

NOT for the first — and no doubt not for the last — time, football fortunes have proved themselves fickle indeed.

Seven days ago, all was right with Wycombe Wanderers' world — 20 goals and eight points from four games is enough to make even the most pessimistic smile.

Suddenly they were brought back to earth with a very rude bump indeed. Maidenhead — Barry Baker and Charlie Gale as much as any — taught the Blues a few tricks on the day. For bumpy pitch or not, they played the tactics most suited to the difficult conditions and deservedly won the F.A. Cup tie 2-0.

At Hayes 48 hours later, Wycombe had every incentive to do well; the team in general to make up for Saturday, and

Fickle fortune—and a financial setback

Keith Searle in particular for obvious reasons.

An improvement on the Maidenhead trip, they were still suffering the psychological setbacks of that sudden failure. That ultimate confidence and drive to their form was missing.

Tomorrow they are 'on tour' a third time, visiting another new Isthmian opposition, Bishops' Stortford. The match will provide a revealing insight into the mental make-up and capacity of the 1971-72 squad.

Another aspect of the Maidenhead defeat is financial. Cup runs, with the luck of attractive draws, can often be rewarding to a club's treasury.

The Slough matches last year for instance, while resulting in disappointment on the field, meant a useful boost to 'gate' takings over the season.

FLEET STREET XI'S CHARITY VISIT

A CHARITY football match organised by the Aylesbury and

District Leukaemia Association takes place at Prestwood on Sunday (3 p.m.)

The Wycombe Combination club, field an XI against a star-studded Fleet Street XI including former World Cup hero George Cohen — now managing Corinthian Casuals — Queens Park Rangers' boss Gordon Jago, and Mexico Olympic gold medallist, David Hemery.

Former Wycombe Wanderer and more recently Ernest Turners man Jimmy Palmer is

searchlight on tomorrow

Goal average keeps Wanderers out on top

CLINGING to their position at the Isthmian summit on goal average alone after the mid-week programme, Wycombe Wanderers travel to Bishop Stortford with the deflating memory of two off-peak displays in the past seven days.

The defeat at Maidenhead and the draw at Hayes belie the startling goal bonanza Wycombe gleaned in recent League fare. The four games prior to that had seen them tally 20 goals — eight split against such "cream" clubs as Enfield and Hitchin.

How fast the Blues' recovery rate is, presents the most likely key to tomorrow's result against a Stortford side showing better form than either of the other two newcomers to the League.

INCONSISTENT

Yet Stortford, managed by former Leyton and until last season Dagenham team boss Ted Hardy, possess a record suggesting inconsistency. That they have ample strength to give Wanderers a rough ride, however, is clear enough.

Half of the Hertfordshire club's squad was playing under Hardy for the "Daggers" in the 1971 Amateur Cup Final.

Wycombe manager Brian Lee faces an intriguing decision when selecting tomorrow's side. Both Chris Austin and Mick

Holifield pushed forward impressive claims for regular recognition with 90 minutes effort at Hayes.

But Julian Lailey, unavailable on Monday, should be back in consideration again for the number three spot, and it must be a toss up as to who gets it.

On Tuesday, Wycombe are home to Oxford City, a match no doubt Holifield will be anxious to play in against his old club.

Referee joins the panel

Bill Cleere, a High Wycombe referee on the Football League list and regularly assisting Wycombe Wanderers on training nights join club manager Brian Lee on Wednesday (September 29) when the second supporters "talk-in" is held at the Loakes Park clubroom (8 p.m.)

The meeting is chaired by 'Free Press' Sports Editor, Mike Whitesman, who time permitting, will endeavour to answer questions relating to the local press.