

Crowds flock back

SATURDAY'S staggering crowd of 4,239 has proved beyond doubt that High Wycombe can support a League Club according to Wycombe manager Jim Kelman.

"It was simply marvellous and it would be nice to think they'll all be back for the Trophy game against Merthyr Tydfil next Saturday," he enthused. "It shows what this club could attract if it reached the Football League."

This was Blues biggest league gate since 1974/75. The official figure for the Isthmian League match against Enfield was given as 3,900 but this did not include season ticket holders and the figure was rounded up to 4,500.

Saturday's attendance was only 120 short of the gate Third Division Reading attracted for their 3-1 win over Cardiff and is the second highest in the Conference this term.

Sitting pretty with Conference leaders

WYCOMBE'S Conference position looked even rosier this week following Kettering's surprise 2-1 defeat at Runcorn.

The Midlanders, who would go clear at top by winning their games in hand, are still many people's favourites for a place in the Football League at the end of the season.

Wanderers remain fourth - just a point adrift of the trio of leading clubs Macclesfield, Barnet and Kidderminster.

"The crazy thing about our League is that almost anyone can win it," said manager Jim Kelman. "Sutton United are something like sixth from bottom but if they were to win all their games in hand they'd be five points off the lead. That is how tight it is. Hopefully we'll contest the championship right to the end."

Meanwhile the Town is still buzzing following last Saturday's 1-0 win over Kidderminster Harriers with a stunning display that drew praise from former chairman Brian Lee.

Lee, the club's most successful ever manager, was impressed by the exciting brand of football served up in the crunch top-of-the-table clash.

"Brian came up to me afterwards and said it was the best he has seen a Wycombe side play for a long, long time," said Kelman. "For him to say that meant a lot to me."

"It was a tremendous game and it still has not sunk in yet. To do what we did to Kidderminster, especially in the first 30 minutes was a bit special. We were absolutely brilliant."

Pressing

Even though his side is pressing home a very real promotion challenge the Loakes Park boss claims they are feeling no pressure.

"Honestly, we are under no real pressure," he stated. "If I felt the pressure then so would the players."

"We did not wind ourselves up for the game on Saturday. We adopted a very low profile in the dressing room. For us it was just another game. The crowd lifted the players."

Even Harriers manager Graham Allner admitted: "I was impressed by Wycombe. They have great spirit, work hard for each other and like to play football. The vociferous crowd helped them obviously."

"I cannot compare them to the other top sides because I haven't seen them all yet but I think they have as good a chance as any in the final run-in."

"I didn't think we threatened nearly enough. After we survived the early barrage we came forward a bit more but had nothing on the end of it."

● Wycombe Wanderers have been approached by two Southern-based Conference clubs, both offering top strikers for sale.

But Blues have rejected the unofficial offers which are in excess of £35,000.

"We have refused to be drawn into these deals," said Kelman. "The prices are ridiculously inflated and these players are no better than our own strikers. We will only buy when required."

● Wanderers have made an offer for Mark Butler, Egham's 22-year-old striker.

The deal would involve an initial cost of £2,000 with further payments should he make the grade.

"It is now up to Egham and the player," said Kelman. "He will continue to play for the Vauxhall-Opel Division Two club but will play for us in Capital League games."

Bracknell's 24-year-old defender Andy Russell may also join Wycombe on a similar basis.

● Club skipper Keith Barrett could be back in action for Wycombe next week either in a Capital League match or in the annual friendly against the RAF.