



Daggers are set up to celebrate

IT IS highly significant that the only full-time employee of Dagenham Football Club is the bar steward.

While their part-time players were panting and perspiring as they trained in the freezing night air at the Victoria Road ground this week, the warm, glossy social club glowed with bonhomie.

The bingo was going into extra time and the two bars were filled with talk of the big match: Daggers v Cambridge United in tomorrow's FA Cup first round.

Turnover in the club bars last year was a merry £250,000. The wage bill for the 18 players was less than a tenth of that.

No wonder part-time football can flourish in austere times.

The bank manager will be happier still if Dagenham beat Fourth Division Cambridge tomorrow. An anticipated 2,000 crowd will bring in £4,000. That is not much after the visitors, vatman and taxman have taken their share, but the bars will do a roaring trade—particularly if there is a Daggers victory to celebrate.

By COLIN BATEMAN

"That's what it's all about in the Gola League. Everyone chips in with the work and everyone enjoys themselves," said part-time secretary Fred Hawthorn, a British Telecom worker.

Part-time chairman Norman Sparrow is one of them. Dagenham is part of his family tree. His father, Vic, was chairman and is now president, his five-year-old son, Christopher, will be the mascot tomorrow.

And last Saturday Norman doubled as "the spy," going to Cambridge to see them lose 4-0 to Burnley.

■ CARTON CAPERS
... but Dagenham manager Tony Jennings (left) and player Joe Dunwell hope to celebrate with something stronger tomorrow night.



"They had one lad who kicked everything that moved and nothing else to worry us," he reports.

"Typical of League football, no one spoke to us or gave us a drink. I think they'll find it different here on Saturday. We'll give them a welcome."

Different it is. The compact 9,000 capacity ground is hemmed in on one side by furniture and record factories, on the others, by rows of terraced Essex homes.

At one end, the supporters stand on a grass bank; at the other there is high netting to stop the ball going into gardens and breaking windows.

It will not appeal to Cambridge, whose desperate slide from Division Two has taken them to 91st position in the League inside 18 months.

lost count of the League sides he helped put in their place.

But, Jennings, a Tilbury dock worker, still warns, with typical managerial apprehension: "Things could not be much worse for Cambridge at the moment, but I can't make us favourites because we're so inconsistent... during every match."

"It takes something very special to mount a long cup run. We are not at that stage yet, but if we can harness everything on Saturday it could be our day."

"If it is we'll be having a few beers. That's why the barman here has to be full-time."

Distinguished

Sparrow like most Daggers fans, expects a Cup upset, particularly after last season when Dagenham beat League opposition for the first time, winning at Swindon and at home to Peterborough to reach round three.

And giant-killing has been part of manager Tony Jennings's stock in trade during a distinguished part-time career which brought him 12 caps with England's non-League side.

He played in a Hendon side that went to First Division Newcastle, appeared with Enfield on Match-of-the-Day during one cup run and has