

2<sup>nd</sup>  
November  
2023

# PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

All the news from Roundwood ahead of the weekend's hosting of Queens Park Rangers



Matt Taylor

## On rebounding from derby disappointment...

"It's a better league than it was last season, we have to remember that.

"It is a strong league. There's incredible teams struggling.

"We're not bottom, there's still some big teams below us, and we've got the opportunity certainly this weekend to get closer to that next pack.

"If we can do that with three games in a week, then we'll feel a lot better about ourselves and begin to move away from that bottom three.

"We'll do that with a couple of wins and a couple of positive performances - we're not a million miles away.

"I think I said after the Coventry game, we should be a couple of points, if not a few points better off.

"Some things have been taken away from us and we have played a part in that ourselves, but at some points this season you're left thinking; "that was a bit unfair".

"We should have more than we have, but even still we're not a million miles away from that point-a-game ratio, which we probably are as a team at this level.

"We want more than that. In order to get that more than that, we have to get to parity pretty quickly."



Matt Taylor

## On a return to home soil against the Rs...

"Regardless of the opposition, I just want us to concentrate on ourselves this week - especially on the back of last weekend.

"We need to plan and prepare for every eventuality at the weekend, because it's an unknown.

"That makes it simpler for myself and this group of players.

"What we produce has to be our best regardless of what we come across.

"We still respect the opposition, we know their strengths and weaknesses as a group.

"It's still a strong squad for Championship level, which shows just how difficult this league is.

"It's a game where, if we're at our best, we've got a good chance of winning.

"We've spoke about what's pleased me this season, and our home form is near the top of that list.

"Our performances at home against some good teams has been generally consistent, but we know we also need that consistency elsewhere.

"That's something which has given us a little bit of comfort, and we'll be looking more of the same again.

"We want another typical Rotherham-style home performance. We're looking forward to it.

"I know there will be a bit of a shakiness in the atmosphere from the fans, but we've got to force the issue and get them back on our side after what was a disappointing Sunday."



### Last Meeting

Rotherham 3 - 1 Queens Park Rangers  
Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2023

A Jordan Hugill brace set the hosts on their way at AESSEAL New York Stadium before Jamal Lowe replied to reduce arrears, only for Hakeem Odoffin to seal the points on the 90 minute-mark.

### Recent form

Queens Park Rangers

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### Marti's the man!

The R's have turned to Spanish coach Marti Cifuentes to steer the ship following Gareth Ainsworth's departure from W12.

The 41-year-old arrived from Swedish side Hammarby IF on Monday and will take charge of his first game this weekend.

Matt Taylor

**On Daniel Ayala...**

“He had a good working session on Tuesday, a bit more work today too.

“We put him on the bench on Sunday for his presence.

“It's ironic because you can't influence the game from the bench, I know that, but just being an experienced body and a good voice in the change room, settles some players down at certain times.

“Hopefully, he'll get game time this week.

“In what capacity? He's not ready to start games as yet, but hopefully we can offset some of the load on Sean Morrison and the Peltiers of the world without Hally back yet.

“That's centre-half department is still a little bit weak, so we hope to see him on the pitch in the next week.

“I'm looking forward to seeing what he brings, but he's looked like exactly what we expected from him.

“He's a little bit short in terms of sharpness and game intensity, but when he's defending that box and when he's close to the action, he's capable of doing exactly what he's done all his career, which is be a quality defender.

**On team news ahead of Hoops clash...**

“The biggest bruise is a mental one, but we have struggled a little bit in the week.

“We've lost one with a muscle injury from Sunday, and a bit of illness.

“One of the regular starters hasn't trained since and hasn't been in the building since.

“We're a little bit low in that aspect.

“We can keep focusing on the negative aspects of what's going on around our club and of the way things have gone in the last few days, or try to find a way to be positive going into the weekend because we have to in order to produce a good performance.

“We have to hit the ground running with intensity and energy and brightness and a little bit of love for football again, which we seemed to lose on Sunday.”

“However we shape up, We have to put the best of us on show and offer more than we have done to date starting this weekend with QPR.”



Matt Taylor...

**On a return for Jamie Lindsay...**

“It seems to be a matter of days rather than weeks now.

“It's strange going into a three-game week because he's not fully up to speed yet. I don't expect him to be made available, although he certainly wants to be.

“The work he's done so far isn't quite enough to stick him on the pitch for a proper game of football in the Championship.

“He might not feature in the coming games, but I can say with certainty that after the international break he will be back and he will be back in a good capacity.

“We have missed him, regardless of any results.

“What Jamie stands for as a person as well as a player is imperative, he brings a lot to the team.

“It's been a long time since that game against Elche in pre-season, he's been as frustrated and as down as anyone.

“Now he's outside, however, so he's got a new brightness about him and a smile on his face which is great to see.

“It's an extra boost to have Jamie back, not just for the midfield but for the defence too, since we've been looking at Haks in that centre-half role in light of recent injuries.

“I've said this before, but in the last nine or ten games of last season, Jamie was the first name on the team sheet. He adds a bit of steel in there.

“He doesn't have to be on the pitch every minute of every game but when he's there, he adds another dimension to our play - it's something we felt we missed on Sunday, and other time away from home.”

Matt Taylor

**Reflects on last weekend's defeat...**

“It was painful. Painful during and after, and in the few days which followed on from that really. Everyone was so disappointed.

“There was a range of emotions after the game and beyond that, from sadness to anger, disappointment, the feeling that we'd let ourselves and others down, the fans and the club as well.

“It's such a shame that it happened on our biggest game of the season to date, the one which the fans care most about and we can't hide away from that fact.

“It was quickly then a matter of honesty with the group, honesty with the staff, and reflecting on the game.

“We have to find a way to pick ourselves back up and concentrate on the next game of football.

“Those four or five days between Coventry and Sheffield Wednesday were incredible thanks to the highs of a win and a good performance, but we were then at the other end of the spectrum, experiencing the lowest of the lows because of the way we went about our business on Sunday.”

