

Blues apply to join Football League

Wycombe drop a bombshell

WYCOMBE Wanderers dropped a football bombshell over the Easter holiday by applying to join the Football League next season.

This shock announcement, which will send reverberations around the non-league world, means that for the first time in their history Wycombe are aiming to join the elite.

Indeed it is also the first time an Isthmian League side has ever applied to join the Football League — and this brave decision could set a trend for the future.

Up until now, it has been assumed that only clubs from the Alliance Premier League could apply, but according to Wycombe secretary John Goldsworthy this is not the case.

"There is no tie-up between the Football League and any other league. There's nothing to stop any club applying," he said.

Mr Goldsworthy explained why, after 97 years, the club had finally got around to applying to join.

Remote chance

"The Isthmian League is really not going anywhere and we wanted a change of scenery. The Alliance, we considered would not be an option. At a general discussion about the future, we decided to apply for the Football League."

Their chances of gaining entry to the Football League, must be remote to say the least.

Before their application can go any further, Wycombe's ground and facilities must be examined by special Football League inspectors to see if they match up to the League's required standard.

This must be a major hurdle because Wycombe's Loakes Park ground is renowned for its slope and no other club in the Football League has a pitch like it.

The dressing room accommodation is good, but certain

Story by **MICHAEL KNOX**

improvements might have to be made to the press area.

There must be severe doubts as to whether Wycombe would pass this inspection, although Mr Goldsworthy defends the pitch by saying: "If you can't play on that surface, you can't play anywhere."

Even if they clear that hurdle, the chances of getting enough votes at the annual meeting must be remote. Even Altrincham, with

their exceptional non-league record, failed to beat strugglers Rochdale in a vote last year. There are no such obvious candidates to be thrown out of the League this time.

Mr Goldsworthy agrees the chances of election are slim. "Teams very rarely get in first time. But unless you try, you never know. But at least we will know where we stand, if we fail."

Wycombe's application

has received support from the Isthmian League, who can only benefit. If nothing else it shows that teams do not have to enter the Alliance to apply for the Football League.

A spokesman for the Football League said: "We shall treat Wycombe's application no differently from any other. We will write to them to ask for certain information and inspect their ground."

"If it is satisfactory then their application will go before the annual meeting. Why should we treat it any other way?"