

Ups and downs of Blues' year

WYCOMBE Wanderers have a number of claims for fame (or notoriety) after their first season back in the GM Vauxhall Conference.

The crowd at their final game at Lincoln, 9,432, was a record for the competition.

Of less welcome prominence was the fact that the two best individual scoring feats of the season were both against them—five goals by Nicky Francis of Enfield in October and four by Nicky Evans of Barnet in September.

Despite their low placing in the table, Wycome attracted 30,686 to league matches, giving them an average gate of 1,461, sixth best in the league—and better than such notables is Altrincham, Stafford Rangers and Maidstone.

Gates were up 30 per cent on their previous season in the Vauxhall-Opel League and all 21 home matches this term drew four-figure attendances.

Blues earned £2,125 in prize and sponsorship money (compared to £10,250 by Lincoln City).

Next season, they will have four new opponents in the Conference, Yeovil Town, Chorley and Aylesbury United plus Newport County.

● Figures supplied by the GM Vauxhall Conference press office.

GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE

	P	W	F	A	Pts
Lincoln City	42	24	86	48	82
Barnet	42	23	93	45	80
Kettering Town	42	22	68	48	75
Runcorn	42	21	68	47	74
Telford United	42	20	79	58	69
Stafford Rangers	42	20	79	58	69
Kidderminster H	42	18	75	66	69
Sutton United	42	16	77	54	66
Maidstone United	42	18	79	64	63
Weymouth	42	18	53	43	63
Macclesfield	42	18	64	62	63
Enfield	42	15	68	78	55
Cheltenham Town	42	11	64	67	53
Altrincham	42	14	59	59	52
Fisher Athletic	42	13	58	61	52
Boston United	42	14	60	75	49
Northwich Victoria	42	10	46	57	47
Wycombe Wand	42	11	50	76	46
Welling Utd	42	11	50	72	42
Bath City	42	9	48	76	37
Wealdstone	42	5	39	76	32
Dagenham	42	5	37	104	21

ATTENDANCE TABLE

	Agg	Av
Lincoln City	79,005	3,762
Barnet	55,965	2,665
Boston United	33,508	1,596
Weymouth	31,296	1,490
Telford United	31,081	1,480
Wycombe Wanderers	30,686	1,461
Kettering Town	29,068	1,384
Altrincham	28,336	1,349
Kidderminster	28,246	1,345
Cheltenham Town	27,977	1,332

Maidenhead started the season with two league defeats, against last year's bottom club, Southall, and Metropolitan Police, who were eventually to be promoted.

Those performances gave the rest of Division 2 (South) a head start, but manager Jim Kelman then took his side to a run which saw them lose just three times in as many months.

Leaders

That run saw the side steadily creeping up the table, and a thrilling 4-3 win at Petersfield in mid-November put the Magpies on top of the table.

Maidenhead succeeded in their test of ability when they came through their toughest string of fixtures without defeat. Wins against Harefield (2-0), Chalfont St. Peter (3-0) and Chertsey (1-0), as well as hard fought away draws at Metropolitan Police and Yeading, helped them to consolidate their promotion chasing position.

However, a total of just two points from four games followed to give United a far from happy Christmas. Maidenhead's lack of form and the vacant managerial post at Vauxhall Conference side Wycombe aroused speculation that Kelman

could be on his way to Loakes Park. The obvious questions were asked with Kelman saying only that he had heard nothing and Wycombe chairman Brian Lee commenting, "Jim who?"

Despite these innocent replies, Kelman signed a few days later for the Conference strugglers, and he promptly set about trying to sign his former captain, Michael Barnes.

Kelman looked set to get his man, and only a medical stood in the way of Barnes joining the club for a fee of £5,000.

However, the former Reading and Northampton defender failed the fitness test due to the knee injury that forced him to quit League football. He returned to Maidenhead to find that his contract had been cancelled by the club when they thought the deal was going through, and he promptly joined Windsor, for nothing!