

BLUES BLOW!

Carroll out for two months with broken collar-bone

GIFTED Blues midfielder Dave Carroll will be out of action for at least two months after breaking his collar-bone in Tuesday night's Premier Inter-League Cup clash at Wokingham.

Wanderers won the tie in extra time, but it was a success which must have seemed barely worth the effort when the in-form ex-Ruislip Manor man walked disconsolately from the field after a 58th minute tumble which left him lying on the ground in agony.

Physio David Jones rushed him to Wycombe hospital where X-Rays confirmed manager Jim Kelman's worst fears and added to the ever-increasing Loakes Park sick list.

Kelman said after the game: "I suppose a cup is a cup - but this was a huge price to pay for victory.

"Dave has been playing so well lately that he has made the right side of midfield his own. There was no-one at the club who could have taken that position from him but, having said that, the rest of the lads kept going and won the game

Pete Thomas reports

for us once he had gone off.

"Fully fit players are getting a bit thin on the ground at the moment but hopefully all the little niggles will clear up once we get down to just one game a week.

"The lads are under a lot of strain at the moment - Martin Blackler and Andy Robinson are both playing with groin strains, John Granville still has an ankle problem and Keith Barrett's back is still not perfect - but the shortage of players has meant they have had to battle through.

"Even our transfer listed players are not fit, which makes it difficult for me to unload them and buy others.

Attracted

"Mark Boyland has attracted a lot of interest from Gloucester City, Aylesbury Town and Windsor and Eton but he is still injured. Jeff Lissaman looked set to join Cheltenham on a free transfer but then John Murphy resigned as manager there and threw the whole deal into confusion. Worcester City, Leicester United and VS Rugby are all interested, but Jeff is still having treatment for a back problem."

Another disappointment for Kelman this week was the final chapter of the long-running Peter Coyne saga, which ended with the young Swindon striker deciding to stay at the

County Ground.

Kelman explained: "I followed this one right to the end and spoke to Robins boss Lou Macari four times this week. But I finally spoke to Peter himself and he told me he had made up his mind to stay put. He had hoped to improve himself financially by joining the Conference but when he realised that would not be the case he changed his mind.

"You will never get the best out of a player who regrets joining the club so it was best that he didn't come."

Meanwhile, the players already at Loakes Park have notched up an unbeaten run of seven matches, culminating in Tuesday's cup triumph at Wokingham.

Unhappy

Kelman was unhappy with the Finchampstead Road pitch but pleased with the way his players stuck to their task: "The surface was very bobbly and uneven and it was fortunate we had some rain to damp it down. The grass had been left long to protect the ground and that, along with the small pitch, meant it was always going to be a tight game.

"Wokingham were desperate to protect their 11 match unbeaten run and their performance was all about pride. Defender Phil Alexander had a damaged hamstring but still refused to come off despite the



■ Dave Carroll.

fact that they have an important league match on Saturday. They were clearly prepared to go the distance, but my lads finished the stronger.

"Wokingham play with one man up the middle, one man on the wing and one floater, leaving a man to come from deep on the right. I played Creaser on Pearce in the middle, Day man for man on Lucas and Steve Abbley to take Nunn on the wing. I was quite prepared to let them attack from the back if it meant that Mark West and John Regan could go one on one on their defence.

"Unfortunately Creaser was a little ring rusty and Kevin Durham didn't pick his man up very well which meant that Day and Barrett had to deal with Spencer as well.

"That all changed when Sean Norman came on and Durham pushed up front. He began to take them apart and Scott Young did well as the other substitute. I felt we deserved to win."

● On Saturday Blues entertain Welling United, who notched up their third away win of the season at Runcorn on Saturday to move into eighth spot in the table - their best ever Conference position.

The clubs have already met once this season when a lone Dave Carroll goal gave Wycombe the points at Park View Road.

Carroll will be sidelined for Saturday's clash, but Wings have problems of their own, with both Nigel Ransom and Ray Burgess struggling to recover from leg injuries sustained at Runcorn.