

WHY I HAD TO GO

PAUL Bence quit as manager of Wycombe this week and then admitted that it was the hardest decision of his football career.

Bence, who in 18 months led Blues into the Gola League and brought them a glorious FA Cup run, resigned because of work pressures in his career with the Morland Brewery.

"I was promoted in November to trade and tenancy manager and now I have the chance to go all the way to the top," explained the man who managed Wycombe during their Centenary Year.

"In five years, if everything works out, I could win a seat on the Board of Directors."

Bence, 35, admitted that his job at Loakes Park was on the line from the moment he gained promotion at work.

"It rapidly became obvious to me that I could not give Wycombe the level of commitment they required and deserved," explained the departed Blues boss.

"I could have stayed on and done a reasonable job but I am not a cheat and I realised I could not give it 100 per cent.

Decision

"And that would not have been fair to the players, officials and supporters of this great club.

"Resigning was the hardest decision of my life and one which I took with great regret."

Bence officially handed in his resignation on December 12 but, when questioned at the time by the Bucks Free Press on a strong rumour that he was quitting, the manager denied the accusation.

"I stayed on then at the request of chairman Brian Lee who wanted me in charge until after the FA Cup run," explained Bence.

"But he swore me to secrecy. I don't like lying to the Press but I had no option.

Bence originally wanted to quit after Blues defeated Colchester in the FA Cup first round.

But he was talked out of it by Alan Gane, now the new man in charge.

But he eventually wrote out his resignation letter days after Wycombe overcame Chelmsford to reach

by **JIM McCANN**

the FA Cup third round for only the second time.

"Alan Gane again tried to persuade me to stay but I had made up my mind," stated Bence.

"Something had to go. I was leaving home four days a week at 7.30am and not getting home until midnight.

"I would be at Loakes Park two nights for training and on other nights I would be watching games and scouting for new players.

"I was not seeing enough of my wife and kids and I was eventually turning up tired to work."

Bence told the Wycombe players about his decision on Thursday night and he then spent his first Saturday afternoon at home for 20 years.

Bence speaks about agonising decision

"It was an empty feeling not being involved with football," he admitted sadly.

"I phoned up Loakes Park at half time for the score and then watched television for the result.

"It's such a great shame because I never wanted to leave Wycombe.

"I had given myself five years to put the club into great shape.

"And in 18 months I think Alan Gane and myself had laid the foundation for future success."

Bence is confident that the new managerial duo of Alan Gane and John Maskell will cope with the pressure of lifting Wycombe out of trouble in the Gola League.

Bence added that it was too early to speculate on his future in football.

"No one knows what the future holds," he said.

"But I told the Wycombe players it was not a goodbye; I'll still be around if required to help out, watching opposition or assessing players.



PAUL BENCE . . . anguish.