

Starting off in shambles

Sports Comment

WYCOMBE Wanderers begin tomorrow (Saturday) what could be a long hard painful season in non-league's top flight.

Instead of the bold and positive campaign predicted at the end of last term, Blues approach the new season with apprehension.

And that is sad for such a proud club.

After winning the Vauxhall-Opel Premier Championship, and breaking all number of club records under the leadership of Alan Gane, Wycombe found themselves once again back with the cream of non-league football.

Gane was a step nearer fulfilling his dream of reaching the Football League and both players and fans could taste the ambition and wanted to be part of it.

Loakes Park buzzed with talk of big name signings and no-one it seemed could wait until the start of this season.

But the signings were never made, morale amongst the players declined — some becoming disillusioned — and then Gane sensationally resigned two weeks before the start of the season.

The blame for this shambles can be traced back to the board of directors and for which the chairman, Brian Lee, must shoulder much of the responsibility.

The Blues chairman revels in the power he wields at Loakes Park and, it seems, is loathe to allow anything to challenge his authority.

He guards his records as the club's most successful ever manager jealously and has always taken more than a 'healthy' interest in team affairs.

The Board is supposed to decide, but it is Lee who has the real authority at Loakes Park — as Alan Gane has found despite last season's marvellous triumphs.

There is probably more to Gane's 'resignation' than has been revealed. After all, isn't it odd that a talented and successful young manager should quit two weeks before the start of a season and only days after being openly enthusiastic about managing Wycombe in the Conference?

So often in the past these things blow over . . . a new manager arrives and everybody forgets what happened.

But the fans are beginning to wise up to what is happening behind the scenes at Loakes Park and, understandably, they are furious.

They were convinced Wycombe were going forward and that the club was prepared to whatever was necessary to ensure a bright future. After what has happened they feel cheated.

They are some of the best fans in the land and they deserve some answers to what is happening to their beloved club.

Why, for instance, the Board persists in a penny pinching policy with considerable assets in the bank?

Wycombe Wanderers is a great club. It has brought joy to a lot of people.

But it is a sleeping giant and Brian Lee, despite his assurances and his board, seem determined to keep it asleep.

Someone must wake it up before it's too late.