

# Loakes Park shock

# WILLIAMS RESIGNS!

**ANDY Williams has resigned as manager of Wycombe Wanderers. He made this bombshell announcement on Saturday before the club's league match at Slough.**

Mr Williams, who has held the position for one and a half seasons, said he was leaving because of a disagreement with the club over the position of scout Nicky Beach.

According to Mr Williams the club have decided to remove Mr Beach, whom he appointed, from the payroll. The manager took exception to this and, after much thought, resigned.

Wycombe Wanderers, who have accepted the resignation, declined to make any statement on the matter on Saturday. Mr Brian Lee, the vice-chairman, said that the club would not comment on the situation until later in the week.

## Reluctant

There have been calls from Wycombe fans in recent weeks for the removal of Mr Williams but it came as a surprise to supporters and committee alike that Mr Williams should decide to go at this stage — just seven days before the FA Trophy match against Bedford.

In a statement issued to the press (see left) Mr Williams outlined his reasons for going and added that he was reluctant to go with the team rebuilding job not completed.

Mr Williams later stressed to me that the performance

## Story by MICHAEL KNOX

of the team, who are in the lower half of the Bergey Isthmian league Premier Division table, had nothing to do with his departure.

"Otherwise, I have nothing to add to my statement. I don't believe in mud-slinging. It does nobody any good," he said.

Mr Williams indicated he is leaving on a point of principle. He appointed Mr Beach after the club said they wanted a coach following the disbandment of the youth team in the close season.

## High price

He considers that Mr Beach, who succeeded him as manager at Hitchin for a short while, had done a good job. The club clearly feels differently, even though the scout obtained the services of such players as Gary Lester and Steve Smith, who came on a free transfer.

When Mr Williams took

over the job 18 months ago he said he knew the price of failure would be high. Last season Wycombe finished sixth — their lowest position for ten years — and this winter they have struggled even more.

The low point of his managerial reign came when they were knocked out of the FA Cup by Croydon in the first round.

This led to a series of letters in the local press calling for his resignation. He always maintained that the club was going through a rebuilding stage but club supporters seemed impatient for success.

The highlight of his short stay at Loakes Park was the exciting run in last year's FA Trophy when Wanderers reached the last 16. But all too often team selection has seemed difficult to understand, although the side had some cruel luck with injuries during his reign.

His choice of captains has been perplexing. On his

arrival he appointed Mick Holifield, who found the role affected his game. Howard Kennedy took over for the rest of last season.

This winter Gary Fowles, who had just rejoined from Boreham Wood, was made skipper on his return. Steve Hardwick was his deputy, but when Fowles fell out of favour Keith Mead was appointed — for two matches.

Finally Paul Birdseye became captain — a position he still holds. The captaincy may seem unimportant in football but the fact that Mr Williams changed his mind so often, seems to indicate a certain indecision.

There's no doubting his ability as a coach and a football tactician but being a quiet man he did not make himself known to the supporters, who could never identify with him.

Of his future Mr Williams indicated that he wanted to remain in football in some capacity, preferably as a manager because he enjoyed a club atmosphere.

# Who will take over?

**THE departure of Andy Williams and Wycombe's refusal at this stage to make any comment, will naturally lead to speculation as to his successor as manager.**

The natural choice, in some ways would seem to be the assistant manager Howard Wells, who is Brian Lee's number two at Bisham Abbey.

But it is by no means certain that he will get the job, as he was appointed by Mr

Williams and not by the club itself.

Other names coming into the reckoning could be the boss of Hungerford Town Jimmy Kelman or former Wycombe players Geoff Anthony and John Delaney, now managers at Maidenhead and Tring Town respectively.

Mike Keen, the former Watford and Northampton boss, who lives in Flackwell Heath must be another strong candidate.

The club's next match is a friendly at Marlow tonight (Tuesday). On Saturday vice-chairman Mr Brian Lee said he could not say who would be in charge of the side on the night. This surely confirms the view that Mr Wells is not an automatic choice.

Mr Lee, who will be appointed chairman when the club becomes a limited company in the next month, said Wycombe would not make any comment until this matter had been resolved.