for work on Monday morning. However that's the way it works these days with TV dictating when your team plays and when you can go and socialise with your mates. In the end Reading manufactured a last minute equaliser so Wolves missed a glorious chance to go joint top with Norwich.

All in all it was a pretty mundane affair in the first 45 minutes even though Wolves had a great chance to take an early lead. In the fifth minute Clarke setup Saville for a one-on-one with Federici, but the midfielder shot weakly at the keeper who saved with his legs before Evans blasted the rebound over the bar. Nothing else really happened until Reading took the lead in the 19th minute, and the goal was due more to poor defending than good work from the home team. A short corner on the right wasn't closed down and Norwood was given the time and space to cross the ball onto the head of Hector who made no mistake from six yards



After the tedious affair served up in the first half nobody would have expected the goal feast served up in the second-half. It was Wolves who started the net bulging with an equaliser six minutes after the break. Sako made a break down the left flank and then sent over a daisy cutter that eluded three Reading defenders before falling to Henry who fired home at the far post. Three minutes later Wolves were ahead, Obita's horrific clearance fell straight to Evans ten yards out and the midfielder didn't need any second invitation before slamming the ball back into the net. Wolves supporters hardly had time to celebrate before Reading were level, the Wanderers defence stood back off Cox as he ran at them, he then delivered a slide rule pass to find Taylor whose angled shot flew through Ikeme's legs and into the net.

The game continued to flow from one end to the other and Wolves must have thought they had won all three points after they went 3-2 up with six minutes to go. Sako's corner skimmed off the head of Edwards and was nodded into his own net by Blackman despite an attempted clearance on the line by Norwood. Instead of taking the ball into the corner and killing the game off some poor passing and decision making saw Wolves gift Reading a last minute equaliser. Murray was given acres of space on the edge of the area and when he let fly from outside the box it deflected off the back of Batth and into the top right hand corner of the net.

**Opinion:** With the game won and a minute left should have closed the game down.

**Man of the match:** Henry

**Team Rating:** 5/10

**Attendance:** 17,454

**Team:** *Ikeme, Doherty, Golbourne, Saville (Edwards 77), Batth (capt), Stearman, Henry (van La Parra 79), Evans, Clarke (McAlinden 87), McDonald, Sako*

**Unused Subs:** *McCarey, Edwards, Rowe, Ebanks-Landell, Jacobs*

**Bookings:** Stearman (66 – foul), Edwards (90 – foul)



# MATCH REPORTS



## BACK TO EARTH WITH A T'HUDD

### WOLVES 1-3 HUDDERSFIELD

Wednesday 1st October 2014



On a night when Wolves could have gone top of the Sky Bet Championship it all went pear shaped as they suffered their first home defeat in 17 games. Even though they had beaten Wolves in their previous six meetings in a run dating back to 1997 expectations were high with Huddersfield hovering just above the relegation zone.

It all seemed so promising at the start as Wolves tore into Huddersfield from the off and Ricketts was desperately unlucky not to open the scoring in the 6th minute when a thunderous shout from outside the area came back off the post. Wolves continued to attack and Dicko created himself an opening in the six yard area but his angled shot was saved by Smithies.

Wolves continued to dominate and created a series of half chances before the Terriers stunned them by scoring against the run of play in the 21st minute. Holt brushed his way past Stearman on the right and sent over a low cross that Bunn rifled in from close range. The goal rocked Wolves right down to the soles of their boots and all of a sudden it was the Terriers in the ascendancy. Things got even worse in the 40th minute as the Terriers added a second, and it was some shocking defending that contributed to the goal. Sako, Sagbo and Golbourne all missed the chance to clear the ball before Scannell took possession and smashed it past Ikeme via a deflection off the unlucky Danny Bath.

If Wolves supporters were expecting a turnaround in the second-half then their hopes were totally shattered when Huddersfield added a third just six minutes after the break. Out of the blue Conor Coady took possession of the ball about 30 yards out and out of nothing smashed

an unstoppable drive into the top right hand corner. Wolves to their credit responded and did pull a goal back in the 71st minute. Sako hustled his way through the area and put the ball through the keepers legs from close range, however it was not to be and Huddersfield comfortably held on to end up 3-1 winners.

**Opinion:** Home run had to end sooner or later, need to bounce straight back on Saturday.

**Man of the match:** Dicko

**Team Rating:** 3/10

**Attendance:** 19,059

**Team:** Ikeme, Ricketts (capt), Golbourne, Bath, Stearman, Henry (Clarke 75), Evans (Rowe 41), Sagbo (van La Parra 55), Dicko, McDonald, Sako

**Unused Subs:** *McCarey, Edwards, Saville, Ebanks-Landell*

**Bookings:** Stearman (48 – foul)

## ON ME ED' SON

### WOLVES 2-2 WIGAN

Saturday 4th October 2014

After conceding only three goals in the first eight league games the stats have been totally reversed as Wolves shipped another two goals against Wigan making that eight goals in the last three games. It was another game where they had the lion's share of the possession but failed to make it pay in terms of taking all three points.

Wolves enjoyed the majority of the play in the early stages without creating anything clear-cut, the only notable effort being a shot by Doherty on the 15 minute mark that was blocked by a Wigan defender. Wolves continued to push forward and went close when Sako had a fierce cross-shot saved by Carson at his near post. Their dominance finally paid off when they went in front on the half-hour mark, van La Parra floated over a cross from the right and Edwards guided a superb header into the top left-hand corner of the net.

The joy was short lived as Wigan stunned Wolves with an equaliser within two minutes. The visitors won a free-kick on the right hand edge of the penalty area, Maloney floated over a cross and Perch made no mistake after he was given a free-header two yards out. In the second minute of first half stoppage time the game was turned on its head when Wigan took the lead following more shocking defending by the Wolves defence. The ball was whipped in from the left-wing and Stearman



unexplainably missed the ball, Golbourne didn't do much better in his attempt at clearing and it fell to Fortune who made no mistake and beat Ikeme with a rising drive at the far post.

Wolves piled on the pressure at the start of the second-half with the impressive Sako firing just wide into the side-netting with a pile driver from the left-hand side of the area. And it was that man Sako who eventually got the equaliser in the 64th minute, Golbourne's left-wing corner eventually fell to Sako who side footed home a shot from the edge of the area. That signalled a spell of intense Wolves pressure with Carson tipping away a header from Edwards and Stearman's goal bound shot hitting a defender on the line before bouncing to safety. With the seconds ticking away it was apparent that Wolves' luck was out when Doherty's header bounced back off the bar in the 87th minute with the keeper beaten.

**Opinion:** Need to get back to winning ways at home.... quickly.

**Man of the match:** Sako

**Team Rating:** 5/10

**Attendance:** 21,288

**Team:** *Ikeme, Doherty, Golbourne, Edwards, Bath (capt), Stearman, van La Parra (Henry 60), Rowe, Dicko (Sagbo 90+2), McDonald, Sako*

**Unused Subs:** *McCarey, Saville, Clarke, Ebanks-Landell, Jacobs*

**Bookings:** Sako (54 – foul)

## WOO'DEN HEADS

### MILLWALL 3-3 WOLVES

Saturday 18th October 2014

In their previous away game Wolves surrendered a goal in the 87th minute at Reading to throw away two precious points in their promotion push. It turned out to be a large case of Deja vu in this game at the Den, but this time the Wanderers somehow managed to squander a three goal lead before another 87th minute equaliser.

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Wolves soon settled into their now accustomed slick passing game and playing keep ball, but for all their possession there were no real clear cut chances for either side until Wolves went into the lead in the 23rd minute. Sako delivered their first corner of the game into the area and Bathth produced a cool finish as he volleyed in from ten yards. Millwall immediately looked to strike back and McDonald forced Ikeme into a low save just a minute later, but it was Wolves who were well worth their lead as the referee blew for half-time.



Wolves had a lucky escape in the 51st minute when a McDonald header came back off Ikeme's right hand post, and the miss proved costly as their lead was doubled five minutes later. Ebanks-Landell was on hand to bundle the ball over the line after Henry's free-kick from the left came back off the inside of the post. Sako then looked to have made the game safe three minutes later when his stunning free-kick from the left wing found the top left hand corner of the net.

With the score standing at 3-0 and with the three points in the bag Wolves were in total control, however the Millwall players had other ideas as their fickle supporters started to stream from the ground. Just three minutes later a long through ball found Gregory in space on the edge of the area and he found the back of the net to pull one back for the hosts. The deficit was reduced to just one goal when Fuller scored Millwall's second goal eight minutes from time, the ageing striker was given time and space in the area allowing him to pick his spot and blast the ball past Ikeme. It was Fuller who completed the unlikely comeback with just three minutes remaining on the clock, the Wolves defenders again failed to close him down and he took full advantage as he turned on the edge of box and fired powerfully beyond Ikeme.

There was to be one last moment of drama in the eighth minute of time added on, Evans raced clear but was cynically

brought down by Williams who was deservedly given a straight red card. From the resulting free-kick Forde made a great save to his left hand side to keep out Sako's superb effort.

**Opinion:** That's how to grab a point from the jaws of victory.

**Man of the match:** Sako

**Team Rating:** 6/10

**Attendance:** 13,428

**Team:** Ikeme, Doherty, Rowe, Edwards, Bathth (capt), Ebanks-Landell (Stearman 86), van La Parra (Henry 54), Evans, Dicko (Sagbo 80), K. McDonald, Sako  
**Unused Subs:** Flatt, Golbourne, Saville, Jacobs

**Bookings:** Dicko (35 – foul), Doherty (55 – foul), Ebanks-Landell (68 – foul), Bathth (70 – foul), McDonald (87 – dissent), Rowe (90+5 - foul)

## HELPING HAND FROM AN OLD FRIEND

### WOLVES 2-0 MIDDLESBROUGH

Tuesday 21st October 2014

Wolves cruised to a comfortable win against in-form Middlesbrough at Molineux, it was their first victory in five games and just what the doctor ordered. After squandering a three goal lead at Millwall only three days earlier Kenny Jackett's boys made up for the two lost points with a win that takes them to 4th place in the Championship and just 3 points behind the leaders Derby.

There was just 86 seconds on the clock when Sako won possession from Fredericks just on the halfway line and then teased the Boro' defence in a jinking run before lashing wide from a good position in the area. After that early spurt it was a cagey start with both sides weighing each other up until Leadbitter tested Ikeme with a long rage effort in the 21st minute.

It was now Wolves turn to push forward and Sako went close when he sent over a free-kick from the right and keeper Konstantopoulos just managed to scramble back and tip the ball over his own bar. That seemed to be the kick start Wolves needed, and they finally opened the scoring in the 33rd minute. Dicko made a darting run in the area and old Wolves boy George Friend clumsily brought him down for a stonewall penalty, up stepped Sako who arrogantly chipped the ball down the middle for his seventh goal of the season.



Just five minutes later Rowe's attempted clearance was diverted into the box by Adomah and when the ball fell into the path of Vossen his half hit volley ended up dropping back off the crossbar and into the grateful arms of Ikeme. This was to be Boro's best moments of the game and a Bamford blast was blocked by Ikeme before the Wolves stopper again denied the same player with a double save just before half-time.

It was all Wolves after the break and Edwards went desperately close to increasing the lead on the hour mark. Henry's cross from the right found the unmarked midfielder on his own and his downward header from six yards bounced off the turf and onto the bar. Wolves were suddenly on the up again and McDonald hit the woodwork with a brilliant 30 yard effort that had the Boro' keeper beaten all ends up.

Wolves finally sealed the points in the 73rd minute when Edwards's pass found Dicko in the area and he turned two defenders before unleashing a right foot thunderbolt into the roof of the net from eight yards. With Wolves well and truly in control Boro' had no reply, and if anything Jacobs could have added a third just before the end when his shot just whistled over the bar.

**Opinion:** Much better performance against an in-form side.

**Man of the match:** Ikeme

**Team Rating:** 7/10

**Attendance:** 18,391

**Team:** Ikeme, Doherty, Rowe, Edwards, Bathth (capt), Ebanks-Landell, Henry, Evans, Dicko (Clarke 78), McDonald, Sako (Jacobs 63)

**Unused Subs:** Flatt, Golbourne, Ricketts, Stearman, Sagbo

**Bookings:** Ebanks-Landell (90+1 – foul), Clarke (90+3 – foul)

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## FULL UP WITH YORKSHIRE PUDDINGS

### LEEDS 1-2 WOLVES

Saturday 25th October 2014

As in the very last game of the 1971-72 season Wolves ended up 2-1 winners, that game 43 years ago meant that Leeds who only needed to draw the game failed to win the league and cup double having already won the FA Cup just days earlier. This time around the stakes were not quite so high, but victory was still sweet against one of the most hated teams in the league.

The early signs were not good for Kenny Jackett and the boys as his team looked uncharacteristically lethargic, and Ikeme was the first to be called into action when he palmed away a fierce shot from Morison in the 14th minute with Mowatt then shooting into the side-netting from the rebound. However the keeper could do nothing four minutes later as Leeds took the lead, Morison fed Antenucci just inside the right hand side of the area and his first time shot went through the legs of Bath and past the fingertips of Ikeme into the bottom right-hand corner of the net.

Leeds continued to push forward and Wolves had a lucky escape in the 25th minute when Mowatt hit a weak shot straight into the arms of Ikeme with the goal at his mercy. As the game approached half-time Wolves started to up the tempo and Leeds keeper Silvestri was at last called into action dealing with shots from Jacobs and Henry, while Edwards hooked another effort wide.

Wolves looked a different team in the second-half and slowly but surely took control of proceedings. On the hour mark they were within a whisker of an equaliser when Silvestri just about got his hand to a Dicko header that was heading for the right-hand corner of the net. It was only a stay of execution as Wolves finally levelled six minutes later, a mix-up in the Leeds defence saw the ball drop at the feet of Henry who rifled home from close range.

The table was now well and truly turned and van La Parra missed a golden opportunity to put Wolves in front on 74 minutes as he ghosted in at the back post to meet Henry's cross, but he somehow managed to shoot over the bar. Wolves surged forward in search of victory and Clarke should have been the man to take



the glory as he found space just inside the area, but his shot to Silvestri's left was a weak effort. However, it mattered not as he made amends with five minutes left on the clock, Doherty ran onto a delightful through ball from van La Parra and he drew Silvestri before squaring for Clarke who had the simple task of tapping the ball home for the winner.

The win meant that after 14 games Wolves were equal top with Derby and Watford on 26 points, and all in all Kenny Jackett has so far done a superb job. As for Leeds they sacked the manager after the game having only been in charge for six games, how the mighty have fallen.

**Opinion:** Superb come back in second half and another good away performance.

**Man of the match:** Henry

**Team Rating:** 8/10

**Attendance:** 27,883

**Team:** *Ikeme, Doherty, Rowe, Edwards (Clarke 45), Bath (capt), Ebanks-Landell, Henry, Evans, Dicko (Stearman 87), McDonald, Jacobs (van La Parra 63)*

**Unused Subs:** *Flatt, Golbourne, Saville, Sagbo*

**Bookings:** Johnson (18 – foul), Stearman (21 - diving)

**Sending's Off:** Evans (76 – foul)

## SAME OLD BRUM SCUM

### WOLVES 0-0 BIRMINGHAM

Saturday 1st November 2014

Having had an 8-0 drubbing the week before it was always going to be a damage limitation exercise when Birmingham turned up at Molineux for the local derby. And true to form that's exactly what happened with our friendly neighbours rounding the wagons and putting on the tin hats from the first minute to serve up a goalless bore draw.

With a reputation that precedes them Birmingham's low life supporters showed their total lack of respect when they

interrupted the minutes silence for Remembrance Day. This is the opportunity to remember and pay tribute to the soldiers who gave their lives so that our shores are now a safer place for people like them to live on... what more can you say it's exactly what you would expect from them.

Kenny Jackett decided to play five in midfield with Clarke up front playing in the creative "hole" position. But the striker failed to adhere to the required tactics by constantly straying forward leaving a big "hole" of its own in the middle of the park. The result was that the midfield players were constantly left sending hopeful long balls forward making the game scrappy and unentertaining. This played straight into the opponent's hands, and apart from an early Clarke header over the bar and a weak effort from McAlinden that was the first half in a nutshell.

The pattern continued after the break with Wolves devoid of any ideas or that little bit of imagination that might make something happen, however they were denied a blatant penalty in the 55th minute when a cross by Henry saw the ball strike the outstretched arm of Grounds' in the area. Five minutes later Grounds nearly rubbed salt into the wounds when he forced Ikeme into a rare save with a powerful header from a corner.

With nothing happening Jackett brought on subs Sako and Edwards in an effort to swing the game Wolves way, and the impact was instant with both players providing the inroads lacking up to that point. McDonald flashed a low drive wide before Randolph produced a superb reflex save to tip Edwards' header over the bar after spilling Sako's cross.

Edwards went within a whisker of scoring in the 71st minute but his delicate chip from the edge of the area bounced back off the top of the crossbar. Wolves continued to push forward in search of a winner but Birmingham frustrated their attempts with ten men crammed into defence and hoofing



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the ball clear at every opportunity. With injury time approaching a last gasp effort from Wolves saw Randolph push out a dangerous cross by Henry, but when the ball fell to Sako he wildly blazed the ball over the bar.

**Opinion:** Only bright note is that we were at least top of the league for a few hours.

**Man of the match:** Bath

**Team Rating:** 4/10

**Attendance:** 25,135

**Team:** Ikeme, Doherty, Rowe, Jacobs (Sako 56), Bath (capt), Ebanks-Landell, Henry, Evans, Clarke (Sagbo78), McAlinden (Edwards 56), McDonald

**Unused Subs:** Flatt, Stearman, Saville, van La Parra

**Bookings:** Clarke (74 – foul)

## SUFFOLK'S SAKE

### IPSWICH 2-1 WOLVES

Tuesday 4th November 2014



Wolves put in probably their worst performance of the season so far against an Ipswich team run by old boss Mick McCarthy. It was a typical performance by McCarthy's Ipswich team, each and every player gave their all for their manager and what they may have lacked in football ability was more than made up for by their effort and tenacity. In the end Ipswich ran out 2-1 winners consigning Wolves to only their second defeat in 14 games.

As a mark of respect Wolves were wearing black armbands in memory of one of the former members of the legendary 1950's team Eddie Stuart who had sadly passed away earlier in the day. Right from the off it looked like it was going to be one of those nights for Wanderers. McCarthy had obviously done his homework with his players steaming into every Wolves player on the ball and stopping them play their sleek passing game. However some of the tackling was a bit over zealous, and Edwards found himself on the wrong end

of a crude tackle that ended up with him limping off with knee ligament damage in the 14th minute.

Ipswich nearly took the lead a minute later when an uncharacteristic slip by Ikeme saw him drop the ball from a cross straight to the feet of McGoldrick, but fortunately the striker poked the ball wide. Wolves offered very little up front although Sako did manage a powerful angled free kick that was deflected wide by a defender in the 27th minute. It was Ipswich who finally broke the deadlock in the 35th minute, McDonald made a real hash of clearing in his own box and within a flash Murphy pounced and hit a curling shot that found the left hand side of the net. Ipswich continued to dominate and Kenny Jackett would have been glad to see his side go in at half-time just the one goal down.

It started a bit more encouraging at the start of the second half for Wolves and out of nothing they equalised eight minutes after the restart. Henry's vicious cross from the right missed everyone in its path and somehow found its way past the diving Bialkowski and into the net at the far post. However, the away supporter's joy was short-lived as six minutes later Lee Evans' wayward pass went straight to McGoldrick who then teed up the onrushing Murphy to chip past Ikeme to make it 2-1.

As Wolves tried to respond Matt Doherty had a good effort that just missed at the far post. But on the night it wasn't to be, and although a frantic end saw some backs-to-the-wall defending from Ipswich the home side hung on to claim all three points and move above Wolves in the table.

**Opinion:** One of those nights best forgotten.

**Man of the match:** Doherty

**Team Rating:** 3/10

**Attendance:** 17,267

**Team:** Ikeme, Doherty, Rowe, Sako, Bath (capt), Ebanks-Landell, Henry (van La Parra 82), Evans, Clarke Edwards (Jacobs 14) (McAlinden 79), McDonald

**Unused Subs:** Kuszczak, Stearman, Saville, Ricketts

**Bookings:** Doherty (30 – high kick), Clarke (90+5)

## TRAMPLED ALL OVER IN THE RAMPAGE

### DERBY 5-0 WOLVES

Saturday 8th November 2014

It had been 21 years since Derby had



beaten Wolves on home soil, but after the way Wolves defended during this game that record came to a very abrupt end. It was an absolutely shocking display by Kenny Jackett's side and the trend of giving poor goals away, which started at Ipswich in midweek, carried on at an alarming rate at the iPro Stadium (or Pride Park as it used to be called).

The first 15 minutes was an even affair with both sides showing a little bit of caution on the rain soaked surface, but then Derby scored with their first goal bound effort to start the rout. Doherty gave away a needless free-kick outside the area when he pulled back Dawkins. When the ball was delivered into the area Shotton got himself in front of Bath to head powerfully towards goal, and even though Ikeme made a great effort to keep out the ball it finally went in off the post.

Three minutes later Sako nearly scored when the ball fell to him following a corner, but unfortunately the midfielder just couldn't get his foot over the ball and keep it down. Just minutes later an even better chance went begging when some slick passing in the build-up ended with Saville just seven yards out and the goal at his mercy, but he lacked the cool head required to find the net and blasted it wide.

That miss proved costly as Derby made it 2-0 in the 28th minute with a goal out of nowhere. A throw-in on the right was knocked on to Hendrick, and as the Wolves players looked on at him he knocked it on to his right foot and smashed it past Ikeme from just outside the area. It was a poor goal to give away and if Jackett was disappointed with that goal then he would have been absolutely fuming at the third one just three minutes before the break. Derby won a corner on the left and the ball fell to Russell on the edge of the box, he then ran to his left and advanced four yards before hitting a left foot shot past the under siege Ikeme, the disturbing aspect for Wolves is that seven players watched on and not one tried to close him down.

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If anything Wolves were even worse in the second half and it took Derby just ten minutes to make it 4-0. This time the goal came through open play as Derby carved up the Wolves defence to leave Hendrick the simple chance of placing it past Ikeme from ten yards. The fifth and final goal came on the hour mark when a daisy cutter from the left-hand touchline went straight across the area to the unmarked Russell who hit the ball high into the roof of the net from six yards.

**Opinion:** Jackett's loyalty to last season's players now being pushed to the absolute limit.

**Man of the match:** Henry

**Team Rating:** 1/10

**Attendance:** 30,398

**Team:** *Ikeme, Doherty, Ricketts (capt), Saville, Bath, Ebanks-Landell (Stearman 45), Henry, McDonald, Clarke (McAlinden 67), Evans (Rowe 75), Sako*

**Unused Subs:** *Kuszczak, van La Parra, Jacobs, Dicko*

**Bookings:** Doherty (16 – foul), Henry (30 – kicking ball away), Ricketts (43 – foul), Saville (68 – foul)

## TIED UP IN NOTTS

### WOLVES 0-3 NOTTINGHAM FOREST

Saturday 22nd November 2014



That's three defeats on the spin now and with it comes the first real crisis since Kenny Jackett took over the reins last season, and more alarmingly is the number of goals now being shipped. After the Derby nightmare a fortnight ago things looked better at the start of the game with Wolves more confident on the ball and looking to get on-loan Danny Graham as much of the ball as possible, but it's no good getting a striker on-loan if he's not going to get the service.

After a minutes applause in memory of 50's legend Eddie Stewart Forest got proceedings underway, and within a

minute Antonio set the precedent when he fired in a long range drive that Ikeme parried before picking up at the second attempt. As things settled down Wolves began to look more and more confident and new boy Graham had the first decent effort on goal which Darlow collected low down to his left. Henry was next to have a pop at goal but his attempted long range volley flew high and wide.

To be honest that was just about it as far as Wolves were concerned and slowly but surely it became the Nottingham Forest show. In the 26th minute they came within a whisker of taking the lead, but Ikeme produced a fantastic save when he touched Lansbury's pile-driver onto the post. Within a minute it was Ikeme to the rescue again when he dived low to his left to turn away a cross shot from Fryatt. Edwards did have the ball in the net for Wolves on the half-hour mark but he was ruled for offside, and just a few seconds later he missed a good opportunity when he let the ball run away from him with an empty goal gaping after Darlow was caught in no man's land. Ikeme continued to keep Wolves in it after the break with a good save from Fox, and then denying Lansbury who shot straight at him in the 53rd minute. However there was nothing Ikeme could do in the 65th minute as he was left hung out to dry by his defence, Fryatt was allowed oceans of space in the area to square for Assombalonga who was all on his own to tap home from two yards. Three minutes later it was game over when Fryatt somehow managed to beat three Wolves defenders in the air to head home from a corner.

Van La Parra wasted a golden opportunity to pull one back for Wolves with 15 minutes left but his header was a shocking effort that went wide from six yards. You knew it was going to be one of those days when Rowe's goal bound effort was blocked by Lascelles and Ricketts blasted the rebound high over the bar. Forest put the final nail in the Wolves coffin eight minutes from time when Lansbury was again given as much time as you want to drill home Forest's third goal from just inside the area.

**Opinion:** Another defensive shambles.

**Man of the match:** Ikeme

**Team Rating:** 2/10

**Attendance:** 25,513

**Team:** *Ikeme, Doherty, Ricketts (capt), Edwards (van La Parra 75), Bath, Ebanks-Landell (Stearman 44), Henry (McAlinden 59), McDonald, Graham, Rowe, Sako*

**Unused Subs:** *Kuszczak, Saville, Evans,*

*Keita*

**Bookings:** Doherty (48 – foul), Stearman (80 – foul)

## ALL AT FOURS

### BRENTFORD 4-0 WOLVES

Saturday 29th November 2014



That's four defeats on the spin now and the performances are getting worse by the minute. Wolves won the corresponding fixture 3-0 last term, but that was never likely to happen again as they continued with the kind of suicide defending that had seen them ship ten goals in their previous three games.

It was a cautious approach from Wolves in the early stages, but it was Sako who had the first worthy effort of the game when his free-kick from the right flew just over the bar. Wolves went even closer a few minutes later, van La Parra crossed from the right and Graham could only watch on as his far post header hit the underside of the bar and was then cleared by the legs of Button on the goal line.

That was about it if you were a Wolves fan as it all went downhill from that point, and Brentford eventually opened the scoring on the half-hour mark. Judge intercepted the ball from a Wolves throw in and exchanged passes with Toral before slotting the ball home from eight yards. Wolves tried to get back into the game and Sako was firstly denied by a smart save by Button and then just failed to control a cross at the back post when in a good position.

The only surprise was that Brentford had to wait until the 73rd minute for their second goal, and it was the result of more poor play when Wolves were in a good attacking position. A mix up between Saville and Graham resulted in Brentford breaking at speed into the box, and Pritchard who had three defenders round

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him still managed to pick out the unmarked Dallas who slid the ball home at the far post.

Wolves' heads went down and Gray benefitted from more shocking defending in the 82nd minute, he seemed to go past defenders at will in a diagonal run before angling a drive into the far corner. Brentford made it 4-0 in injury time when Jota was handed an early Christmas present and the easiest of chances to drill the ball home across the body of Ikeme.

Brentford is famous for being the only club in the country whose ground has a pub on every corner. After watching this drivel it meant that it didn't matter where you were sitting inside the stadium you didn't have to walk far after the game for a much needed beer.

**Opinion:** Drastic improvement needed or it's back to the good old relegation dog-fight.

**Man of the match:** van La Parra

**Team Rating:** 1/10

**Attendance:** 10,923

**Team:** Ikeme, Doherty, Golbourne (Rowe 45), Saville, Bath, Ricketts (capt), van La Parra, Edwards, Graham (Clarke 90+2), Evans (McDonald 57), Sako

**Unused Subs:** Kuszczak, Stearman, Henry, Jacobs

**Bookings:** Saville (15 – foul), Edwards (24 – foul), Evans (54 – foul), Ricketts (81 – foul)

## JONES THE CHERRY PICKER

### WOLVES 1-2 BOURNEMOUTH

Saturday 6th December 2014



Thanks to one of the worst refereeing performances seen at Molineux over the years, and there has been some horrendous ones believe me, Wolves losing streak now stands at five. It seems that the higher the so called level of the referee that gets to officiate down in the lower leagues the further they are up their own a\*\*e. Mike Jones is one of those referee's in the

same mould as Howard Webb, Mark Clattenburg, Phil Dowd, our old mates Kevin Friend and Mark Halsey and who can ever forget the infamous Uriah Rennie, whose name when mentioned still gives me indigestion.

It was an appalling display by referee Jones, he sent off van La Parra for what seemed an accidental clash of heads, he then sent off Doherty for what looked like a fair tackle and booked three other Wolves players in a show which suggested he was on some kind of revenge mission. So incensed was owner Steve Morgan at the final whistle that he ran down from the stands and onto the pitch to remonstrate with the clueless Jones and his accompanying officials.

Considering the lack of confidence and form Wolves started at a real high tempo, and by doing so the superb supporters who have followed them through the recent poor results got right behind the team and urged them forward. And in the 6th minute they nearly got their reward when Cherries keeper Boruc beat out a fierce 25 yard effort by Henry. Wolves again went close on the quarter-hour mark when Boruc failed to hold on to a shot at the near post from Iorfa and van La Parra shot into the side netting when the rebound fell to him.

Wolves were well in the ascendancy and only a brilliant fingertip save by Boruc denied Graham's powerful header finding the net and the striker opening his account for Wolves. With half-time approaching Wolves finally went in front, and there was nothing Boruc could do this time when Graham got the deffest of touches to a cross from Henry to steer a neat glancing header just inside the far post.

It was The Cherries who started brighter at the start of the second half, but ultimately it was the sending off of van La Parra on the hour mark that turned the game on its head and ultimately handed the three points to Eddie Howe's team. Van La Parra and Cook went for a high ball in midfield with both players seemingly having their eyes firmly fixed on the ball, Cook got there just fractionally before van La Parra and there was a clash of heads. Astonishingly referee Jones deemed the contact deliberate and in the blink of an eye showed the red card to the disbelieving Dutchman.

The sending off gave Bournemouth the momentum they were looking for and they piled forward in search of an equaliser,

and the pressure finally paid off when the ball fell to Arter on the edge of the area and he fired a low drive beyond Ikeme. Wolves came under a fierce onslaught but despite defending valiantly they couldn't hold on for a point. Ikeme pulled of a stunning double save to deny Ritchie and then Wilson, but there was nothing the unlucky keeper could do when Ritchie blasted the ball through a crowded goalmouth from eight yards for the winner.

However Mike Jones still wanted to be the centre of attention and late in stoppage time the hapless referee sent off Doherty for what appeared a fair tackle. Wolves are to appeal both sending's off, but even if rescinded the stats will show that its zero points and five losses on the bounce.

**Opinion:** Always get at least a couple of these idiots every season.

**Man of the match:** Danny Graham

**Team Rating:** 6/10

**Attendance:** 20,196

**Team:** Ikeme, Iorfa, Doherty, Edwards, Bath (capt), Stearman, Henry (Jacobs 74), van La Parra, McDonald, Graham (McAlinden 83), Sako (Clarke 87)

**Unused Subs:** Kuszczak, Rowe, Price, Hause

**Bookings:** Iorfa (53 – foul), Stearman (45+2 - foul), McDonald (89 – foul)

**Sending's Off:** van La Parra (58 – not looking where he was going), Doherty (90+5 – fair tackle)

## BACK ON THE PR'OWL AT LAST

### SHEFFIELD W 0-1 WOLVES

Saturday 12th December 2014



It wasn't pretty but Wolves finally ended a five game losing streak by snatching a late goal to earn victory against Sheffield Wednesday. Leon Clarke came off the bench to score with his first touch and end a nightmare run of results. Wolves were lucky to go in level at half-time after a poor first half, but they were a different side

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after the break and gave as good as they got as the game opened up.

Wednesday dominated early proceedings as a lack of confidence showed in Wolves play and it was typified in the 5th minute. Stearman made a real mess of a back pass to Ikeme which May intercepted and ran wide rounding the keeper in the process, but Stearman redeemed himself by tracking back and clearing the strikers shot off the line. However Wolves did have their moments and Henry should have done better when he blazed over after Wednesday had been ripped open on the break. Midway through the half Wednesday went within inches of taking the lead when a header by Loovens from a corner on the right flashed just wide of Ikeme's post.

After being under the cosh for most of the half Wolves started to look dangerous on the counter, and Graham missed a glorious chance to open the scoring when he was clean through in first-half stoppage time, unfortunately he shot wide after a slide rule pass by Sako had created the opening. However there was still time for May to squander another Wednesday chance when he again beat the offside trap but failed to hit the target with only Ikeme to beat.

The poor finishing continued after the break when van La Parra fired over with the goal gaping after Westwood had parried McDonalds shot into his path. It was now Wolves' turn to be wasteful with van La Parra the main offender, and when he did manage to find the net after a neat finish he was denied the goal by the linesman's flag. The midfielder had yet another chance to open the scoring just two minutes later following a reverse pass from Henry, but Westwood spread himself well to save and keep the scores level.

As the game reached its climax it became an end-to-end affair, and Drenthe fired just wide from 20 yards as Wednesday went on the attack. The match had 0-0 written all over it with just six minutes left and Jackett sent on Clarke for Graham in an attempt to break the deadlock. It turned out to be a masterstroke as Clarke raced in unmarked just 40 seconds later to get on the end of McDonald's inch perfect cross and fire home from close range. Despite a series of crosses into the Wolves box in injury time they held on for a win and a valuable confidence booster with the hectic holiday period just around the corner.

**Opinion:** Priceless win and a clean sheet

as well, time to crack on with a run of form.

**Man of the match:** McDonald

**Team Rating:** 7/10

**Attendance:** 20,598

**Team:** *Ikeme, Iorfa, Hause, Edwards, Bathth (capt), Stearman, Henry (Price 88), van La Parra, McDonald, Graham (Clarke 83), Sako (Rowe 90)*

**Unused Subs:** *Kuszczak, Saville, Evans, McAlinden*

**Bookings:** None

## NO BOND'ING BETWEEN DICKO AND REF

### WOLVES 1-1 BRIGHTON

Saturday 20th December 2014

Wolves salvaged a point with a Danny Bathth equaliser with just two minutes left. It was no more than they deserved after conceding an early goal and then laying siege on the Brighton goal in the second half. There was more controversial refereeing decisions for the second successive home game, after the shocking Mike Jones performance in the last home game against Bournemouth this time it was the turn of Darren Bond. The incompetent referee awarded a penalty after Dicko was fouled in the area but then he changed his mind and booked the striker for diving after consulting his linesman.

Despite Brighton's lowly league position they started the better of the two teams, and they took an early 10th minute lead with a Darren Bent diving header following a cross from the right. Slowly but surely Wolves started to find their way back into the game and built up a real head of steam as half-time approached. It was Sako who led the charge and when he hit a first-time half volley from ten yards and Stockdale pulled off a tremendous reaction save to keep the scores level. Two more superb pieces of skill from Sako saw Wolves within a whisker of equalising, firstly he hit the outside of the post after leaving two defenders in his wake, and then forced Stockdale into another save in time added on.

Dicko was introduced from the bench at the start of the second half and made an instant impact, within five minutes of joining the action he was the centre of the controversial penalty decision. He was quick as a flash to intercept a weak back pass to Stockdale who rushed out and brought down the striker as he slipped the ball past him. Referee Bond immediately pointed to the spot but changed his mind and booked Dicko after words with his linesman, an awful decision by another

awful referee.

Minutes later the ref was again at the centre of attention when he sent Brighton midfielder Bruno off after a two footed tackle on McDonald. That was the signal for Wolves to pour forward in search of the equaliser and Sako spurned a good chance to make the extra man count in the 68th minute when he was again denied by Stockdale. Just as it looked like the Brighton rear-guard had earned them the points a corner from the left by Sako fell to Bathth and the captain forced the ball home from five yards to save Wolves from a sixth defeat in seven games.



**Opinion:** Could be a priceless point come the end of the season.

**Man of the match:** Sako

**Team Rating:** 5/10

**Attendance:** 22,882

**Team:** *Ikeme, Iorfa, Hause, Edwards (Clarke 76), Bathth (capt), Stearman, Henry (Price 45), van La Parra, McDonald, Graham (Dicko 45), Sako*

**Unused Subs:** *Kuszczak, Evans, Rowe, Ebanks-Landell*

**Bookings:** Hause (38 – foul), Dicko (51 – simulation), McDonald (78 – foul)

## HALLEL'NOUHA

### WATFORD 0-1 WOLVES

Friday 26th December 2014

Over recent years Wolves have put in some shocking performances over the Christmas period, but not this time around, along with the game at Fulham early in the season this rates as one of the best all round away performances of the season. Watford are one of the teams right up there in the promotion chase and to go there and completely outplay them on their own patch is hopefully the start of our own promotion push.

In front of the Sky cameras Wolves turned on the style as they set out their stall at Vicarage Road and went straight for the jugular. The sleek passing style missing of

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late was suddenly apparent again and within the first ten minutes both van La Parra and Iorfa shot wide and over respectively as Wolves gathered a head of steam.

In the 18th minute Watford keeper Gomes made the first of a trio of world class saves to keep his team on level terms. He somehow managed to get down and deflect a close-range effort from Edwards around his post after being set up by van La Parra. Next was the pick of the bunch when he somehow managed to tip over a 40 yarder by Hause that was heading like a bullet into the top right-hand corner of the net. He then made another great save down low to his right as van La Parra connected with a shot from the resulting corner.

With half an hour on the clock Watford were still somehow on level terms, but when a through ball by Sako cut the Watford defence in two and put Dicko through on goal the striker missed the best opportunity so far when he slid the ball wide of Gomes and the target. As the teams went in for their half-time cuppa Wolves must have wondered how the scores were still level after completely outplaying the home team for the whole of the 45 minutes.



Watford finally managed their first shot on target in the 56th minute but Ikeme easily gathered a low shot from the edge of the box by Tozcer, but any hopes Watford had of getting a foothold in the game were ended in the 57th minute when Wolves got the goal they had threatened all game. Van La Parra was the creator when he attacked down the left wing and got to the byline before laying the ball back across the area where Dicko was on hand to put the ball into the net from six yards.

Wolves continued to dominate although they had a few scares towards the end of the game. In the 74th minute Ighalo's shot from the edge of the area was pushed on to his crossbar by Ikeme, and then Ighalo nearly broke Wolves hearts when he hit the crossbar again in time added on.

However it would have been harsh on Wolves who had been the better team by a country mile all evening.

**Opinion:** Let's have more of the same against Brentford on Sunday.

**Man of the match:** Dicko

**Team Rating:** 8/10

**Attendance:** 17,443

**Team:** Ikeme, Iorfa, Hause, Edwards (Ebanks-Landell 90+2), Bath (capt), Stearman, Price, van La Parra, Dicko (Rowe 86) (Henry 89), McDonald, Sako

**Unused Subs:** Kuszczak, Clarke, Graham, Evans

**Bookings:** Stearman (64 – hand ball), Price (90+3 – kicking the ball away)

## BUSY BEES ON THEIR KNEES

### WOLVES 2-1 BRENTFORD

Sunday 28th December 2014

Following their 4-0 hammering at Griffin Park nearly a month to the day Wolves gained revenge on Brentford with a 2-1 victory in the reverse fixture at Molineux. Wolves were comfortable at 2-0 up midway through the second-half, but they then had to hang on for the last thirteen minutes with ten men after Kevin McDonald was sent off for a second bookable offence.

It was all very cagey to start with as both sides weighed each other up, however Brentford created the first chance in the 6th minute when Jota teed up a chance for himself, but Ikeme got his hand to the shot and turned the ball on to the post. And Wolves took full advantage of their good fortune by going in front with their next attack, Dicko raced onto Hause's ball over the top and smashed it past Button with a fierce shot. The goal saw a period of Wolves pressure and Sako went within a whisker of doubling the lead when his left foot drive following a corner was heading for the top corner, but a lucky deflection saw the ball bounce to safety after rattling the crossbar.

As half-time approached a rare attack from Brentford ended when Pritchard's fierce shot from the edge of the area was blocked by Stearman, and the visitors went close again when Ikeme had to push a misplaced header from his own defender Iorfa over the crossbar. Having survived Brentford's brief spell of pressure Wolves came close to doubling their advantage right on the stroke of half-time when Button somehow blocked out Sako's long range free-kick.



After the break Brentford went in search of an equaliser, but time and again they lacked that killer instinct in the last third of the field with the Wolves defence easily keeping them at bay. As the game went into the last quarter Wolves got the all-important second goal to give them some breathing space. A break on the right caught Brentford napping and Edwards put in a perfect cross which van La Parra headed against the bar, the rebound came back to McDonald and his scuffed shot went in despite Tarkowski's effort on the goal line to keep the ball out.

McDonald's involvement in the game ended just five minutes later when he was sent-off for a second bookable offence, and that gave the signal for Brentford to lay siege on the Wolves goal. However they had to wait until the 87th minute to pull a goal back when a poor cross from the left took a freakish loop of the legs of Bath and over Ikeme into the net. For the second game in a row it was hearts in mouths time as Wolves were saved by the woodwork in time added on, this time it was Douglas who headed against the post in the fourth minute of injury time.

**Opinion:** Close at the end but deserved it over the 90 minutes.

**Man of the match:** Stearman

**Team Rating:** 7/10

**Attendance:** 23,598

**Team:** Ikeme, Iorfa, Hause, Edwards, Bath (capt), Stearman, Price, van La Parra (Clarke 85), Dicko (Henry 65), McDonald, Sako (Doherty 90)

**Unused Subs:** Kuszczak, Graham, Evans, Ebanks-Landell

**Bookings:** McDonald (64 – foul, 77 – foul)  
Sending's Off: McDonald (77 – second yellow card)



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## IT'S SAKO AND OUT

### FULHAM 0-0 WOLVES

Saturday 3rd January 2015 (FA Cup 3rd Rnd)



Well its back to Molineux for a replay. After a first-half that can only be described as grim at least the game opened up in the second-half with both teams having a go at settling the tie at the first attempt. It was also the last game for Bakary Sako before he heads off for the African Nations Cup. Yes that's the one that's played in the middle of the season and nobody gives a toss about because they're not interested, whether Sako returns as a Wolves player remains to be seen.

Respect to both managers who both fielded more or less full strength teams and thus not degrading the value of the FA Cup in the way that a lot of managers do these days under the excuse of "resting tired players". The first half was probably the worst 45 minutes of football Wolves have been involved in all season. The only real effort came on the half-hour mark from that man Sako who hit a superb shot from just outside the area that was tipped onto the post by Bettinelli, unfortunately the rebound fell to Clarke who somehow managed to miss the target from two yards. It was a shocking miss and should Wolves fail to win the replay that effort will be the one responsible for a weekend of inactivity.

Whatever Jackett said at half-time certainly did the trick with Wolves at last showing some urgency after the break. Within two minutes of play restarting Evans stung the fingers of Bettinelli who pushed his goal bound effort around the post, the resulting corner ended with Sako firing wide from the centre of the area. There were further efforts from Batth and Sako before Fulham eventually showed some desire with Woodrow blazing an effort over the bar and Fofana hitting a long range effort just wide from distance.

Play started swinging from end to end with Bettinelli tipping over Henry's header before Woodrow again shot just wide a few minutes later. Bettinelli was the busier of the two keepers and was again on-hand when Henry ran through on goal following a slip from one of his defenders, although he could only watch on helplessly when Sako curled a shot wide. A Rodallega snap-shot hit the side-netting at the other end and Ikeme made himself big to deny Fofana as the third-round encounter ended goalless.

**Opinion:** Says a lot when the main talking point was the use of a pink football.

**Man of the match:** Sako

**Team Rating:** 5/10

**Attendance:** 11,879

**Team:** *Ikeme, Doherty, Iorfa, Edwards, Batth (capt), Stearman, Henry, Evans, Clarke (Dicko 63), Price, Sako*

**Unused Subs:** *Kuszczak, Saville, Ricketts, McAlinden, Ebanks-Landell, Jacobs*

**Bookings:** Evans (69 – foul)

## PARTY TIME AT THE ROVERS RETURN

### BLACKBURN 0-1 WOLVES

Sunday 11th January 2015

It was back to the business of gathering league points after the Christmas break and the 3rd round of the FA Cup, and Wolves continued their good run of league form with a hard earned and well-deserved win away at Blackburn Rovers. Dave Edwards scored the only goal as Wolves moved within a point of a Sky Bet Championship play-off place.

Dicko was the first to go close when a loose pass by Williamson allowed the striker a run at goal, but he was forced to go wide and right, and when he did manage to get his shot in Steele easily saved at his near post. After Wolves' early threat Rovers started to gain a bit of momentum, and even though they just about edged the possession up to the half-time interval Carl Ikeme was only once called into action when he pushed a Marshall free-kick around the post.

It was a much improved Wolves side who came out in the second-half and they had the perfect start just three minutes after the restart. Dicko picked the ball up on the left and cut inside before feeding Edwards on the edge of the box, good old "Duracell" made himself a yard of space before unloading a peach of a shot that rattled



into the bottom left-hand corner of the net. That goal set the tone and from that point on it was pretty much all Wolves dominating play and creating a host of chances. Danny Batth missed a glorious chance to make it 2-0 in the 68th minute when he headed over from six yards following an inch perfect cross from Henry. Edwards was then guilty of an even worse miss when Henry slid in a slide rule pass that left the midfielder the simple task of sliding the ball home, but with the goal gaping he couldn't get a decent connection with the ball and it was sliced wide.

The closest Blackburn came to an equaliser was when Stearman headed against his own post. Wolves' failure to make the most of their chances and get that all important second goal meant they had to endure a nervous final few minutes, but they easily shut out a disillusioned Rovers side to celebrate a win which puts them within a point of the top six.

**Opinion:** Beginning to gain momentum at just the right time.

**Man of the match:** Edwards

**Team Rating:** 8/10

**Attendance:** 15,355

**Team:** *Ikeme, Hause, Iorfa, Edwards, Batth (capt), Stearman, Henry, McDonald, Dicko (Doherty 86) Price (Ebanks-Landell 90+2), van La Parra*

**Unused Subs:** *Kuszczak, Clarke, Evans, McAlinden, Jacobs*

**Bookings:** McDonald (42 – foul)

## IT'S SNOW JOKE

### WOLVES 3-3 FULHAM

(After extra-time: Fulham win 5-3 on penalties)  
Tues 13th January (FA Cup 3rd Rnd Replay)

Well what a very sad day for everybody associated with Wolverhampton Wanderers. Earlier in the day it was announced that Sir Jack Haywood OBE had sadly passed away. The football club and fans will forever be indebted to Sir Jack who openly stated during his days at the club that to see

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Wolves win the FA Cup Final at Wembley would be a dream come true. Strangely his passing away came on the day that Wolves played an FA Cup 3rd Round Replay at his beloved Molineux, the game ended with Fulham winning 5-3 on penalties after the game had finished 3-3 at the end of extra time.

Following a minute's silence in respect of Sir Jack it was Wolves who kicked off in the driving snow. It was a strangely subdued start from Wolves, and Fulham took full advantage as they went into the lead in the 25th minute after Woodrow powered in a header from a left-wing cross. Fulham continued to dominate and Dembele missed an open goal just before the break leaving Wolves fortunate to go for their cup of tea just the one goal down.

Kenny Jackett brought on Edwards and Dicko for Henry and McAlinden at the start of the second-half in an attempt to swing the tie back in Wolves favour. The change seemed to have the desired effect as Wolves looked a completely different team, they were inches away from an equaliser when Doherty smacked the post from Van La Parra's corner before his follow-up was hacked off the line. Just two minutes later Dicko again hit the woodwork as his shot from the edge of the area rattled the bar.

Wolves' pressure finally paid off when they deservedly equalised in the 71st minute, Edwards was the man in the right place when he prodded in Iorfa's cross from eight yards. Things got even better three minutes later when van La Parra beat the offside trap and chipped the keeper to put Wolves 2-1 up. However a crazy five minutes were completed when Woodrow scored from close range to equalise for Fulham and take what was now a pulsating game into extra-time.

Edwards must have thought he had won it for Wolves with a brilliant goal in the 109th minute, Bathh cut the ball back from the by-line and Edwards produced a back heel that Messi would have been proud of to put Wolves back in front.

In a frantic finale Fulham were awarded a free-kick on the edge of the area, McCormack crashed the ball into the Wolves wall and the referee awarded a penalty for hand-ball. It was yet another outrageous decision by Graham Salisbury in what seems to be a conspiracy by referees against Wolves this season. McCormack converted the spot-kick to

send the tie into a penalty shootout, although if he had missed Salisbury would probably have let him take it again.

Predictably Fulham won the penalty shootout by converting all of their spot-kicks, unfortunately for Matt Doherty he was the only player to miss when he fired wide to present Fulham a trip to Sunderland in the next round.



**Opinion:** At the end of the day the result was really irrelevant although it would have been nice to win it for Sir Jack.

**Man of the match:** Bathh

**Team Rating:** 7/10

**Attendance:** 8,148

**Team:** Ikeme, Doherty, Iorfa, Evans, Bathh (capt), Stearman, Henry (Edwards 45), McDonald, McAlinden (Dicko 45) (Clarke 118), Price, van La Parra

**Unused Subs:** Kuszczak, Saville, Ebanks-Landell, Jacobs

**Bookings:** van La Parra (73 – celebration)

## **THUMBS UP TO YOU SIR JACK**

### **WOLVES 2-0 BLACKPOOL**

Saturday 17th January 2015



This game wasn't about winning three vital Championship points, it was all about winning for Sir Jack. A host of former players and managers all turned up at Molineux to pay tribute to a great man whose veins carried gold coloured blood around his body. Born and bred a Wolverhampton boy Sir Jack single handedly kept the name of Wolverhampton

Wanderers alive, and everybody associated with the club from supporters right up to director level will forever be indebted to this true legend.

With the ground bulging to capacity every Wolves supporter in the ground was willing the ball to hit the Blackpool net and for the first half an hour it was as if the players were trying too hard, the desire was there but the end product was missing. Blackpool deep in relegation trouble were intent on sitting back as Wolves struggled for momentum. But as irony may have it Wolves seemed to suddenly click when Jack Price upended the total waste of space Jamie O'Hara who was returning to Molineux for the first time since he was sent packing earlier in the season. The noise went up a decibel and the crowd should have been celebrating a goal just before half-time, Edwards was presented with a gilt-edged chance when he was released by a through ball from Dicko but he shanked his shot wide with the goal at his mercy.

With Blackpool seemingly uninterested in trying to attack it was all one-way traffic after the break with Wolves desperate to get that all important goal. But even with new boy Afobe introduced as an extra attacking option they still seemed to be missing that final killer touch. For all the pressure it seemed it just wasn't going to happen, and then with just four minutes left came the goal everybody was craving for. Fittingly it was one of the old school Dave "Duracell" Edwards who broke the deadlock, van La Parra went on another mazy run down the right and when he delivered the ball across the six yard area Edwards was on hand to help it over the line.

All the emotion of the night was released as Molineux went ballistic and Edwards paid his respects by holding his black armband aloft in memory of Sir Jack. In the last minute of normal time the icing was put well and truly on the cake when a total mix-up between O'Dea and Lewis left Afobe the simple task of tapping the ball into the empty net, 2-0 to Wolves ..... Job Done.

**Opinion:** Glad to have won for you Sir Jack.

**Man of the match:** van La Parra

**Team Rating:** 7/10

**Attendance:** 28,132

**Team:** Ikeme, Hause (Doherty 76), Iorfa, Edwards, Bathh (capt), Stearman, Henry (Afobe 57), McDonald, Dicko (Ebanks-Landell 89), Price, van La Parra

**Unused Subs:** Kuszczak, Clarke, Evans, Jacobs

**Bookings:** None

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## ABSOLUTELY DRAW'FUL

### WOLVES 0-0 CHARLTON

Saturday 24th January 2015



After four league wins on the run and with Wolves' confidence sky high Charlton came to Molineux and put a spanner in the works to stop Kenny Jackett's team's recent climb back towards the Championship top six. Charlton who unlike Wolves had lost their last four games on the spin and they came with a plan, and in simple terms that plan was to spoil and shut up shop, all in all it made grim viewing for all those unfortunate to have been there.

On paper it looked another three points for Wolves, but right from the off they struggled to stamp their authority on the game and seemed devoid of ideas when it came to the last third of the field. Even though Charlton seemed well marshalled in defence Wolves should have had more than enough fire power to break down a team who hadn't kept a clean sheet for more than two months.

Wolves' first real effort if you can call it that came in the 18th minute, and that was a hopeful pot shot by Edwards that flashed wide from just outside the area. As the half progressed they continued to toil and the only notable effort before half-time came when Henry swung in a free-kick from the left and Hause did well to get on the end of it and flash a header just wide.

Jackett switched to 4-4-2 at the start of the second-half and a sense of optimism suddenly crept in as Wolves nearly opened the scoring just three minutes after the break when Batth's back header was cleared off the line by Bikey. Having not had one single effort at goal up to that point Charlton showed they could still be dangerous on the break when they had their first goal bound shot just a minute later, Harriott made a run towards goal and hit a low drive that was palmed away by Ikeme. Even though Wolves continued to dominate

that cutting edge was still missing, and the next chance didn't arrive until midway through the second-half when van La Parra's effort looked to be heading for the net but it hit a defender and flew over the bar. In another rare Charlton attack Ikeme had to be alert when he blocked an effort by Watt at his near post. As the game petered out with Wolves lacking in any ideas on how to beat the Charlton rear-guard the afternoon was summed up when Afobe headed straight into the arms of Dmitrovic from close range.

**Opinion:** Just one of those days you get at least once a season.

**Man of the match:** van La Parra

**Team Rating:** 5/10

**Attendance:** 23,487

**Team:** *Ikeme, Hause (Golbourne 45), Iorfa (Doherty 75), Edwards, Batth (capt), Stearman, Henry (Dicko 45), McDonald, Afobe, Price, van La Parra*

**Unused Subs:** *Kuszczak, Evans, Ebanks-Landell, Jacobs*

**Bookings:** Stearman (40 – foul), Dicko (90+4 – ungentlemanly conduct), Doherty (90+4 – ungentlemanly conduct)

## HENRY THUNDERBOLT TOP DRAW'ER

### BOLTON 2-2 WOLVES

Saturday 31st January 2015



Just a week ago a four game winning streak came to an abrupt end for Wolves when they participated in what can only be described as a horrible scoreless draw with Charlton, on that occasion Wolves lacked the silky passing and ball skills that was all apparent in the game's leading up to that point. So it was ironic that after toiling for over an hour and an half in that game without ever really threatening to score it took just two minutes and fifteen seconds for Nouha Dicko to find the net in what was the quickest Championship goal of the day.

After the great start by Wolves the game became scrappy with both sides seemingly

unable to string two passes together. Then in the 23rd minute Bolton were awarded a dubious free-kick outside the area, and out of the blue Clough stepped up and blasted it past Ikeme into the net from twenty yards out. Just two minutes later and with Wolves still in shock they suddenly found themselves behind, van La Parra was beaten on the right hand side by Ream and the cross came over where Clough was again on hand to steer it past Ikeme through a ruck of players to make it 2-1 to Bolton.

Wolves then came under intense pressure as Bolton pushed forward, and even though there was a slight improvement just before the break Kenny Jackett would have been disappointed that they were trailing at half-time after such a great start, but also pleased that they didn't concede a third goal during the onslaught that followed Bolton taking the lead.

The pressure eased slightly for Wolves after the break, but they still looked lethargic and lacked any kind of real penetration or ideas when it came to breaking down the Bolton defence. To be fair they never gave up and after Lee Evans had Wolves first goal bound effort of the half blocked in the 88th minute even Carl Ikeme joined the attack for a corner in time added on. Then in the 94th minute substitute James Henry picked up a long ball clearance and hit an unstoppable shot from the best part of 35 yards that hit the back of the net like a rocket.

Henry ran the full length of the field to celebrate the goal in front of the Wolves fans, and with most of his team mates with him Bolton showed a lack of class and dignity by kicking off and trying to break and catch Wolves out while not ready, talk about sportsmanship and being gracious in having victory snatched from them at the death.

**Opinion:** What a goal and what a precious point that could be.

**Man of the match:** Henry (for that goal)

**Team Rating:** 5/10

**Attendance:** 15,869

**Team:** *Ikeme, Iorfa (Doherty 75), Golbourne, Edwards (Henry 67), Batth (capt), Stearman, van La Parra, Price (Evans 67), Dicko, Afobe, McDonald*

**Unused Subs:** *Kuszczak, Ebanks-Landell, Jacobs, Hause*

**Bookings:** Price (64 – foul), McDonald (69 – foul), Evans (75 – foul), Stearman (82 – foul)

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## A TOUCH OF THE ROYAL BLUES

### WOLVES 1-2 READING

Saturday 7th February 2015



After the last two games where the Wolves performances were well below the high levels set earlier in the season this game was an accident waiting to happen, and that accident turned out to be a total car crash. Only a last minute wonder strike from James Henry kept Wolves unbeaten run going at eight in the previous game at Bolton, there was to be no repeat this time around as Reading left Molineux with all three points following a 2-1 victory.

It couldn't have been a worse start for Kenny Jackett and his merry men if they had tried. Reading kicked off and shortly after launched a long ball into the Wolves half, Hause made a real hash of a headed clearance with the ball going backwards towards his own area, Bath then missed the tackle as Cox flicked the ball into the path of Pogrebnyak, he then volleyed past former Polish keeper Kuszczak who was about as alert as a Polish builder reading a drawing for a loft extension... one down with just 19 seconds on the clock.

The goal rocked Wolves right to the soles of their boots and after taking in that they more or less kicked off one down they gradually started to get up a head of steam. It was Sako who was the man initiating the comeback, firstly he unleashed a shot that flew just over the bar and then minutes later his header from point-blank range was saved by Federici and hacked off the line by a defender. However just a few seconds later and with 26 minutes on the clock a cross on the right by van La Parra was met by the head of Afobe to put Wolves on level terms.

Rather than seize the initiative Wolves lost their momentum after the break and Reading assumed control and created a series of chances which allowed Kuszczak to make amends for his first minute near

post blunder with a series of good saves. But there was nothing the keeper could do in the 70th minute when McCleary setup Williams who hit a low shot from outside the area that flew into the back of the net off the post.

The goal was enough to send Wolves crashing to their first defeat in nine league matches. With every other team bar Ipswich in the top seven winning Wolves lost more precious ground on the teams above them with a five point difference now between Wolves and Watford in the final play-off position.

**Opinion:** Need to get back to winning ways before the gap becomes insurmountable.

**Man of the match:** Bath

**Team Rating:** 4/10

**Attendance:** 20,274

**Team:** Kuszczak, Doherty, Hause, Edwards (Price 71), Bath (capt), Stearman, van La Parra (Henry 71), Evans (Dicko 62), Afobe, McDonald, Sako

**Unused Subs:** Flatt, Golbourne, Ebanks-Landell, Iorfa

**Bookings:** Stearman (18 – foul)

## THREE POINTS AND FOUR PINTS OF JOHN SMITH'S

### Huddersfield 1-4 Wolves

Tuesday 10th February 2015

Prior to this game Wolves had not beaten Huddersfield since 1997, they had in fact lost the last seven games which included the 3-1 defeat earlier in the season at Molineux. On numerous occasions this season Wolves have totally dominated possession and failed to make their superiority pay, however this time around the stats show it was the Terriers who had the lion's share of the play and the majority of the chances yet ended up 4-1 losers, just like Wolves had done earlier in the season at Molineux.

Wolves kicked off this game still smarting from the defeat at home to Reading just three days earlier and they still seemed hungover as Huddersfield had them under the cosh early doors. Within the first few minutes Vaughan had a long range effort that flew just wide and Kuszczak needed two attempts at gathering Miller's 20 yard effort. But just as it seemed a hard nights work was in store Wolves scored with their first attempt at goal, van La Parra rolled the ball into the path of Dicko just inside the box and the striker slotted the ball



under Smithies to make it 1-0.

Huddersfield continued to dominate and even though Wolves looked dangerous on the break Kuszczak was the man in the thick of the action making saves from Miller, Vaughan, Bunn and Scannell. The half-time break came at the perfect time for Wolves to get a breather following the onslaught, and as the second-half kicked off they hit Huddersfield with another goal within 60 seconds, Sako swung in a vicious corner from the right and Coady headed it into his own net.

Huddersfield picked up where they ended the second half, on the attack, but yet again they found Kuszczak in no mood to give them anything. And just as they had already done on two occasions Wolves added a third against the run of play, and this time it was Afobe who tapped home from close range after van La Parra's shot had been pushed back into his path.

It seemed game over and three points in the bag for Wolves, but after some valiant defending they gave Huddersfield a glimmer of a hope just two minutes later when poor defending allowed Vaughan who was unmarked eight yards out to slot home from a right wing cross. The pattern of the game continued with Huddersfield pressing and Kuszczak unbeatable, and in line with the rest of the nights events the icing was put well and truly on the cake when Dicko added his second and Wolves fourth in the second minute of injury time.

**Opinion:** Cracking result, just what the doctor ordered.

**Man of the match:** Kuszczak

**Team Rating:** 8/10

**Attendance:** 11,843

**Team:** Kuszczak, Doherty, Hause, Price, Stearman, Bath (capt), van La Parra (Edwards 78), Dicko, Afobe, McDonald, Sako (Golbourne 73)

**Unused Subs:** Flatt, Henry, Evans, Ebanks-Landell, Iorfa

**Bookings:** Dicko (81 – dissent), Afobe (90+5 – simulation)

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## **NOTHING TO TWEET HOME ABOUT**

### **NORWICH 2-0 WOLVES**

Saturday 14th February 2015



As with the midweek game at Huddersfield Tomasz Kuszczak was Wolves man of the match, however this time the game was in total contrast to the midweek heroics shown by his team mates. It was back to the drawing board for Wolves when all the good work done in midweek was thrown away by a performance that can only be described as woeful.

From the first minute Wolves were on the back foot and that's the way it continued for the next 89. There was none of the quick one touch passing that was prominent in the early part of the season, basically they struggled to string two passes together in what developed into probably one of their worse performances of the season.

Norwich totally dominated the play in the first half and after a series of near misses in and around the Wolves goal area it was no surprise they took the lead in the 28th minute, Redmond sent over a corner from the left and Johnson got in front of two Wolves defenders to head Norwich in front. Disappointingly there was no response from Wolves and they continued to give the ball away cheaply, and the only effort they mustered on goal was a weak effort from Sako in time added on in the first half.

It was pretty much as you were in the second half with Norwich again dominating possession and Kuszczak again the man responsible for keeping the Canaries at bay with a series of fine saves. However, there was nothing he could do in the 67th minute when Norwich added the all decisive second goal, the overlapping Olsson crossed from the left and Grabban was all on his own at the back post with

the simple task of tapping the ball home from three yards.

Following the goal Wolves tried to hit back and they finally managed to muster up their first real chance of the game in the 73rd minute, Afobe picked up the ball in the area and turned Martin but his final shot lacked any kind of power to trouble Ruddy. Wolves never threatened again and only Kuszczak can put his hands up and say he made a contribution in what was a bad day at the office for the rest of his team mates.

**Opinion:** Getting into those play-offs gets harder by the minute.

**Man of the match:** Kuszczak

**Team Rating:** 2/10

**Attendance:** 26,322

**Team:** Kuszczak, Iorfa, Hause (Golbourne 78), Price, Stearman, Batth (capt), van La Parra, Dicko (Edwards 45), Afobe, McDonald, Sako

**Unused Subs:** Flatt, Henry, Evans, Ebanks-Landell, Jacobs

**Bookings:** Iorfa (70 – foul)

## **A SPARKLING FIVE KEEPS PLAY-OFFS ALIVE**

### **WOLVES 5-0 ROTHERHAM**

Saturday 21st February 2015

After the dire performance at Norwich the week before Wolves took out all their frustrations on Rotherham and banged in five goals to record their highest win of the season. Time and time again this season we've watched on as Wolves have dominated games and failed to make their superiority pay, there was none of that this time around when they found the same kind of clinical finishing as that at Huddersfield recently.

As the rain poured down the game reflected the weather for the first quarter of an hour with neither team threatening the opposition's goalkeeper, but then the game exploded into life with a great piece of finishing by Afobe. McDonald sent a long ball deep into the Rotherham half and Afobe skilfully brought it down before slotting it past Collin to make it 1-0. Wolves continued to apply the pressure and seven minutes later Afobe turned creator when he played in Dicko who calmly slotted home from ten yards to double Wolves lead.

As half-time approached Wolves had a lucky escape when Stearman headed against his own post and with Rotherham

sensing a way back into the game Hammill fluffed his big chance to score against his old club when he shot weakly at Kuszczak from six yards. Derbyshire was then guilty of an even worse miss when he swung at the ball and totally missed it from just seven yards out.



After the break Kuszczak made a spectacular save from Derbyshire's header and it proved to be crucial as Wolves made it 3-0 just a minute later when Henry put Afobe through and the striker coolly rounded Collin before side footing the ball into the empty net.

With Rotherham again enjoying a spell of pressure Kuszczak made another great save when he tipped away a fierce drive from Hammill that was heading for the top corner. Edwards then showed Rotherham how to finish when he flicked in a corner from Sako at the near post in the 74th minute. Sako completed the rout with a clinical finish ten minutes from time after latching onto van La Parra's through ball.

**Opinion:** That boy Afobe looks like the bargain of the season.

**Man of the match:** Afobe

**Team Rating:** 9/10

**Attendance:** 20,336

**Team:** Kuszczak, Iorfa, Golbourne (Hause 81), Edwards, Stearman, Batth (capt), Henry, Dicko (Doyle 68), Afobe (van La Parra 68), McDonald, Sako

**Unused Subs:** McCarey, Doherty, Ebanks-Landell, Jacobs

**Bookings:** None

## **NICE AND THREESY**

### **WOLVES 3-0 FULHAM**

Tuesday 24th February 2015

This was the fourth time these two teams had met this season and just over a month ago Fulham visited Molineux for a FA Cup 3rd round replay and knocked out Wolves after winning 5-3 in a penalty shootout. On that occasion Fulham were fortunate to

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equalise with a hotly disputed penalty in the last few seconds of extra time, so revenge was sweet as Wolves ended up 3-0 winners to keep their play-off push on course.



After the 5-0 thumping of Rotherham on Saturday it was a relatively quiet start, but that soon changed in the 10th minute as Wolves got their noses in front. Iorfa made a good run on the right which resulted in a corner. Over came the in-form Sako who sent over a perfect delivery that left Bath the simple task of sticking his head on the ball and leave the Fulham net bulging. With Fulham on a run of poor form since that FA Cup win you would have thought that Wolves would have gone for the jugular, it couldn't have been more different with the visitors pinning Wolves down in their own half and looking the more dangerous in front of goal. In fact they should have levelled on the half-hour mark when Christensen put McCormack clean through, but fortunately for Wolves he hit a weak effort straight at Kuszczak.

With Fulham looking dangerous Wolves scored a stunning goal out of nothing in the 40th minute. Starting in their own half they put together a string of short passes moving upfield like a Panzer Movement, and the conclusion came with an incisive strike from Sako who hit an unstoppable shot into the bottom corner from all of 25 yards. With the half-time whistle imminent it was that man Sako again, he picked up the ball on the edge of the area after another superb passing movement and weaved his way past two players before sending a powerful shot through the legs of Bettinelli and into the net.

When Sako made the score 3-0 right on the break it more or less ended the game as a contest with Wolves eager not to make the same mistakes made at Millwall earlier in the season where a three goal lead was carelessly surrendered by poor defending. Wolves were quite content to play keep ball and not allowing Fulham a foothold back into the game. Afobe forced Bettinelli into a good save in the 70th

minute and Fulham had a couple of half chances courtesy of Rodallega and Kavanagh, but that was it on the goal chances front and Wolves cruised to a deserved 3-0 victory.

**Opinion:** Great to see some goals at the end of some superb build-up play.

**Man of the match:** Sako

**Team Rating:** 8/10

**Attendance:** 17,744

**Team:** Kuszczak, Golbourne, Iorfa, Edwards, Bath (capt), Stearman, Price, McDonald, Afobe (Doyle 81), Dicko (Henry 70), Sako (van La Parra 67)

**Unused Subs:** Flatt, Doherty, Ebanks-Landell, Hause

**Bookings:** None

## SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT

### CARDIFF 0-1 WOLVES

Saturday 28th February 2015

There's a new grit and determination set in at Wolves, players and supporters alike have a steely determination to put the horrific relegations of 2012 and 2013 behind them and get back in the big time called the Premiership. This game away at Cardiff typified the new mood as Wolves dug deep and come away with a superb 1-0 win in what is always a difficult atmosphere to play.

It was a slow start all round with Kuszczak slightly the busier of the two keepers, but that only involved one real save when diving at the feet of Manga in the 21st minute. Wolves seemed to be struggling to get any kind of passing game going, but when they suddenly put together a decent move in the 26th minute they ruthlessly punished Cardiff with a goal. Afobe broke away from Noone and found van La Parra, and when the wingers cross hit Manga it fell nicely into the path of Sako who despatched it into the bottom corner of the net.



Wolves were suddenly on the front foot and Afobe had two good chances to

extend the lead before the break. Firstly he had a shot saved by Marshall after Sako had played him in, and then he should have scored when he was put clean through after a woeful backpass from Gunnarsson, but the strikers shot lacked conviction and the Cardiff keeper saved his goalbound effort.

The game seemed to have gone well and truly in Wolves favour when Whittingham was sent off in the 65th minute for a second bookable offence, but it had the opposite effect as Cardiff steamed into Wolves. The hosts bombarded Kuszczak with high balls and the keeper was fortunate when his defence rescued him after he spilled one of the crosses against Morrison and the ball was cleared off the line.

Wolves stood firm and defended superbly as the bombardment continued, but Kuszczak was again found wanting as he nearly gifted Cardiff an injury time equaliser, he flapped at another cross and Jones's header was brilliantly headed off the line by Stearman. Kenny Jackett's men have now won four of their last five and are coming on strong at just the right time of the season as they target back-to-back promotions.

**Opinion:** Two massive games coming up which could define the promotion hopes.

**Man of the match:** Stearman

**Team Rating:** 8/10

**Attendance:** 21,165

**Team:** Kuszczak, Hause, Iorfa (Doherty 61), Edwards, Bath (capt), Stearman, Van La Parra (Dicko 59), McDonald, Afobe (Ebanks-Landell 88), Price, Sako  
**Unused Subs:** McCarey, Golbourne, Henry, Evans

**Bookings:** Iorfa (7 – foul), McDonald (74 – foul)

## STEER CLEAR OF THE CHERRIES

### BOURNEMOUTH 2-1 WOLVES

Tuesday 3rd March 2015

After a three game winning run it all went a bit pear shaped at promotion rivals Bournemouth as Wolves lost by a 2-1 score line. As with the game at Molineux in early December the rub of the green again went the way of AFC Bournemouth following some dubious refereeing decisions that had a big impact on the final result, even though it was AFC who dominated for long periods.

Referee James Linington put the skids on Wolves promotion charge with two poor penalty decisions, both of which went

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against our boys. Firstly he gave AFC an early second half penalty when Stearman was adjudged to have tripped Wilson inside the area and replays suggested the offence was outside the box. Secondly when the clock was rapidly approaching full-time a free-kick by Sako was clearly handled by Elphick in the area, this time no penalty.

After the "up and at em" attitude of the last three games for some reason Wolves seemed in impassive mood from the start and they paid the price in the 10th minute as AFC opened the scoring. Poor defending by Stearman allowed Wilson to send over a low cross from the right, even slacker marking by Bath and Edwards left Kermorgant on his own on the edge of the six yard box, and the striker had all the time in the world to hook the ball into the roof of the net. Wolves looked all at bay, their usual crisp passing game was sloppy and careless giving AFC the initiative and putting the back four under constant pressure.



However Wolves stunned the home team in the 34th minute with a goal against the run of play, and what a superb goal it was. McDonald produced an inch perfect pass from the halfway line that Afobe ran onto to slot past Boric from twelve yards. Suddenly Wolves were on the front foot and it was Afobe who carved up another chance for himself with some smart work just outside the box, but this time his final effort lacked pace and Boruc saved down to his left. McDonald again surged forward right on the stroke of half-time and his low shot from the edge of the area drifted just wide of the left upright.

Half time definitely came at the wrong time for Wolves, and so came the dreadful penalty decision at the start of the second half putting Wolves straight on the defensive again. The penalty was hotly disputed by Wolves after Stearman was penalised for allegedly tripping Wilson inside the area, but Kermorgant unaffected stepped up to

slot it past Kuszczak from the spot-kick, although the keeper would have been disappointed after the shot seemed to slip in under his left hand.

It was all Bournemouth as Wolves failed to recover from the penalty setback, Wilson twice went close for AFC before Stearman made a great goal line clearance for the second game in a row when he booted Pugh's volley off the line in the 68th minute. Apart from Sako's late penalty appeal for hand ball Wolves never threatened after the break and Bournemouth deserved all three points.

**Opinion:** Big improvement needed next Saturday to get play-off hopes back on track.

**Man of the match:** McDonald

**Team Rating:** 5/10

**Attendance:** 9,851

**Team:** Kuszczak, Doherty, Hause, Edwards, Bath (capt), Stearman, van La Parra, McDonald, Afobe, Dicko (Doyle 75), Sako

**Unused Subs:** McCarey, Golbourne, Henry, Iorfa, Ebanks-Landell, Price

**Bookings:** Stearman (49 – foul)

## IT'S JACK IN THE BOX

### **WOLVES 2-2 WATFORD**

Saturday 7th March 2015

With the game finishing 2-2 that's just one point from the two games against two of their promotion chasing rivals. However the game against Watford was a high tempo, end to end cup tie type game with both teams looking for that all important win. Both sides ended the game with 10 men after two red-cards in stoppage time, Hoban seeing red for Watford after collecting a second caution and Sako was dismissed for allegedly pushing over Forestieri after the midfielder was scythed down by a crude tackle by the Italian.

Wolves started at breakneck pace and deservedly took the lead in the 14th minute. McDonald was the creator with an inch perfect 40 yard pass that Afobe took in his stride before nonchalantly slotting the ball past Gomes. Wolves continued to push forward and nearly doubled their lead when Henry's low shot was well saved by Gomes. Then with Wolves well on top Watford scored against the run of play, Deeney released Vydra who raced clear before beating Kuszczak with a low shot from the edge of the area. Wolves were in the ascendancy again in the run up to half-time and Afobe was within a whisker of



scoring a second when his goal bound header was tipped over the bar by Gomes.

Wolves continued to press after the break and they were immediately rewarded for their efforts, Jack Price got a massive deflection on Hauses's 25 yard pile driver and the ball beat the helpless Gomes and ended up in the corner of the net. Wolves continued attacking in search of that all important third goal but their inability to turn the pressure into goals was ruthlessly exposed by Watford again in the 65th minute when Deeney latched onto a through ball and muscled past Bath before slotting it past Kuszczak.

The game became a box to box affair with both teams looking for the win, but despite several near misses the game reached its conclusion with both teams earning a point each. The game finished with two red cards in injury time. Firstly Hoban received a second yellow for a foul on van La Parra and then we saw the distasteful part of the game introduced by the foreign imports. Sako was felled by a foul from Forestieri and when the midfielder reacted the Italian went down clutching his face as if he'd been hit by a right hook from Manny Pacquiao. The cheat was immediately surrounded by Wolves players but the referee had already been duped into showing the red card.

**Opinion:** Yet again the same old story of failing to turn domination into goals.

**Man of the match:** van La Parra

**Team Rating:** 7/10

**Attendance:** 23,146

**Team:** Kuszczak, Doherty, Hause, Henry (Doyle 79), Bath (capt), Stearman, van La Parra, McDonald, Afobe, Price, Sako

**Unused Subs:** McCarey, Golbourne, Edwards, Iorfa, Ebanks-Landell, Dicko

**Bookings:** Price (90+4 - foul)

**Sending's Off:** Sako (90+3 – violent conduct)

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## VAN THE MAN GIVES EM THE OLD HEAVE HOVE

### **BRIGHTON 1-1 WOLVES**

Saturday 15th March 2015



The last time Wolves played at the Amex Stadium they were relegated from the Championship to League One two seasons ago, even though that nightmare will linger for years to come they started to erase the demons when they came from behind to earn what could prove to be a precious point in the promotion play-off push. A draw was probably a fair result on the balance of play, but Wolves could so easily have snatched all three points when Sako had a shot pushed onto the post by Stockdale in the dying seconds.

It was Brighton who made all the early running and Mackail-Smith missed an early chance for Brighton when he headed straight at Kuszczak from six yards. Even though the hosts had the lion's share of the possession Wolves could easily have taken the lead in the ninth minute. Dunk spectacularly slipped to let in Afobe but Stockdale was quick off his line to block the shot, Sako then sent the rebound goalwards but Greer was on hand to clear the ball off the line. Afobe again went close on the half hour mark but his goal bound effort was superbly tipped away by Stockdale.

As the half ended Wolves had their best spell, and Sako had a shot saved by Stockdale before McDonald shot just wide. Wolves kept the momentum going at the start of the second half as the game became more open with both sides looking for the win. After a series of close chances at both ends it was Brighton who opened the scoring with twenty minutes remaining, and it was defender Bruno who drilled a low shot under the body of Kuszczak after Calderon's effort was parried into his path.

The lead lasted just four minutes before van La Parra broke down the right and sent over an innocuous cross to the near

post that was palmed into his own net by Stockdale. Then came that last minute effort from Sako which allowed Stockdale to make amends for his earlier blunder by somehow managing to get a hand on the shot and palm it around the post.

**Opinion:** Just three points off the play-off zone now with two home games to come.

**Man of the match:** van La Parra

**Team Rating:** 7/10

**Attendance:** 27,019

**Team:** Kuszczak, Doherty, Hause, Henry (Dicko 62), Bath (capt), Stearman, van La Parra, McDonald, Afobe, Price, Sako

**Unused Subs:** McCarey, Golbourne, Edwards, Evans, Doyle, Ebanks-Landell

**Bookings:** Doherty (87 – foul)

## GRAY DAY FOR THE OWLS

### **WOLVES 3-0 SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY**

Tuesday 17th March 2015

Stuart Gray visited Wolves for the first time since his brief caretaker manager role at the club ended in 2004. And it all ended in tears as Wolves kept the pressure on their promotion rivals with another vital 3-0 home victory against his Sheffield Wednesday team. They now sit just five points behind fifth placed Derby who come to Molineux on Friday night for the live Sky TV game.

Wolves with the most to gain set their stall in determined fashion and although real clear-cut chances were at a premium it was only a matter of time before the home team would make their dominance pay, and that moment came in the 17th minute. Dicko went on a mazy run into the Wednesday area and went past one defender before going to ground following a tackle from Dielna, and even though contact seemed minimal the referee pointed straight to the spot. Sako stepped up and sent Westwood the wrong way from the resulting penalty to put Wolves one up.

It was all Wolves and they hit a ten minute purple patch around about the half hour mark, and Wednesday had keeper Westwood to thank for keeping them in the game. He made a good save from McDonald before flinging himself to his left to keep out a rasping drive from Dicko, he then had a little bit of luck when Price shot straight at him when well placed. The constant push forward in search of a second goal nearly backfired in the 35th minute when Kuszczak had to dive full stretch to palm out a header from Maghoma.

After their incessant assault in the first half it was a subdued start for Wolves after the break, and they went inches of conceding an equaliser in the 50th minute when Nuhui headed over the bar from close range. Kenny Jackett responded to the threat and brought on Henry for van La Parra in the 52nd minute, and the move paid off just three minutes later. Henry fed Doherty on the right and the full-back crossed for the unmarked Afobe to thump a great volley that went in off the post.



With the score at 2-0 that was about it as far as Wednesday were concerned and Henry put the icing well and truly on the cake twelve minutes later. He gathered the ball just inside the right hand by-line and moved infield to the edge of the area before unleashing an unstoppable shot into the top left hand corner of the net from outside the area.

**Opinion:** That's just one defeat in seven games now and the perfect time to go on a run.

**Man of the match:** McDonald.

**Team Rating:** 8/10

**Attendance:** 18,687

**Team:** Kuszczak, Doherty, Golbourne, Price, Bath (capt), Stearman (Ebanks-Landell 74), van La Parra (Henry 53), McDonald (Edwards 88), Afobe, Dicko, Sako

**Unused Subs:** McCarey, Hause, Evans, Doyle

**Bookings:** None

## A TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE DERB

### **WOLVES 2-0 DERBY**

Friday 20th March 2015

On the day when Britain experienced its first Total Solar Eclipse for over 50 years Wolves set about erasing the memory of the 5-0 drubbing received at the hands of Derby last November. With Sky covering the game on the Friday night it was also a



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chance for Wolves to put the pressure on their promotion rivals, and that's exactly what happened with a 2-0 victory helping close the gap on the top six.

The game started at break neck speed with the game flowing from end to end, but it was Derby who were the first to go near when Ince was given space on the edge of the area and his shot smacked the top of the crossbar in the 25th minute. However a minute later Afobe got on the end of Dicko's cross from the right and the striker forced Grant to save with his legs following a volley from six yards.

After a series of referee blunders which have gone against Wolves this season Keith Stroud finally gave a decision in our favour which changed the whole direction of the game. With half time approaching Bathth appeared to touch Bent's shirt when the Derby striker was through on goal, but the referee decided that a free-kick was sufficient punishment when he could in theory have shown the red card. Derby manager Steve McClaren rushed from the stands to pitch side to vent his anger and frustration, now he knows how we England fans felt when he was manager of the national team.

It was Wolves who broke the deadlock three minutes after the break. Forsyth gave the ball away to McDonald just outside his own area and he fed Dicko who made himself a few inches of space before rifling in a shot through the legs of Grant. Derby immediately set about an equaliser and Bryson hit the post from the edge of the box before Lingard forced Kuszczak into a full length save.



Wolves responded again and a long ball from McDonald released Afobe who outran Forsyth and crashed the ball against the crossbar before Wolves were gifted a second goal in the 68th minute. There's an old saying that says "Never take anything for granted", and it was Derby keeper Lee

Grant who was responsible for the goal with a real howler, he elected to punch the ball after Forsyth had slashed a clearance skywards but only succeeded in clumsily dropping the ball into his own net.

The goal ended any hope that Derby had of getting anything out of the game and Wolves just sat back and allowed time to run out with Derby heads well and truly down. Sako could have added a third right at the death when he carved himself a chance just eight yards out, but he uncharacteristically shot over the bar with only Grant to beat.

**Opinion:** International break definitely coming at the wrong time.

**Man of the match:** Sako

**Team Rating:** 8/10

**Attendance:** 27,480

**Team:** Kuszczak, Doherty, Golbourne, Price, Bathth (capt), Stearman, Henry (van La Parra 67), McDonald, Afobe (Doyle 90), Dicko (Edwards 65), Sako

**Unused Subs:** McCarey, Hause, Iorfa, Ebanks-Landell

**Bookings:** None

## AFOBE DOUSES THE FOREST FIRE

### NOTTINGHAM FOREST 1-2 WOLVES

Friday 3rd April January 2015

It was a great start to the busy Easter period for Wolves as they came away from a potentially tricky away game at Nottingham Forest with all three points. In a pulsating end-to-end game played at a ferocious pace it was bargain of the season Benik Afobe who set Wolves on track with a superb goal straight after the break, and player of the season Bakary Sako sealed the win with a penalty midway through the second-half.

It was in form Forest, who themselves were in with an outside chance of reaching the play-offs who put Wolves to the sword in the opening twenty minutes. Carl Ikeme, back in goal after injury nearly gifted Forest an early goal when he allowed Antonio to close him down following a back pass, but he got away with the blunder and then made amends a few minutes later when beating out a long range pile driver from Mancienne.

Despite the early pressure the Wolves defence stood solid, and slowly but surely they started to build from midfield and threaten the Forest goal. Afobe had

Wolves first real effort on goal in the 25th minute but his glancing header went narrowly wide. It was Afobe again who threatened when his shot was blocked by Darlow, and then Lichaj miraculously somehow cleared off the line from Dicho's follow-up.

Wolves had built up a head of steam and just 28 seconds into the second-half they got the decisive opening goal. Afobe picked up a pass from Iorfa just inside his own half and then raced to the edge of the area before unleashing an unstoppable shot into the bottom left-hand corner of the net.



The goal allowed Wolves to take the game by the scruff of the neck and with 72 minutes on the clock they got the all-important second goal. Lansbury made a ridiculous challenge on Sako in the box and for the referee it was a no brainer as he immediately pointed to the spot, Sako picked himself off the floor before sending Darlow the wrong way with the penalty.

Wolves never looked in any danger from then onwards and easily held out, even though Forest did pull one back in injury time when Blackstock scored from close range. However it was too late for Forest to go in search of an equaliser as the referee blew for full time as soon as Wolves kicked off.

**Opinion:** Six games left and all to play for.

**Man of the match:** Afobe

**Team Rating:** 8/10

**Attendance:** 27,185

**Team:** Ikeme, Iorfa, Golbourne, Price, Stearman, Bathth, Henry (van La Parra 67), McDonald, Afobe (Doherty 89), Dicko (Edwards 67), Sako

**Unused Subs:** Kuszczak, Doherty, Doyle, Ebanks-Landell, Hause

**Bookings:** Price (66 – foul)

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## KING H'EDWARDS AMONG YOUR YORKSHIRE PUDDINGS

### WOLVES 4-3 LEEDS

Monday 6th April 2015

After dominating play for long periods and leading 3-1 just after half-time Wolves were cruising against a Leeds team with nothing to play for. It may have been Easter but Wolves were handing gifts out as if it was Christmas. All three Leeds goals were the result of some woeful defending and it looked like being two dropped points as Leeds were allowed to somehow level the game at 3-3, however super sub Dave Edwards was on hand to get the boys out of jail when he headed a superb winner with just two minutes remaining.

Wolves ran the show from the off but it was Leeds who opened the scoring in the 11th minute following the first of a series of defensive blunders, and last year's player of the season Kevin McDonald was the offender. The midfielder was forced back towards his own goal and then inexplicably tried a pass across the face of the area, unfortunately it struck Stearman and fell straight into the path of Taylor who said thank you very much to make it 1-0 Leeds.

Wolves continued to charge forward and were rewarded in the 19th minute with an equaliser. Afobe made a great break down the right and his cross was met at the far post by Dicho who calmly slotted home from an acute angle, one apiece. Chances continued to go begging for Wolves and they finally made the pressure pay in the first minute of injury time. This time it was Sako who was the provider with a through ball that put Dicko clear, and the striker kept his composure to fire past Silvestri, 2-1 Wolves.

Three minutes into the second-half Wolves extended their lead, albeit with a goal which was a tadge on the scrappy side. Byram failed to deal with a McDonald cross that fell to Bathth ten yards out, the Captains shot struck Dicko but fortunately the ball fell to goal machine Afobe who made no mistake from two yards, 3-1 Wolves.

Wolves continued to push forward and just as the fans were expecting a goal fest Bathth handed Leeds a lifeline in the 65th minute, there appeared absolutely no danger from a low cross into the area from the right but Bathth ignored Ikeme's call and

sliced the ball into his own net, 3-2 Wolves. Wolves did their best to throw it away with 15 minutes left following more shocking defending. Stearman gave the ball straight to Mowatt outside the area who took one step forward before smashing an unstoppable shot into the top left hand corner, three apiece.



It appeared the late bombardment on the Leeds goal had ended in vain with the full time whistle just a minute or so away, but that man Edwards had the final say when a superb header from McDonald's left wing cross found the top right hand corner, 4-1 Wolves and a place in the top six.

**Opinion:** Great win but nerves are shot to pieces.

**Man of the match:** Dicko

**Team Rating:** 8/10

**Attendance:** 25,169

**Team:** *Ikeme, Iorfa, Golbourne, Price, Stearman, Bathth, Henry (van La Parra 78), McDonald, Afobe, Dicko (Edwards 70), Sako*

**Unused Subs:** *Kuszczak, Doherty, Doyle, Ebanks-Landell, Hause*

**Bookings:** Golbourne (37 – foul), Bathth (38 – foul)

## THE DAY WE BLUE IT

### BIRMINGHAM 2-1 WOLVES

Saturday 11th April 2015

With all the hype surrounding Wolves late charge into the play-off reckoning this game was a massive wake up call for those who think a top six place is a formality. The cavalier type football played in recent games was conspicuously missing as Wolves were beaten 2-1 by an average Birmingham side with nothing to play for.

Considering they were the away team it was Wolves who were the brighter in the opening stages although neither goalkeeper had much to do, however that was until the 21st minute when Wolves went in



front. And it was Afobe who found the back of the net after some great battling by Dicko just outside the area saw him dispossess Kiernan before squaring the ball back to in-form striker who made no mistake from ten yards.

Instead of consolidating on that goal Wolves gave away the lead cheaply just four minutes later. City won a corner on the left and as the ball was delivered into the six yard area Ikeme was indecisive in clearing, it led to a Keystone Cops sequence of hoofing at the ball by defenders and forwards alike and ended up with the ball ricocheting off Kiernan into the Wolves net. It was poor defending by Wolves just at the time they needed to protect the lead. The goal gave City a real lift at a time when Wolves had been the better team, from then on up to half-time Wolves were restricted to two long range efforts by Sako and McDonald, both of which were easily saved by Randolph.

Disaster struck for Wolves just after the hour mark following some more awful defending, and they somehow managed to concede a goal from a corner given in their favour. Sako's poor flag-kick was headed away to Gray on the edge of the area and he was allowed to race clear unchallenged, Golbourne temporarily nipped the ball away from the youngster before giving it straight back to him, Gray was again allowed to continue his run before slotting it past Ikeme from the edge of the area. Wolves found themselves unable to respond and things were summed up when a late McDonald shot nearly ended up over the top of the stand.

After working so hard to get into the play-off places Kenny Jackett will be thoroughly frustrated at the way his team so easily gave the game away with defending that can only be described as appalling, it was as if they thought they only had to turn up for the three points. Wolves were the only team in the top eight to lose which now means it's vital they get something in the

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next game against Middlesbrough. With games running out and an inferior goal difference compared to the teams above us we're already relying on those teams dropping points.

**Opinion:** Schoolboy defending from set-pieces unforgivable.

**Man of the match:** Afobe

**Team Rating:** 4/10

**Attendance:** 19,330

**Team:** Ikeme, Iorfa, Golbourne, Price, Stearman, Bath, Henry (van La Parra 73), McDonald, Afobe, Dicko, Sako

**Unused Subs:** Kuszczak, Edwards, K. Doyle, Ebanks-Landell, Hause, Jacobs

**Bookings:** McDonald (72 – foul), Price (74 – foul), Bath (83 – foul)

## DOWNSIDE TO EARLY BROADSIDE AT THE RIVERSIDE

### MIDDLESBROUGH 2-1 WOLVES

Tuesday 14th April 2015

After losing at Birmingham on Saturday it was imperative that Wolves got back to winning ways against one of their promotion rivals Middlesbrough. Before the game had even kicked off history was against a Wolves side who hadn't won on Teeside for 64 years and against a Middlesbrough team who had lost only one league night game in the last six years.

Wolves got off to the worst possible start by conceding after just three minutes. Stearman got himself in a real tangle when a long ball from the Boro half into the Wolves area bounced over his head, Bamford got himself on the other side of the defender and slid the ball to Vossen who placed his shot between three defenders into the net.

Wolves tried to bounce back but Sako made a real hash of a free-kick that he sent high into the stands in the 10th minute, and just a minute later Boro made Wolves pay a heavy price by going straight up the other end and extending their lead. Adomah beat Hause on the right wing and crossed to the unmarked Bamford who flicked up the ball and swivelled before volleying past Ikeme. Despite the early disaster Wolves refused to lie down and went close to reducing the arrears just a minute later when van La Parra's shot was deflected over the bar.

After a disappointing first-half in which Wolves were mostly under the cosh Kenny Jackett replaced Hause with Golbourne after the break, but it didn't alter the



pattern of the game with Boro straight on the attack and Vossen blasting over from three yards just five minutes into the half. However three minutes later Wolves were given a glimmer of hope when they conjured up a goal out of nothing. Edwards picked up the ball in the Boro half and his slide rule pass picked out Sako who broke into the box before smashing the ball past Konstantopoulos.

The goal silenced the Boro fans and suddenly it was Wolves who were on the offensive, Jackett threw on Dicko for Price to give the team an extra attacking option, and it nearly paid off five minutes later. Golbourne sent over a cross from the left that picked out van La Parra all on his own at the back post with the goal at his mercy, but his volley from just two yards out smashed against the bar.

With time running out Wolves continued to push forward looking for that vital equaliser, but Boro seemed quite contempt to slow down the tempo and waste time at every opportunity. In the end it was that first eleven minutes that cost Wolves and leaving themselves a mountain to climb against one of the best home teams in the division. That miss by van La Parra could be the defining moment of the run in, Ipswich winning at home to Cardiff means we have to beat Ipswich at home and hope they drop points in the run in along with Brentford.

**Opinion:** How expensive will that van La Parra miss turn out to be?

**Man of the match:** Sako

**Team Rating:** 5/10

**Attendance:** 20,520

**Team:** Ikeme, Iorfa, Hause (Golbourne 45), Price (Dicko 63), Stearman, Bath (capt), van La Parra (Jacobs 77), McDonald, Afobe, Edwards, Sako

**Unused Subs:** Kuszczak, Henry, Doyle, Ebanks-Landell

**Bookings:** Stearman (24 – foul), Bath (38 – foul), Sako (45+1 – foul), Edwards (90 – foul)

## TRACTOR BLOCKADE

### WOLVES 1-1 IPSWICH

Saturday 18th April 2015



Any fading hopes Wolves may have had about reaching the Championship play-offs went well and truly out the window at approximately 2:00pm when Stuart Attwell blew the final whistle. At the stage of the season when Wolves needed to up the ante they were found wanting. The two defeats at Birmingham and Middlesbrough meant this was a must win game, but just one point out of nine means Wolves now need at least two of the three teams above them to go into meltdown to enable a top six finish.

Wolves backed by an expectant crowd made all the early running, but it was Ipswich who set the trend by defending in numbers and frustrating the efforts of the Wolves attack. For all the possession and will to win from Kenny Jackett's boys there were no clear cut chances as Ipswich set their stall in the hope of catching Wolves on the break, and in the 20th minute disaster struck as Ipswich scored. In a rare attack Ipswich won a corner on the right and when the ball came over Smith challenged Stearman in the air and unluckily for the defender it came off the back of his head and looped over Ikeme into the net.

Wolves continued to push forward and they were unlucky not to draw level six minutes before half-time. For once the Ipswich defence failed to clear their lines and the ball fell to Edwards whose excellent volley from twelve yards clipped the outside of the Ipswich post.

With just ninety seconds of the second-half gone Dicko missed a glorious chance to equalise when he headed wide of goal at the far post from four yards out following a free-kick from Sako. Luckily for Dicko Wolves didn't have to wait long for an equaliser, McDonald put van La Parra

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through on goal and when his shot was partially blocked the ball ran into the path of Afobe who rammed the ball into the net from two yards out.

Wolves piled on the pressure but there was no passing the solid blue wall which stood firm and not allowing the Wolves forwards an inch of space. As the game reached its conclusion the frustrated Wolves players ran out of ideas and constantly gave the ball away in the last third of the field, and their frustration was summed up in time added on when Dicko just failed to connect with a miss-hit shot from McDonald. The reaction from the players at the final whistle spoke volumes, some dropping on their knees to the turf, some with their head in their hands and the body language of the others signifying that the season was all but over.

**Opinion:** Still mathematically possible so let's hope for a miracle.

**Man of the match:** Dicko

**Team Rating:** 5/10

**Attendance:** 23,409

**Team:** Ikeme, Iorfa, Golbourne, Edwards, Stearman, Bath (capt), van La Parra

(Henry 64), McDonald, Afobe, Dicko, Sako

**Unused Subs:** MCarey, Doherty, Doyle, Price, Ebanks-Landell, Jacobs

**Bookings:** Dicko (88 – foul)

## WOLF PACK STILL IN THE HUNT

### WIGAN ATHLETIC 0-1 WOLVES

Saturday 25th April 2015

Wolves are still mathematically in with a chance of making the play-offs after their win at relegation threatened Wigan. With one game to go they lie in eighth position two points off sixth place Derby, but after the disastrous five game losing streak in November where goals were conceded by the bucketful they need Derby to lose and to better Brentford's result in the final weekend to stand any chance of a top six finish.

The way they started you wouldn't have thought that Wolves were the ones chasing the big prize of a place in the Premier league, instead it was Wigan who dominated the play as they went in search of the three points desperately needed to avoid relegation. They had the first goal effort in the 12th minute when a mistake by Stearman let in Pennant, but his shot was brilliantly tipped over by Kuszczak.

After being on the back foot more or less from the off Wolves went in front in the 25th minute following a free-kick on the right hand side of the area, player of the season Bakary Sako's delivery was inch perfect and Afobe as usual was in the right place at the right time to head Wolves in front in what was their first attempt at goal. Wigan continued to push forward, but with Stearman now in charge at the helm his well marshalled defence were in no mood to give the hosts a sniff at goal. If anything Wolves could have extended their lead had it not been for Carson who showed quick reactions to palm away Edwards' glancing header from a Sako corner.



The pattern of the game in the second-half continued with Wigan pushing forward but unable to break down a resolute Wolves defence, and in a rare attack Wolves thought they had scored a second goal on the hour mark. It was Afobe again found the net, but this time the flag for offside had already been raised. Wolves at last started to push forward and when McDonald put Dicko through on goal Carson reacted quickly to block his effort, and just five minutes later Carson produced an even better save from Edward's header following another Sako corner.

For all their possession Wigan could not muster anything in response, and as the game reached its conclusion their frustrations spilled over when McClean was red-carded for his second bookable offence for a wild kick at Stearman.

**Opinion:** We can only win our last game and hope other teams do us a favour.

**Man of the match:** Stearman

**Team Rating:** 6/10

**Attendance:** 16,810 (4,478 away supporters)

**Team:** Kuszczak, Golbourne, Iorfa, Edwards, Stearman (capt), Ebanks-Landell, Price, McDonald, Dicko (Doyle 82), Afobe, Sako (Hause 82)

**Unused Subs:** Flatt, Doherty, Henry, van La Parra, Jacobs

**Bookings:** Dicko (65 – ungentlemanly

conduct), Stearman (81 – foul), Iorfa (90+5 – ungentlemanly conduct)

## A RUN OF THE MILL WALL

### WOLVES 4-2 MILLWALL

Saturday 2nd May 2015



Our beloved Wolverhampton Wanderers were agonisingly beaten to a top-six finish on goal difference after finishing level on points with Ipswich and Brentford. At 12:35 Nouha Dicko scored for Wolves, at that point they moved into 6th spot and into the last play-off position, and for six minutes that was as close as it was going to get as far as reaching the play-offs was concerned. Then at 12:41 Pritchard scored a deflected goal for Brentford and basically put the mockers on the whole afternoon.

As the game kicked off all that Wolves could do from the start was win and hope for the best, with that in mind they attacked Millwall from the first whistle and went for goals. With the early news that Derby had gone behind the crowd upped the volume and in the 20th minute Wolves got the vital breakthrough. Sako picked up the ball deep in his own half and made a breath-taking run that took him into Millwall's box, and when the ball finally broke to Dicho he swept the ball home from eight yards.

Having dominated affairs before the goal, Dicko's strike looked certain to open the floodgates but strangely affairs went a bit quiet in the period up to half-time. Wolves had a massive let-off just after the break when Edwards made a brilliant headed clearance off the line to deny O'Brien, however the atmosphere had already gone a bit flat with the news that Brentford had gone two up against Rotherham.

Hopes were briefly raised when Dicho added his and Wolves second in the 56th minute, the striker collected a pass from Sako and cut inside from the left, he then

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strolled past two defenders before lashing an unstoppable shot into the top right hand corner of the net. However it became Mission Impossible for Wolves just two minutes later when Kuszczak could only parry a long-range free-kick from Powell, and the ball was whipped back across the six yard box where O'Brien tapped it in from close range.

With goals required quickly Wolves lay siege on the Millwall goal and with twenty minutes left Ebanks-Landell showed them how to find the back of the net when rammed in the rebound after Sako's free-kick was deflected into his path by the keeper. At that stage and with only three more goals required the inconceivable was suddenly back on the cards again, but in the 82nd minute Wolves committed defensive suicide to all but end their play-off hopes. Upson

was given acres of space on the left and his cross was missed by just about every Wolves defender and Philpot nipped in to tap the ball home from close range. It had been a superb effort by Wolves and they had the final say when Sako marked probably his last game in the famous gold shirt with a surging run in from the wing to smash it through Forde's legs to make the final score 4-2.

At the end of the day a top six finish wasn't lost today but during a six match run that started in November where one point was taken out of a possible 18 with two goals scored and a massive 16 conceded, at the time we couldn't buy a point and it was effectively where the season ended. However Kenny Jackett has done a miraculous job and things are looking a lot rosier than they did two seasons ago. We

have a good squad with some youngsters who hopefully will be a great asset to the club in the future, and the acquisition of goal machine Benik Afobe from Arsenal for two million pounds sterling looks to be the bargain of the season.

**Opinion:** A harsh lesson learned from some naïve points dropped, but still a great season.

**Man of the match:** Sako

**Team Rating:** 8/10

**Attendance:** 24,480

**Team:** *Kuszczak, Iorfa, Ebanks-Landell, Stearman (capt), Golbourne, Edwards, van La Parra (Price 64), McDonald, Afobe, Dicko, Sako*

**Unused Subs:** *Flatt, Doherty, Henry, Doyle, Jacobs, Hause*

**Bookings:** None

## Sky Bet Championship Final Table

#	Team	Pl	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	<b>Bournemouth</b>	46	26	12	8	98	45	53	90
2	<b>Watford</b>	46	27	8	11	91	50	41	89
3	<b>Norwich City</b>	46	25	11	10	88	48	40	86
4	<b>Middlesbrough</b>	46	25	10	11	68	37	31	85
5	<b>Brentford</b>	46	23	9	14	78	59	19	78
6	<b>Ipswich Town</b>	46	22	12	12	72	54	18	78
7	<b>Wolverhampton Wanderers</b>	46	22	12	12	70	56	14	78
8	<b>Derby County</b>	46	21	14	11	85	56	29	77
9	<b>Blackburn Rovers</b>	46	17	16	13	66	59	7	67
10	<b>Birmingham City</b>	46	16	15	15	54	64	-10	63
11	<b>Cardiff City</b>	46	16	14	16	57	61	-4	62
12	<b>Charlton Athletic</b>	46	14	18	14	54	60	-6	60
13	<b>Sheffield Wednesday</b>	46	14	18	14	43	49	-6	60
14	<b>Nottingham Forest</b>	46	15	14	17	71	69	2	59
15	<b>Leeds United</b>	46	15	11	20	50	61	-11	56
16	<b>Huddersfield Town</b>	45	13	15	17	58	75	-17	54
17	<b>Fulham</b>	46	14	10	22	62	83	-21	52
18	<b>Bolton Wanderers</b>	46	13	12	21	54	67	-13	51
19	<b>Reading</b>	46	13	11	22	48	69	-21	50
20	<b>Brighton and Hove Albion</b>	46	10	17	19	44	54	-10	47
21	<b>Rotherham United</b>	46	11	16	19	46	67	-21	46
22	<b>Millwall</b>	46	9	14	23	42	76	-34	41
23	<b>Wigan Athletic</b>	46	9	12	25	39	64	-25	39
24	<b>Blackpool</b>	45	4	13	28	36	91	-55	25

# XMAS LUNCH

