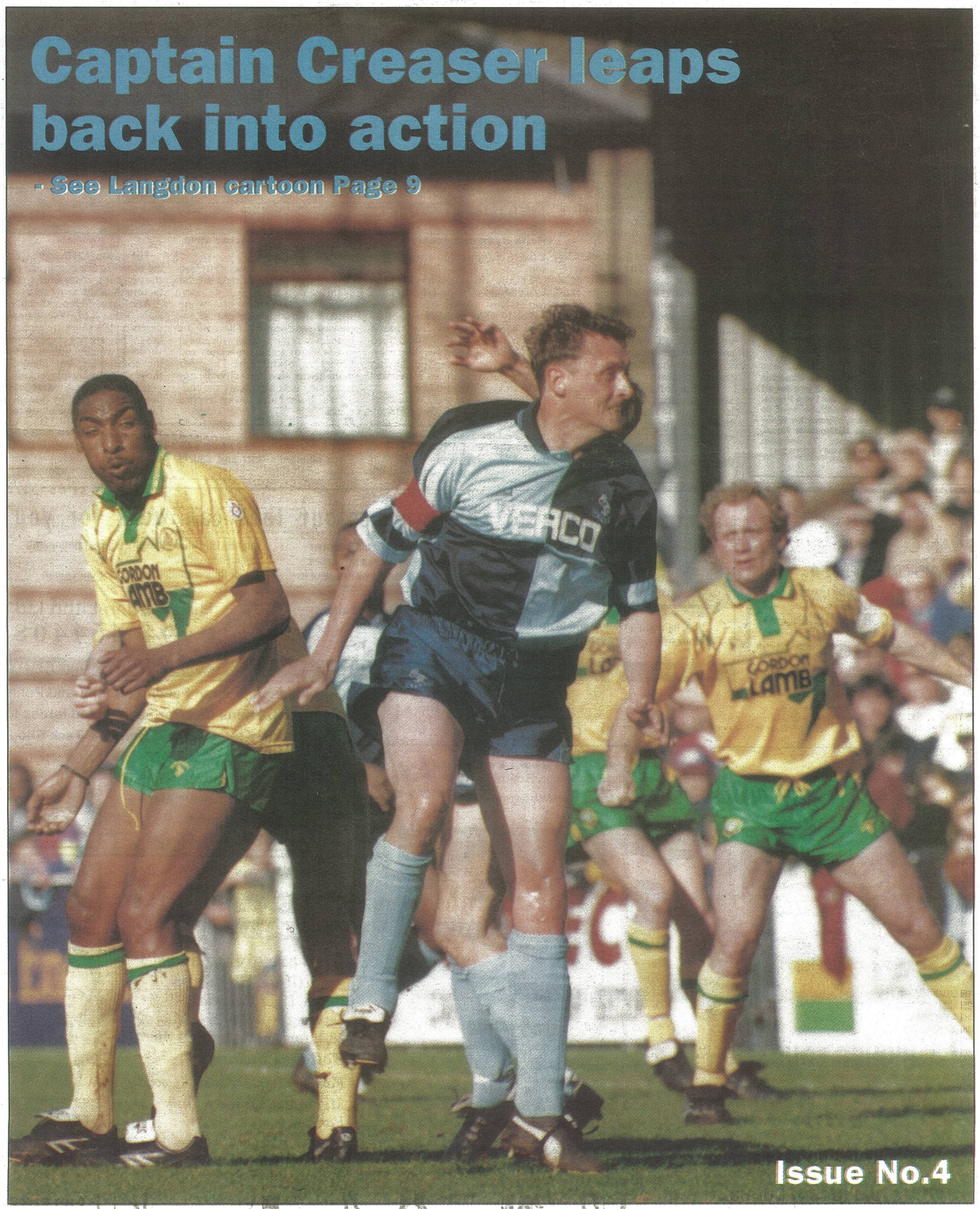
The BLUES NEWS
The official newspaper of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club

Captain Creaser leaps back into action

- See Langdon cartoon Page 9



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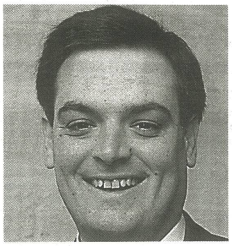
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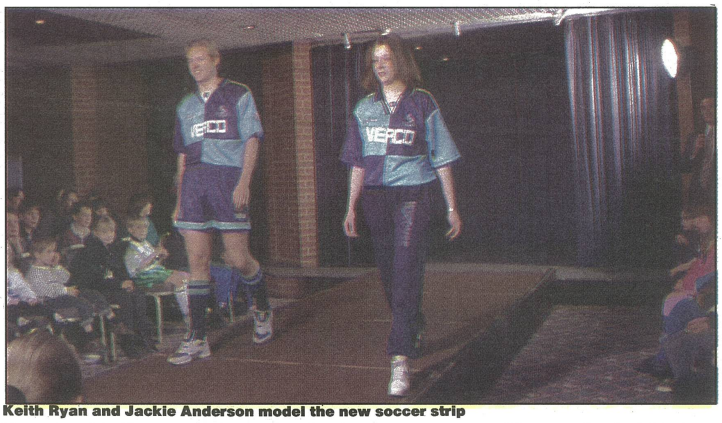
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It's the Blues strip show



By Mark Austin
Sales and marketing Manager



Keith Ryan and Jackie Anderson model the new soccer strip

IT is common practice nowadays for football clubs to bring out several new strips each year to maximise the profits in their club shops.

Unlike the majority of football clubs, Wycombe Wanderers is an organisation run for the benefit of its supporters.

All the directors are elected by the shareholders. To be a £1 shareholder you have to have been a season ticket holder for three consecutive seasons.

The directors of Wycombe Wanderers work for the club on a voluntary basis. They therefore work solely for the benefit of the club. This means that the supporters' interests are always considered first.

The directors have a sensible policy with regards replica kits. Firstly, kits have to last for two seasons, thereby balancing the need to generate revenue for the club against the financial well being of its supporters.

Secondly, no more than two new kits are introduced in any one season.

Thirdly, the board has kept the basic design of the quartered shirt for at least six seasons now, so anybody who genuinely cannot afford a new shirt, at least has a similar one, although the Oxford and Cambridge Blues slightly vary.

It is easy to keep putting up prices, but Wycombe Wanderers want to keep prices down.

Having opened our 'Wanderers in Town' shop in the Octagon Shopping Centre, the club has also increased the availability of replica kit to the general public, as well launched a new range of fashionwear based around the Wycombe colours.

The new replica away shirt will cost anyone the same next season as this season.

The existing green and white striped shirt will also not be increased next season. The cost for both away replica shirts will remain at £24.99 for a children's shirt and £29.99 for an adult shirt. The other main items that the club is not increasing next season are the children's home and away replica socks.

These will still only cost £5.99 per pair. The new home replica shirt is only going up £1 to £25.99 for a children's shirt and £30.99 for an adult shirt.

The reason that the club is charging more for the new home replica shirt is that it costs more to manufacture than the away shirts.

Another difference from other clubs is that ALL Wycombe Wanderers replica shirts are replica replicas. They are not cheaper printed versions, which many other sporting clubs offer, but identical to those worn by the players.

If you want to see next season's home strip worn by the players for yourselves, come along tomorrow (Saturday April 23) to Adams Park, when the whole team will play against Scunthorpe United in the new strip, where you can also see the new shorts and socks.

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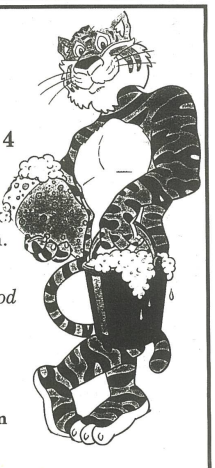
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Martin shields his eyes from the glare of another yellow card

Is that another yellow card I see before me?

SIDE VIEW
by Martin O'Neill

I AM writing these notes on the Monday morning following the Professional Footballers' Association Annual Dinner.

I was absolutely delighted to learn that three of our players, Jason Cousins, Terry Evans and Steve Guppy were voted, by their fellow professionals, onto the Third Division Team of The Year.

A fitting tribute to their efforts in making this football club successful. Perhaps all those people who wrote to me demanding the sacking of Jason after his challenge on the Doncaster left winger may be quietly pleased that I didn't take their advice. (Actually there were only seven letters and all of them came from Jason's mother anyway!).

Steve Guppy was just pleased that the voting had been cast before we played Rochdale at Spotland on Easter Monday. My daughter played better than him and she wasn't there!

I watched the Manchester United v Oldham Athletic FA Cup semi-final at Wembley with very keen interest. It was almost pleasing to see a lot of empty spaces at the grand old stadium, akin to an FA Trophy Final which doesn't involve Wycombe Wanderers.

The FA claimed that Wembley was initially chosen so that everyone who wished to see the game would have an opportunity to do so. As it turned out neither Manchester United nor Oldham were able to sell their allocation because the idea of a day out at Wembley for a semi-final wasn't every supporter's cup of tea especially when you know the cost of a cup of tea at Wembley.

I wonder now that Manchester United won the replay, will the FA give them the 44,000 tickets (average home gate this season) their supporters will obviously demand to be able to see the game. Somehow I doubt it!

I just hope that in the future the FA decide to pack in the idea of playing the semi-finals of the biggest knockout tournament in the world at Wembley, which in my own simple estimation has already been somewhat demeaned by having a maximum two games (and then penalties) to decide any given tie.

Just like the World Cup, nowadays you can actually win the tournament without winning a game, if you see what I mean. Good job I'm the Irish one around here!

I was equally interested in the performance of the referee, Mr Don, who gave less than an impressive display at Adams Park when we played Torquay United recently.

That day he managed to book nine players during the course of the game which, incidentally, contained 17 less free kicks than the foul ridden semi-final at Wembley where Mr Don proceeded to book ... well no-one at all in the normal 90 minutes.

Extra time saw a few yellow cards brandished aloft but certainly not the nine cards he semaphorically waved to us that day.

Perhaps Premier League players don't commit the same type of fouls that Third Division players do, or perhaps the interpretation of the rules changes somewhat depending on which league one happens to be in control of.

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4 THE BLUES NEWS

Frankie comes to Wycombe

PROFILE of PAUL FRANKLIN
By Alan Parry

WHEN you begin your career in professional football by having to mark Kenny Dalglish, things can only get easier. But Wycombe Wanderers' coach Paul Franklin has spent a lifetime being thrown in at the deep end and he's always come to the surface with a smile on his face.

'Frankie' as he's known to everyone at Adams Park is a far cry from the public image of Essex Man, even though he was born and bred east of London in West Ham territory. His football skills brought him to the attention of Watford, a club then emerging from Third Division obscurity under the 'dream team' of manager, Graham Taylor and chairman, Elton John.

Under the watchful eye of youth team coach, Tom Walley, the young Franklin made rapid progress through the ranks at Watford and gained his first honour while still a teenager.

He starred in the Watford side which won the FA Youth Cup, beating Manchester United in the final. United's team included fledgling stars like Mark Hughes, Norman Whiteside and Clayton Blackmore and Frankie's task was to keep tabs on Hughes. It was not to be the last time he'd be landed with an unenviable job!

It was a fabulous era at Vicarage Road as Watford stormed straight through two divisions, gaining promotion to the old First Division for the first time in their history.

With a megastar chairman and a high profile young manager, Watford took the football elite by storm in their inaugural season in the top of 1982/83, eventually finishing runners-up to the men from Anfield.

On the very last day of that season, with the title already decided, Graham Taylor gave a first team debut to a young defender who'd been performing brilliantly in the reserves.

And so it was then the name 'P Franklin' was written onto the Watford teamsheet for the first time. The opponents at Vicarage Road were the champions themselves and Franklin's job was to mark Kenny Dalglish!

Says Frankie: "It goes without saying that I found Dalglish a real handful, but what defender didn't?

"We actually won the game 2-1 with Luther Blissett scoring the winner. The attendance was over 27,000 and I enjoyed every minute."

The following season, Frankie gained a regular first team place as Watford continued their success, this time in the FA Cup. They reached the quarterfinals with Frankie playing in every round before disaster struck. Although Watford beat Birmingham City to win a place in the semi-finals, Frankie suffered a serious injury.



Paul Franklin: 'I feel privileged to be with the club'

He takes up the story: "I badly twisted my knee in the game and it was diagnosed as a cartilage injury. I had an operation straight away and had to sit out the rest of the season as the team went all the way to Wembley. It was a real sickener. We lost the final against Everton and my knee was very slow to recover. It was 18 months before I got back to playing again and ironically my first game back was against Birmingham!"

Sadly, Frankie's return was to be shortlived as his knee continued to cause problems. He made only seven more appearances for Watford before being loaned out to Shrewsbury and Swindon. Eventually, he was sold to Reading, then in the old Third Division under the management of Ian Branfoot.

"The knee never really recovered", says Frankie. "In all I had five operations on it at Watford and another two in my time at Reading. I still managed to make a few appearances for Reading in the season they reached Wembley in the old Simod Cup. Would you believe, I was involved in every round, but then the manager left me out for the Final!"

Finally, at the cruelly young age of 26, Frankie was advised to pack in professional football. "It was a very hard decision to take, but the knee just couldn't stand up to it any more.

"My last game in pro football was for Reading against Chesterfield and it could hardly have been more significant. Whoever lost the game would be relegated to the fourth division, as it was then. Reading won and there were great celebrations, but that was the end for me."

Frankie got himself a job as a sales rep and accepted an invitation from Jim Kelman to sign a part-time contract with Wycombe Wanderers.

"That was the beginning of the season 1989-1990 and I managed around 20 games for Wycombe in the Conference, but the knee was still a problem. In February of that season, Jim Kelman resigned and Martin O'Neill took over as manager. I think I was the only face in the dressing room that Martin recognised, so we struck an understanding straight away."

At the start of the following season Frankie became first team coach and the boots were put away for the last time. "I'd done a bit of work coaching youngsters at Watford and I'd been on various FA courses, but I'd never worked with senior players before."

The partnership with Manager O'Neill flourished as Wycombe's success story began to take shape.

The coach's quiet but forceful style worked perfectly alongside the Irishman's more demonstrative approach. "Martin and I talk about all aspects of the team and I like to think that he has a healthy respect for my opinions," says Frankie.

Last summer, the opportunity arose for him to become full-time at the club, and Frankie jumped at the chance. "I'd grafted my way up to the position of sales manager with Universal Office Suppliers. It was a good job, decent money and excellent employers but I couldn't wait to get back to the pro game again. Like many of our players who went full time, I've effectively taken a drop in earnings, but I've no regrets. I love my job and it's been a marvellous season. The players have performed brilliantly."

Frankie is responsible for training and coaching the first team squad and with the amount of banter that goes on between footballers, it's a job which demands a thick skin.

"I get a fair amount of stick from the lads, especially over my refereeing decisions in the five-a-sides but the players here are excellent. I think what they've achieved this season is absolutely 'monumental' to borrow one of Martin's favourite words.

"I feel privileged to be with the club which is so obviously going places. Having to stop playing at the age of 26 was a very bitter blow, but coming to Wycombe Wanderers has transformed my life."

As an occasional intruder on Frankie's training sessions at Holmer Green FC, I can confirm that the club certainly made a good appointment. Still only 30, he is one of the youngest coaches in the pro game and has a good rapport with the players, but he also has their respect. Believe me, it is no easy job to keep the attention of 20-odd footballers on a freezing, wet Monday morning.

Frankie is at his best on the training pitch surrounded by cones, bibs, players and mud but get him in the bar with a Hamlet and a half of lager, and he's an amusing story teller. I also discovered on the recent break in Portugal that he's a good golfer and a bad liar. He told me that he'd never played the game before, then promptly thrashed everyone he took on.

I'm not sure that he'll ever make it to Hollywood, but since the day the Bucks Free Press announced: "Frankie goes to Wycombe", the club has never looked back.

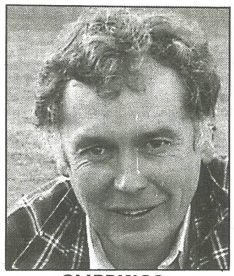
The work starts as the season ends

IT is normally around this time of year when people say to me 'I bet you will be glad when the season's over and you can have a bit of a rest'. I know what they mean but it does not quite work out that way.

Hopefully, and if all goes to plan on the playing side, the boys will finish in the top three and we will begin work on installing the new irrigation system on Tuesday May 10.

The laying of pipes and connecting the pop-up heads will take three days. New tanks, pumps and pipe work in the pipe house will have been completed prior to this and it will just require joining up.

On the following Friday, Saturday, Sunday the pitch renovations will begin, again work will take three days. This year we will dig out the problem area, close to the centre circle on the main strand side to a depth of 8ins and refill with a new sandsoil mix.


CLIPPINGS
by Jim Gardner

Levels will be corrected and the whole of the pitch will have a deep spiking using a hollow tine. Preseed fertiliser will be spread and 12 bags of grass seed used to cover the pitch which will be spread and brushed into the hollow tine holes.

Ten days should see the new seeds becoming established and ten to 14 days' later, I should be carrying out the first cut with the mower set high.

During the summer, the two most important jobs are making sure the irrigation is supplying the correct amount of water and keeping the grass trimmed to encourage the grass to side shoot and fill in quickly.

I will be cutting every other day most of the summer. Because of this, I have to fertilise every 56 weeks to replace the nutrients which are removed by boxing off the clippings.

A hundred tons of sand will be used for the levels and 120 tons to replace that which has been dug out of the poor area.

If the worst comes to the worst and we are involved in the play-offs, I will lose just over one week as the play-off dates are the 15th and 18th.

This will cut recovery time to around ten weeks which is not that long, but it's all the time we have so I will need to make the most of it.

It will mean just the odd day off, hopefully, to watch Middlesex or England win a few cricket matches – ever the optimist.

The above works will cost a good deal of money which is further proof, if you needed it, that the Wycombe board are progressive and there are further improvements planned for the closed season and I am pleased to say that the introduction of fences will not be included.

Let's get there fair and square

PLAY-OFFS LOTTERY
by Adrian Wood

WYCOMBE Wanderers to finish on May 7th in 4th position with 73 points, Chesterfield (or Bury, for that matter any other club) to finish in 7th position with 64 points but finally it's that side finishing with nine points less than ourselves who get promotion to Division 2

Due to priority deadlines, I'm writing this piece when there's still six league games to play. Hopefully, I'm not being prophetic but this illustrates what in my opinion is the ridiculously unfair situation which exists in our national game due to the play-offs procedure, introduced a few years ago.

Yes, OK, all 22 clubs participating in Division 3 know the rules from the outset – namely that the top three clubs achieve automatic promotion but the next four sides compete in an end of term knock-out competition, culminating in a Wembley 'Final' with the winners over the 90 minutes (plus of course extra time, if needed) on that late Spring afternoon qualifying for the final promotion spot.

This, notwithstanding the fact that they may have finished the 42-game league campaign several positions/ points lower than a side, or sides who are condemned to spend another season in the Football League's basement.

The prime example of this anomaly occurred at the end of last season, not in Division 3, but in Division 1.

In a division of 24 sides, only two are automatically promoted to the hallowed echelons of the Premier League with those finishing between 3rd and 6th entering the play-offs to decide on the third fortunate side.

Newcastle finished worthy champions. Eight points behind came West Ham and Portsmouth. The East Londoners, however, finished as runners-up because they had scored all of one goal more than hapless Pompey.

In the play-offs Portsmouth were to face 7th placed Leicester City who had finished with 76 points – 12 less (or four victories fewer) than Jim Smith's men. The rest is well known. Leicester triumphed 3-2 in the two-legged 'semi-final', but were in turn defeated at Wembley by Swindon Town who became the third promoted side. Over the 46-game league campaign, Swindon had also finished 12 points behind Portsmouth. Is this all fair?

In Division Three last season, things did manage to work out fairly. York City finished 4th and in the two-legged semi-final scraped through 1-0 against 7th placed Bury who had finished 12 points behind them in the league.

Thence to Wembley where thanks to a penalty shootout they squeezed past 6th placed Crewe Alexandra to take up their rightful position in Division 2.

One wonders what tensions and pressures their players/ officials and supporters must have felt during those extra three fixtures after what was already a long and exhausting season.

Why then do we have the play-offs? Basically the answer is twofold. Firstly, they bring in money, but one must remember that the Wembley receipts are shared between all the division's clubs and not just between the two participating clubs.

The club's home 'semi-final' game will invariably produce a near capacity attendance, and the ambitious marketing manager will be quick to exploit a Wembley appearance with all the associated memorabilia flags, T shirts, scarves etc. This leads me to the second pro play-off argument – the lure of a Wembley appearance.

Yes, a day out at the hallowed towers is a marvellous experience for everyone connected with a football club and here at Wycombe we've been spoilt with two appearances in the last three years. For the vast majority of the clubs in the Football League, the divisional play-offs will be their only realistic chance of a Wembley appearance.

While accepting the above, I personally will never become convinced that the play-offs are the correct way of determining such a vital issue. Promotion should be the reward for performances over the whole league campaign, and not determined by a knockout competition.

The season is already too long and players who are tired both physically and mentally do not want it extended by a further three weeks.

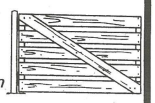
OK if at the end of the day we finish in 5th, 6th or 7th positions, we triumph at Wembley and achieve promotion 'through the back door', it will be tremendous but how they feel at those clubs who have achieved more over the league campaign but who have missed out at the final hurdle?

I only hope we will finish in the top three and avoid all the possible heartaches involved in the play-offs.

'I only hope that we will finish in the top three and avoid all the possible heartaches involved in the play-offs'

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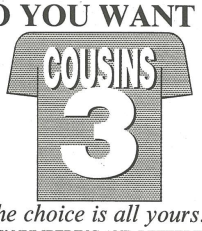

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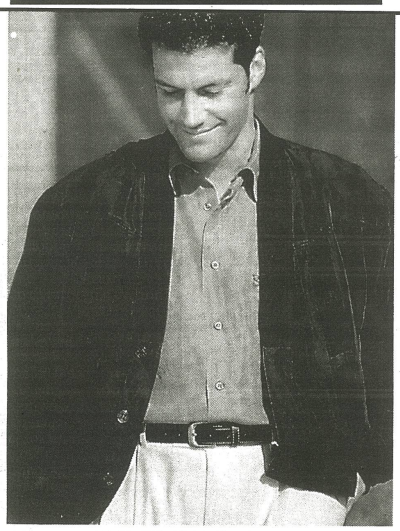
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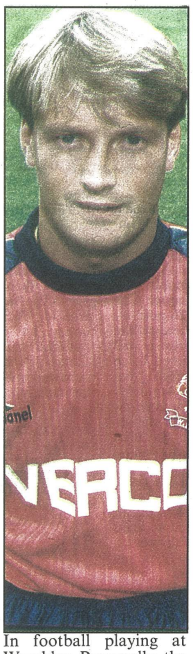
6 THE BLUES NEWS

PLAYER PROFILE
Paul Hyde
Personal details

Name: Paul David Hyde
Date of birth: 7th of April, 1963
School: Barhill, Hayes
Height: 6ft 1in
Weight: 15st
Home: Ruislip
Car: Ford Mondeo (sponsored by Thrifty Car Rental High Wycombe)
Married: To Suzanne
Brothers: Mark & Craig
Children: James, Christopher and Emily
Dad's job: Printer
Family pets: Cocker Spaniel
Nickname at club: Bam Bam or Hydie

Questions & answers

Who do you share a room with on away trips?
Mostly Hakan
Does he have any annoying habits?
He watches TV late at night
What was your ambition as a child?
To be successful
What is your ambition now?
To go as high in League Football as possible
Who was your boyhood hero?
Peter Bonetti
What has been your biggest thrill in life?



In football playing at Wembley. Personally, the birth of my three children
What has been your biggest disappointment in life?
Not playing professional football at an early age
What is your saddest moment in football?
Losing out to Colchester
Which present-day footballer do you admire most?
Peter Beardsley
Who is the greatest player there has ever been?
Maradonna and George Best
Who is the toughest opponent you have faced?
None as yet
Do you have any superstitions before a game?
I always touch the match ball
Which manager has been the biggest influence on your career?
Martin O'Neill
What job would you be doing if you hadn't made it as a footballer?
A sales rep within the print trade
What was your most embarrassing moment in football?
You all know this one, Colchester at home when we lost 2-1. Need I say more?
Which team did you support as a boy?
Chelsea
What is your favourite ground?
Wembley
What other sports and hobbies do you enjoy?
Table tennis and squash.
Away from football, who is your favourite sportsman?
Ian Botham
What is your most prized possession
My FA Trophy & Conference Winners Medals together with the Supporters Player of the Year award
Is there a sporting dream you would have liked to have achieved in another sport?
I would like to have been the World Chess Champion
What really annoys you in football?
Inconsistent referees.
What are your pet hates outside football?
Slow drivers

Favourites

TV Programme: Only Fools & Horses and The Detectives
Pop star/group: George Michael and Rod Stewart
Food: Peking
Drink: Orange
Film: Big
Film stars: Tom Hanks, Tom Cruise and Sharon Stone
Holiday resort: Florida
TV stars: David Jason
Comedian: Freddie Star
Soap: Home & Away, Neighbours and Eastenders
Soap characters: Adam, Brad and Tricky Dicky

Compiled by Steve Hayes

PLAYER PROFILE
Keith Ryan
Personal details

Name: Keith James Ryan.
Date of birth: 25th of June, 1970
School: Wembley High and Burnham Secondary School.
Height: 5ft 11.
Weight: 12st 7lb.
Home: The Chequers, London Road, Amersham.
Car: BMW.
Brothers & sisters: 2 Brothers and 3 sisters.
Dad's job: Publican (The Chequers, Amersham).
Family pets: No (I once owned a blue budgie called Max).
Nickname at club: Rhino.

Questions & answers

Who do you share a room with on away trips?
Simon Stapleton.
Does he have any annoying habits?
None that I can mention.
What was your ambition as a child?
To be a professional footballer.
What is your ambition now?
To play for Arsenal.
Who was your boyhood hero?
Liam Brady.
What has been your biggest thrill in life?
To play at Wembley.
What has been your biggest disappointment in life?
Missing a season through Glandular Fever.

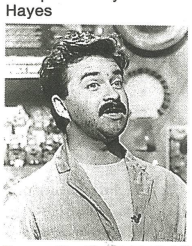


Which present day footballer do you admire most?
Gazza.
Who is the greatest player there has ever been?
Pele.
Who has been the greatest influence on your career?
My family.
Who is the toughest opponent you have faced?
Ray Wilkins.
Do you have any superstitions before a game?
I am not superstitious at all, my training number is 13.
Which manager has been the biggest influence on your career?
Martin O'Neill.
What job would you be doing if you had not made it as a footballer?
A carpet fitter.
What is the funniest moment you have seen on a football pitch?
A friend knocked out his Grandmother with a shot in a youth game.
What was your most embarrassing moment in football?
Modelling the new kit.
What is the oddest piece of training you have had to do?
Skipping races.
Which team did you support as a boy?
Arsenal.
What is your favourite ground?
Highbury.
What other sports and hobbies do you enjoy?
Golf and listening to music.
Do you have any unusual food that improves your game?
Pasta, poached eggs and orange juice.
Away from football, who is your favourite sportsman?
Daly Thompson.
What is your most prized possession?
My FA Trophy and Conference Winners Medals.
Do you play any musical instruments?
I played the trumpet at school.
What really annoys you in football?
Losing.
What are your pet hates outside football?
Traffic jams.

Favourites

TV Programme: Only Fools & Horses.
Pop star/group: The Brand New Heavies.
Food: Anything but fruit.
Drink: Tea, orange juice & Murphys.
Film: Die Hard and Weird Science.
Film stars: Sharon Stone and Michelle Pfeiffer.
Holiday resort: Anywhere hot.
TV stars: Rowan Atkinson.
Comedian: Harry Enfield.
LP: The Brand New Heavies.
City: London.
Soap: Eastenders.
Soap characters: Ricky Butcher.

Compiled by Steve Hayes



Favourite: Harry Enfield

THE BLUES NEWS 7

We love it when everything hots up

ON THE SIDELINES
by Terry Evans

SINCE I last put pen to paper for this column, the squad has been on a short trip to Portugal. The Chairman and some of the Directors were with us and you may remember that Alan Parry wrote about the break in a recent programme.

We were set a target before Christmas that if we reached a certain number of points from so many games we would all go away. Any supporters who were at the home game with Mansfield may have seen some unusual jubilation after we won. Hopefully the reason for that is now clear.

We stayed in a first class hotel situated on a championship golf course, we did train early in the morning or late at night when the temperature was lower than the normal seventy degrees.

Everyone played golf with the exception of myself who spent a great amount of my time on the treatment table. This did not stop me going on a few excursions to the local casino with the regular punters (Dave, Jason and Timmy) but predictably we all lost our shirts.

The trip was excellent for morale and team building and even though some of the players had trouble mastering knives and forks at dinner, their general behaviour and attitude were a great credit to the club.

I feel that the generosity of the club has been repaid by the 3-0 result at Doncaster and the points we have picked up in the game since.

At the time of writing, we had just drawn 2-2 away at Rochdale and hopefully when you read this we will be even closer to our target of promotion.

The Manchester City Chairman has offered all his squad players a £25,000 car each if they stay in the Premiership, a nice thought but somehow I don't think Ivor will be following suit at Wycombe but even if he did, it would possibly not make the players try any harder than they already are.

Because of my previous injuries, I have never been a good spectator but since sitting on the bench with the Gaffa, my attitude has changed greatly. I feel involved and hope that any contribution I can give will help us in the most important games in the club's history.

I would like to make a special mention for two unsung heroes of the side, they are Keith Ryan and Dave Carroll.

Keith has been brilliant and a lot of his work seems to have gone unnoticed by the crowd. Personally I am surprised that he has not won more man of the match awards or the player of the month award.

Dave has got a great engine and seems capable of running all day. He covers an immense amount of ground and gets back to double up on the left wing which is very important to our defence.

The new lads that were signed near to or on the deadline are all forwards and not surprisingly I have had the displeasure of playing against them all over the years.

The reason I say displeasure is because I can guarantee that they are all a handful in their own right and us defenders are not keen on playing against hungry strikers. Importantly, it also shows the club's commitment and true desire to see Wycombe play at an even higher level.

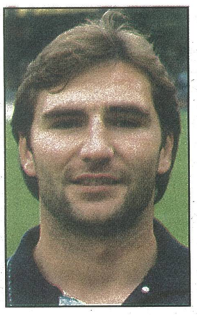
My treatment is coming on very well and Mr Channon and Dave Jones are both very pleased with my progress. Even though I have a great amount of work ahead of me in the summer, I am confident of being fully fit for the new season in August and we all hope this will be in the Second Division.

I would also like to mention something that must be clear to many of the people that come to watch Wycombe which is that we have continued to out attend every team at home in the Third Division. If you regularly look at the attendances in the Second Division you will notice that, with a few exceptions, our crowds are larger than all of them as well.

This is a real credit to you the supporters and on behalf of the players and myself, I would like to thank you for your continued support and I only hope that your faith in us is repaid now we are at the end of the season

'I would like to mention two unsung heroes'

PLAYER PROFILE
Terry Evans
Personal details



Full name: Terry Evans
Date of birth: 12th of April 1965 : Born in London
School: Queensmead, Ruislip
Height: 6ft 5in
Weight: 15st 7lb
Home: Ruislip
Car: Ford Mondeo Estate
Brothers & sisters: Karen is a nurse at Mount Vernon Hospital, Northwood
Dad's job: Printer at the Daily Mail
Family pets: Two German Shepherds, Satan & Jed
Nickname at club: Big Tel

Questions & answers

Who do you share a room with on away trips?
Jason Cousins.
Does he have any annoying habits?
Always pinching my toothpaste.
What was your ambition as a child?
To be a professional footballer.
What is your ambition now?
To help Wycombe all the way to the Premier League.
Who was your boyhood hero?
Rodney Marsh.

What has been your biggest thrill in life?
Winning the 3rd Division championship and being selected for the PFA team in the same season.
What has been your biggest disappointment in life?
Having two very serious injuries which I feel held back my career.
What are your saddest moments in football?
The Hillsborough and Bradford disasters.
Which present-day footballer do you admire most?
Paul McGrath.
Who is the greatest player there has ever been?
Terry Hurlock.
Who has been the greatest influence on your career?
My parents, my father worked nights and got up after only a couple of hours sleep to take me to football for many years.
Who is the toughest opponent you have faced?
All of them.
Do you have any superstitions before a game?
I never wear anything green or the number 13 shirt.
Which manager has been the biggest influence on your career?
Steve Perryman.
What job would you be doing if you hadn't made it as a footballer?
I was a printer before turing pro.
Away from football, what has been your greatest sporting achievement?
I was the schools district high jump champion.
What is the funniest moment you have seen on a football pitch?
Playing for Hillingdon in an F.A.Cup match (which we lost) our keeper Jeff Fanner threw the ball into his own net.
What was your most embarrassing moment in football?
It was the last game of the season at Brentford against Swansea, all my family and friends had come to see me receive the Player of the Year Award from the programme, the supporters and the junior supporters. I was sent off after five minutes for violent conduct.
What is the oddest piece of training you have had to do?
When I used to take the warm ups at Brentford I got the lads to wrestle each other.
Which team did you support as a boy?
QPR.
What is your favourite ground?
Anfield.
What other sports and hobbies do you enjoy?
Boxing.
Do you eat any unusual foods to improve your game?
Pasta.
Away from football, who is your favourite sportsman?
Brian Moore (Harlequins), a total winner who will never give anything less than 100 per cent.
What is your most prized possession?
My late nan's wedding ring and my 3rd Division Championship Medal.
Do you play any musical instruments?
I've had a go at playing the drums.
Is there a sporting dream you would have liked to have achieved in another sport?
Boxing. Heavyweight Champion of the World, The Great White Hope.
What really annoys you in football?
Players diving.
What are your pet hates outside football?
Slow barmen.

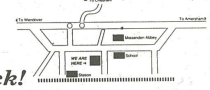
Favourites

TV programme: Minder and Only Fools & Horses
Pop star/group: Guns and Roses and Rod Stewart
Food: Pie Mash and Licker, a cockney dinner made with parsley sauce and eel stock
Drink: Guinness
Film: McVicar and The Long Good Friday
Film stars: Michael Caine, Bob Hoskins and Kim Basinger
Holiday resort: Crete
TV stars: George Cole and David Jason
Comedian: Michael Barrymore
LP: Appetite for Destruction (Guns & Roses)
City: London
Soap: Eastenders
Soap character: Nick Cotton

Compiled by Steve Hayes

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SUPPORTER'S WIFE'S VIEW
by Jan Clark

I SUPPOSE I must have 'Blue' blood in my veins. At the turn of the century, my great grandfather wore the infamous quartered shirt, with his daughter keeping 'in with the club' by serving tea to the players and officials at half-time and full-time at good ol' Loakes Park.

My late father, in his earlier years, had watched many a game, together with taking my mother to Wycombe's first trip to Wembley in 1957 in the Amateur Cup against Bishop Auckland.

My husband, then fiance, visited me in High Wycombe six years ago and started slinking off to Loakes Park to begin the Blues obsession and has since joined the commercial office on matchdays, when shifts permit (guess which gets priority?).

Meanwhile, I now sit watching my four-year-old son proudly strutting about in his new Wycombe strip having just eaten dinner off his Wycombe dinner mat, while his baby sister sleeps upstairs in her cot with her Wanderers babygro and booties hanging close by.

Countless television programmes have been drowned out by verbal replays of the whole 90 minutes; with arms waving and fingers pointing to the 18-yard line of the ceiling: "What we'd do if ...If only he'd put Barrie in ...What we must do in the next three home games is ...".

Endless telephone calls to and from the mate round the corner: "Have you earned enough Brownie points to go to Rochdale? Did you put those shelves up you promised? She might have let you go then...".

The astronomical phone bill showing £100 worth of calls to the Blues Line, which have since been barred, thus stopping the gleeful opportunity for the 'mate round the corner' to ring up and say: "I bet he hasn't heard yet, but blah, blah, blah, has just been signed for X amount," and the retaliation always is: "Oh him, yeah, I knew about that before they went to Portugal," once again deflating the poor ol' mate because he believed that there might, just might, have been something he didn't know.

Matchday. How many of you Blues Widows have to keep to a superstitious routine, same breakfast, shower not bath, same aftershave, specific pair of socks and underpants, even to the point of sewing thread in them to distinguish them against the others as being the 'lucky pair' to ensure they are washed and ready on matchdays to avoid frantic cries of "where's me socks?, where's me pants"?

The dilemma at the beginning of the season of deciding what away kit to use once arriving in the Third Division, leaving the worn-out faithful jeans and socks etc, from Conference and Trophy days fondly back in the wardrobe.

Incidentally, having just waved him off to the Rochdale away game, I noticed last season's jumper had appeared. If Wycombe lose, is it down to that jumper? Thankfully, we settled for a draw.

The changes in combinations of socks and t-shirts to away matches until totally satisfied the winning combination will continue to be lucky for the club!

The home matchday journey to Adams Park can be stressful. In a desperate attempt to find the 'other mag-

We're game for a laugh at an all-ticket tussle



Just the ticket: Sue, right, Kathy, left, and Diane keep smiling

AN ALL TICKET GAME
by Sue Keen

THE cry goes out in the office, it's to be an all-ticket game. Oh, what fun! This means we spend a couple of hours in deep discussion sorting out the most inconvenient way to sell the tickets, inconvenient for the customer that is.

Now let's see. If we sell them in the daytime most people are at work so they will not be able to come and buy them. If we sell them on Sunday morning, a lot of children will be playing football so they will not be able to come and buy them. However, if we sell them on a Saturday morning when the team plays away, the travelling fans won't be able to come and buy.

This is getting very interesting. At this rate, we will have now managed to upset most of the supporters by choosing the most difficult times of sale. But never mind, let's put the notices out and the press release in the local paper and sit back and wait for the complaints and moans.

Oh, and the heartbreaking stories as to why Mr Smith and Mr Jones cannot get to the ground: dog's ill and cannot be left; car broken down; work long hours and can't possibly get to the ground at any of the opening times. It's amazing how many people work 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Shall we sell them on credit card, which would make it very easy? Oh no, don't think so, anyway we can only do credit card bookings of ten or more and one booking will only be eight. so that cuts out that option.

One-for-one? If I come down to the ground, can I have a ticket for me and my mate. Sorry, one-for-one. So my mate has to come down as well? Yes, afraid so. I'm a regular supporter, you don't expect me to queue? I'm a regular supporter who has watched the Blues for over 50 years.

With so many regulars, it's surprising the gates at Loakes Park were so small during recent years there. The longest-serving supporters are much too numerous to mention by name, but after giving you all their playing and watching history, they proceed to inquire the ticket prices to which we reply usual prices. Oh, and what are they?

The day of sale duly arrives, the queue starts forming about 7 o'clock, for what is sometimes a 10 o'clock starting time.

Some have their flasks of coffee and soup to keep them warm. If Tony the banqueting manager is feeling particularly enterprising, he will be up and down the car park with the coffee and tea trolley, but this is not to be guaranteed upon, so it's always advisable to come well-prepared.

All joking aside, we hate the all-ticket games as much as the supporters and, although you think we only try and make things difficult for you, we do try our best to accommodate you if you live near or far.

But nobody is perfect and no one system will suit everyone. Perhaps we could do things differently, but please remember, we have to deal with the situation as it arises, usually with only a short time to spare, and we do try to look at all the options with an open mind.

be a Blues 'widow'



pie' as only one dared to fly across the windscreen, with us cringing in the car waiting to hit the kerb, or other vehicle.

Being on constant call by the phone on the rare day he is not at the match and is at work. Having to know exactly who scored, what time, what position and who else is winning in the division. Being dragged along to a preseason friendly, sitting on a hardseat while nine-and-a-half months pregnant, just in case 'I started' during match and couldn't reach him. Feeling afterwards that I could have laid down on the turf and produced there and then, but planning the birth in the end not to coincide with a game.

And finally, Wembley, and the imminent danger of a third visit this year. Twice, I lost sight of my lounge carpet for seating plans and blocks of tickets, spending hours late into the night on where to put Mr S by an aisle, not putting Mr A behind the goal etc., folding my seven-month-pregnant stomach under while reaching for Block 161 by the television.

Just remember, behind every successful football team are a bunch of good, strong, tolerant women who are happy to lose their men to a stressful 90 minutes and we're not just talking about players wives/ girlfriends.

Langdon's look at the Blues



Glyn Creaser: Head and shoulders above the rest

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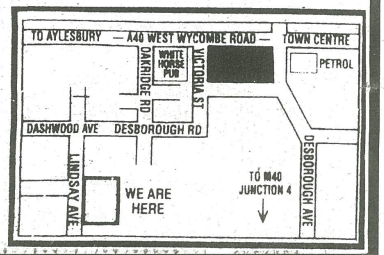


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Come on Iino, give us the ball. Chesterfield's Lee Rogers tries it on

What we need is more passion

SUPPORTER'S VIEW
by Stephen Lee

SADLY, editorial deadlines being what they are, two matches will be played between me writing this and you reading it. So, with each game becoming increasingly more important, all we can do is get right behind the team for those three incredibly tough final fixtures. To achieve that we need more PASSION!

Just look at our position. In only our first season in the Football League we are challenging strongly for automatic promotion, and even have a chance of our second championship in a row. Everyone laughed at the ridiculous odds quoted at the beginning of the season. Perhaps the bookmakers knew something after all!

Equally, it is possible we will miss out on third spot and have to face the play-offs. So our role should be clear – from every corner of the ground, let's keep the noise up and party to the title. Recently, the encouragement at home has improved, but it usually coincides with a stupid refereeing decision.

I hesitate to compare ourselves to those Swansea thugs who came to Wycombe intent on intimidation and trouble, but the rest were certainly passionate!

Their complete belief in the outcome must have affected the players. It reminded me of our own trophy runs in recent seasons, such as our trip to Altrincham as underdogs in 1991, to Sutton last year, and of course both times at Wembley. The size and passion of our support was worth a goal start.

So, while the team challenge for our club's highest-ever honour, promotion to Division Two, let's make our contribution count for a goal start once again. Dust off those Wembley flags, bring out the banners (especially the large quartered one with 'We are the Blue Army' printed on it, because someone swiped it from me at Coventry in September!), blow up those balloons and churn out the ticker tape, then sing until your voice gives in. It'll be worth it.

Back to our travels and Doncaster away is a fixture hardly likely to instil passion in anyone except their financial director, after the strange price increase just before our visit!

It was a beautiful spring day until we stepped onto the terrace. Then the temperature fell by about forty degrees, and a fierce wind blew the length of the pitch right through our bodies.

Someone jokingly suggested that five quick goals would be acceptable, so we could leave the ground and go home warm and happy. Only being 3-0 up at half-time meant we had to continue watching! Singing was impossible with a frozen jaw.

The result against Swansea was devastating. If only that last gasp effort by Langford had gone in, just to see the expression on 2,000 Swansea faces! Hopefully our path to Wembley is well and truly closed for this season, as playing there in a cup tie would be enjoyable, playing for a place in a different division would be unbearable.

Unfortunately, I missed our defeat against Chesterfield. The Darlington match was a great example of the crowd's improved encouragement. Their goalkeeper was an entertainer, as he spent most of the time talking to the Bucks Free Press end, or picking the ball out of the net. If only all our visitors had such a refreshing attitude to the game!

That wish also extends to the referees. Of course, I'm referring to a certain World Cup bound person, who graced us with his presence against Torquay. Although they were a tough physical side, how he found it necessary to book nine players is unbelievable. To cap it all he the had the audacity to play seven odd minutes of injury time, to compensate for his own failings. When he finally finished the game, the ball was actually out of play, waiting for our corner. I thought that if the ball is dead, so is the time.

The referee must be right though, after all he's one of our representatives in America this summer.

He went on to 'perform' at the FA Cup semi-final between Oldham and Manchester United. It seemed he was almost as popular with the crowd and players there, as he was here.

Ironically, up at Rochdale, we benefited from some rather strange refereeing decisions. What is it they say about luck levelling itself out over the course of the season! Well this time, it was over the course of a bank holiday weekend.

Our home game with Rochdale has been postponed twice now, on both occasions within an hour or so of kick-off. So when teletext reported a pitch inspection at 11.30, we stayed in Wycombe waiting for a decision, believing that sinister plans were afoot, and the fates would conspire against us this time.

Thankfully, we were able to set off just before noon. Praise be to Darren for getting us there by 2.50pm.

We even had time to stop once, and get caught up in the usual Birmingham snarl ups. Probably around 600-700 fans made the trip. It was worth it just to 'do a Torquay' and equalise in the last minute. Our noise level was poor really, probably a reflection of the quality of the match, and the typical bank holiday weather of sun/rain/hail/snow and wind.

On to the Walsall game, without Sir Matt, and three vital points. Many of you went to their place on New Year's Day, and without Sir Matt again, we were well and truly stuffed. This time, they took the punishment. What a relief to watch the final few minutes of a match with a two-goal, and then a three-goal cushion. Four points clear of Crewe and looking good for, hopefully at least, third spot!

That brings me to the Crewe match. If you're lucky enough to get one of the 1,200 or so tickets we receive, let's make our final away match of an incredible season into a huge party. I'll bring the booze, you bring the balloons, okay!?

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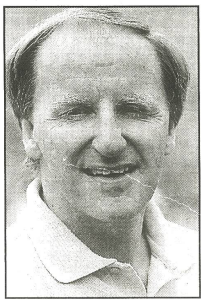
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12 THE BLUES NEWS

Don't stop, we're going up again



By Alan Parry

BY the time you read this, Wycombe Wanderers could be a significant step closer to making a little piece of football history. If results have gone in our favour, we could have guaranteed that the worst thing that can happen in our inaugural season in the Football League is a place in the promotion play offs.

Since automatic promotion from the Vauxhall Conference was introduced seven years ago, no league newcomers have managed to go up at their first attempt. Scarborough, Maidstone and Barnet all came close, but fell agonisingly short of the ultimate achievement.

Lincoln City and our old 'friends' from Colchester couldn't manage it, despite their previous experience of league football, leaving Darlington as the only success story. But they, too, had only just been relegated from the league.

Whatever happens between now and the end of the season, I'd like to place on record my sincere congratulations to the players for all they have achieved. Let's be honest, this season was a step into the unknown for most of them. Winning the Conference title by a comfortable margin was no guarantee that they would easily adapt to the rigours of professional football.

I think we all felt a tinge of apprehension when the season began on that memorable day in Carlisle. The eleven who took the field: Hyde, Cousins, Kerr, Crossley, Horton, Carroll, Ryan, Stapleton, Guppy, Thompson and Scott had only limited experience of League football. Five of them had never played at this level before.

Almost immediately, we had bad luck with injuries – a recurring theme throughout the season. At various stages, we've lost the services of Duncan Horton, Simon Stapleton, Tim Langford, Simon Hutchinson, Tony Hemmings, Terry Evans, Steve Thompson, Lee Turnbull, Simon Garner and Nicky Reid. That's almost a whole team and many of them have been long-term absences. How many other clubs could have coped with that injury list and still kept on course for promotion?

In addition, from November onwards we had to manage without our top goalscorer, Keith Scott, who had notched 15 goals in 23 games before his move to Swindon. No one has been able to overtake Scotty's goals tally even though it's over four months since he left Adams Park. That's how valuable he was.

Despite all these setbacks, and I haven't even mentioned suspensions and the usual crop of awful refereeing decisions against us – the team has performed brilliantly.

In the three major cup competitions – FA Cup, Coca-Cola and Autoglass – our results were outstanding. We played ten ties against second division clubs, winning nine of them, and more than held our own against Premiership opponents, Coventry and Norwich.

In the Endsleigh League, we have been one of the most consistent teams throughout the season. Our worst spell was a run of three successive defeats and we followed that with four straight wins. As I said at the time: some crisis!

I believe that the management and playing staff haven't got the credit they deserve. The fact that most people actually EXPECTED Wycombe to do so well – the bookmakers made us favourites for the championship before a ball had been kicked – only added to the pressure.

And while I'm in this generous mood, a few more pats on the back. Firstly to YOU.

Our supporters have conducted themselves in exemplary fashion both home and away.

Behind the scenes, the people responsible for administration at Adams Park have taken the move into professional football in their stride. Having visited most other clubs in the Third Division, I will say there is no better run club than Wycombe.

I am both proud and delighted that things have gone so well, on and off the field.

It is still possible that we will be starting next season in the Third Division, of course. Personally, I doubt it. I firmly believe that this is the start of a glorious new chapter in this club's history. Wycombe Wanderers have arrived.



Members of the RAFSPA Hawks Freefall Display team land on the pitch on Easter Sunday after jumping 4,000 feet. Three hit the target near the centre circle. The other two were caught in strong winds and landed safely nearby

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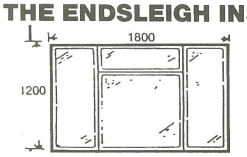
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