

DISASTER FOR THE BLUES

NEW
BOY:
Blues'
Steve
Wicks



BLUES had a disastrous start to their Conference challenge, taking just one point from a possible six in their opening two matches.

On Saturday, they lost 3-0 away to Northwich Victoria, and on Monday, in front of a crowd of over 2,000 at Loakes Park, they drew with rivals Altrincham when the away

Report by CLAIRE PERRY

team scored a goal in the 90th minute.

Blues boss Jim Kelman said after the frustrating weekend: "We just aren't getting the shots in. We should have been 4-0 up at half-time against Altrincham with the game in our pockets.

"Instead it was only one and we left the door open for them to snatch

a draw, which they did. We are playing really well, but we have to polish up the finishing touch."

Wycombe certainly dominated the Bank Holiday game, their first Conference match on home territory.

Within minutes of the start, Mark West and Andy Robinson were in the goal mouth, Robinson's shot

glancing wide of the post. West had a good game, hoping to prove his critics wrong, but once again he couldn't get the ball between the posts.

Altrincham's first attack did not come until the 25th minute, but that shot was blasted high over the crossbar.

As the minutes ticked by, a Wycombe goal was inevitable. New boy Steve Wicks blasted the ball over the top and the other new signing, Paul Sanderson, sliced a shot.

The breakthrough came in the 32nd minute when a Wycombe throw was crossed into the box by Dave Carroll. Robinson climbed for the ball, pressurising goalie Jeff Wealands, and the ball was scrambled into the net after a final touch by Robinson.

The next few minutes saw a surge of Blues shirts jostling for the ball but shot after shot missed the target.

Altrincham were much more physical in the second half.

It did not go unnoticed by the referee, who put a total of four names in the book, plus that of Matt Crossley for a foul.

Steve Wicks, who has played for Queens Park Rangers and Chelsea in his career, joined the Blues on a two-year contract.

He spent last season as assistant manager with second division Portsmouth. Jim Kelman said: "Once he's back in the swing of things, he's going to be very useful to us."

Wycombe are at home again on Saturday to Darlington, who have won their opening two matches 4-0 and 3-0.

Well, the season has really begun with a bang, with lots of teams making it clear that they have intentions of winning this league. Goals have been scored in abundance and we're sure everybody who watches GM Vauxhall Conference matches this season will be in for some exciting matches.

We were obviously delighted to have started the campaign with a home victory against what we believe to be a very good Conference side. The fact that we were able to come through such a stern test with so many new faces was down to the excellent attitude that our players showed. We have made it clear that we expect each game to be contested for the full 90 minutes. This was never more evident than in our second game at Wycombe on Monday when we're sure everyone who was at the game will agree — as did their manager — that the goal against us was very harsh indeed. When a goalkeeper goes for the ball and is bundled over, most referees would give the verdict in the goalkeeper's favour. However on this occasion the verdict went the other way.

This set us back for a little while, though in the second half we were positive and kept going forward. We played very hard to get an equaliser and could, with a little good fortune, have got an even better result.