

THE Football Association have stepped in to settle a disagreement between Wycombe Wanderers and Blyth Spartans as to the date and timing of a replay of their F.A. Trophy second round tie.

Should the teams draw at Blyth on Saturday, then the replay would be at Loakes Park on the following Wednesday, starting at 2 p.m.

The kick-off time is at the insistence of Blyth, who are completely within the rules of the competition.

These state that if a replay is necessary it will take place on or before the following Thursday, kick-off 2 p.m. unless the home team has floodlights. In that case, the kick-off can be 7.30 p.m., providing both teams agree to play under lights.

Blyth did not agree with this and therefore, any replay would kick off at 2 p.m.

The Northern League side, who reached the last 16 of last year's F.A. Cup, are not objecting to the Wycombe lights. They are concerned that if it were an evening kick-off, their players would have to take two days off work.

But by insisting on an afternoon start they would lose only one day.

Not in rules

Wycombe secretary John Goldsworthy explained: "We tried to make the replay date the following Saturday but the F.A. would not agree as it was not in accordance with the competition rules."

Should the weather prevent the match taking place on Saturday, the re-arranged date would be Wednesday, February 7 at Blyth, kick-off 2 p.m.

If necessary the Blyth pitch will be inspected at tea-time on Friday to avoid unnecessary travel the following day. The decision will be available on Blues' information line High Wycombe 446763, during Friday evening.

Blues most immediate concern is the state of the pitch for tonight's Berks and Bucks tie at home to Maidenhead United, postponed from last week.

Unevenness

A steady thaw set in yesterday but the main problems with the Loakes Park pitch is the unevenness caused by the churning up it received in the Isthmian League match against Kingstonian ten days ago.

Wycombe are hopeful that the match will be played and that will give local fans the chance to see two former Wanderers players turning out for the Magpies.

Maidenhead are managed by Geoff Anthony who still plays, while Derek Harris, who signed early in the season, will also be in action.

The Berkshire club are currently enjoying their most successful season for several years and are well placed just behind the leaders in the Isthmian Division One promotion race.

Tickets for the train journey up to Blyth (£6 each) will be on sale from 7-9 p.m. tonight and Thursday from the clubhouse, and on Wednesday from the bottom tea bar at Loakes Park.