

It's over!

Kelman concedes Conference title race after defeat

MANAGER Jim Kelman has conceded the GM Vauxhall Conference title is beyond Wycombe Wanderers' grasp following Saturday's 1-0 demise against leaders Kettering.

The Blues chief admitted: "Realistically Newport County's demise has finished our season. Losing six points and 10 goals ended any chance we had of staying with the leaders.

"Even if we had won on Saturday we would have had to rely on Maidstone losing at least three of their remaining six games while we would have needed six straight wins."

But despite the defeat, in front of a seasonal league record crowd of 4,890, Kelman reflected happily on his side's performance.

"The first half was the best we've played all season and the game should have been dead and buried long before Kettering scored," he said. "It was a cracking game - better even than our win over Kidderminster. Whereas Kidderminster were on the wane, Kettering are a side blowing hot at the moment. To dominate them like that was marvellous. It was just the result that was wrong. Their keeper made two or three great saves and rode his luck on occasions.

Fluke

"It was going to take a fluke goal to win this match and that's what they got. It was unlucky for Glyn Creaser because he and Nicky Evans were probably our two most outstanding players.

"To be honest I was surprised Griffith wasn't playing from the start because he is super player. Edwards, who was on the bench, is also a great attacking player. Kettering obviously did not play their full attacking side and came to contain us. They have based their season on tight results and it worked for them on the day.

By Rolf Niven

"As a manager you tend to get involved in games and fail to look at them objectively. Everyone has said how much they enjoyed the Kettering game and that pleases me.

"Who would have believed back in September that we would be up there near the top attracting a crowd of nearly 5,000. Saturday was not a disaster in any shape or form and I think we can look back on this season with pride.

"We've had a tremendous run and I think we've built a side capable of living with anyone at this level.

"Now we'll fight back and try to finish third."

● The Wycombe Scannappeal benefitted by £489 on Saturday thanks to Wanderers' current drawing power.

The club is donating 10p for every fan that goes through the turnstiles in their three remaining Conference matches.

And with large crowds also expected for the visits of Altrincham and Weymouth the Appeal could receive over £1,000.



■ Dave Carroll fends off the attentions of Kettering's Paul Richardson and sets Blues on the attack in Saturday's crunch game.