

United 'SPIES' owe it to Bell BLUES VIEWS

IN drawing Spennymoor United in the second round of the Amateur Cup, Wycombe Wanderers have been thrown against probably one of the best amateur sides in the country, and undoubtedly the best in the North at present, writes **Michael Knox**.

Spennymoor a Durham club, lead the Northern League by **TWELVE** clear points in a competition, which includes such famous teams as Bishop Auckland, Crook Town, Whitby, Whitley Bay, North Shields and this year's F.A. Cup heroes Blyth Spartans, who play Reading in the third round on Saturday.

United have won 20 of their 26 games, scoring 81 goals with only 19 conceded, in the league

Their cup record over the past two seasons, however, has been none too good. In last year's Amateur Cup they went out in the first round to Skelmersdale, who later beat Wycombe on the way to their Wembley triumph. In this term's F.A. Cup, they lost surprisingly to near neighbours Durham City in the second qualifying round.

Undoubtedly United owe their current position to inspirational manager Bobby Bell. Bell had steered Evenwood to the North League championships twice in two years before joining United at the beginning of this season.

Bell turned them from a middle of the table side into a crack outfit without any major team rebuilding, but he has the quality of inspiring his players.

Leading scorers are Geoff Palmer and Tommy Cochrane with over 20 a-piece, but there are no outstanding individuals and their main asset is that they play as a team.

Indeed their one and only international Billy Roughley — he played for England in 1964 — is at present sitting it out on the substitute's bench, unable to return to the team after injury,

However one disturbing feature for Spennymoor is that their average home attendance is about 600, and their biggest crowd of the season was the 1,400 gate which saw them defeat Emley 5-0 in their Amateur Cup first round tie on Saturday.

SPENNYMOOR United secretary, Stan Bradley gave a typically guarded comment about his club's prospects in the second round tie at Wycombe, after Saturday's replay, writes **Mike Whitesman**.

Remaining undaunted, and clearly hopeful of a first time victory at Loakes Park, he said "It was an interesting game. I was not overawed by the result of the match by any means."

While impressed by the Isthmian champions, it seems the men from Durham — 12 points clear of the Northern League — are not exactly shivering in their boots at the thought of travelling to Wycombe.

Barry Hindmarsh, a Spennymoor director, had words of consolation for the game losers from Aveley: "They are a team of good, honest triers. I think the scoreline flattered the winners a little."

And a final word from Mr. Bradley: "We're coming down here to win."