

OUT OF THE BLUE

**Soccer
special
round-up**

THE Blues picked up their Conference hopes this week, grabbing four points from a possible six, and crushing formidable opposition along the way.

On Saturday they beat Welling United at Loakes Park 1-0, a team who have only lost two Conference games from their last 14.

Then on Tuesday night Wycombe Wanderers met Kettering town, and came away with a 2-2 draw against a side which is rapidly becoming the Blues' bogey team.

The Wycombe side that took to the pitch was completely changed to the one seen at the start of the season — not in personnel, but in attitude.

They dominated the match, playing intelligent, confident football in conditions more suited to water polo.

Man of the match was Martin Lambert who scored both goals for the Blues.

But it was Kettering who took the lead in the early stages through a penalty hotly disputed by the crowd of almost 2,000.

The ball floated into the Wycombe penalty area, and hit Lambert

**By CLAIRE
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on the arm. The referee immediately pointed to the spot, and Kettering's Steve Collins made sure of putting Wycombe one goal down after only four minutes.

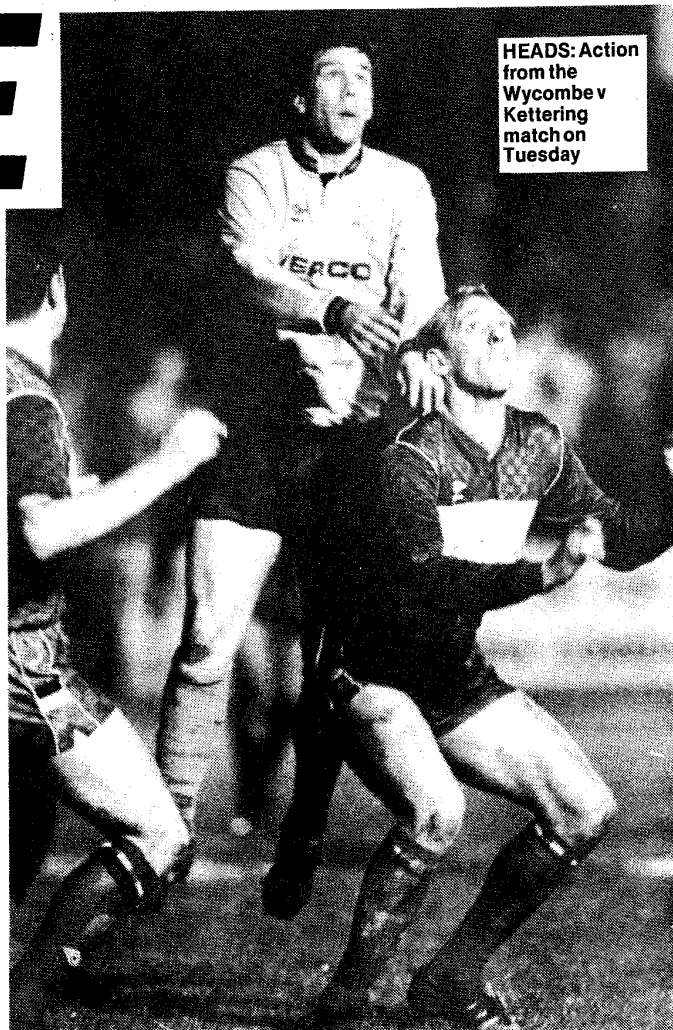
This only made Wycombe more determined, and shots from Lambert, Mark West and Glyn Creaser just failed to find the mark.

After 15 minutes, Lambert made up for his earlier error by scoring the equaliser.

The ball rattled around the Kettering area as player after player tried to get it between the goalposts, thwarted by a barrier of Kettering defenders.

West tried, Andy Kerr tried, but eventually Lambert hammered it home.

It was all blue shirts for the rest of the first half as Wycombe pressed for the lead.



HEADS: Action from the Wycombe v Kettering match on Tuesday

West had a good half, nipping through and fooling defenders, while Lambert and Andy Robinson kept the pressure on.

But going into the second half, totally against the run of play, Trevor Slack gave Kettering the lead once more.

The tension mounted as Wycombe kept pushing for an equaliser, and tempers boiled over more than once. This earned Kettering's Robbie Cooke a booking for an outrageously late tackle on Steve Abbey, and he now faces a suspension.

Robinson was replaced by Robert Thorpe midway through, and the new life on the pitch was used by Wycombe to give width to their play.

Wycombe grabbed the equaliser a few minutes before the end of the game. Kettering goalie Ian Bowling slid out of his area to try and take the ball from Kevin Durham.

As he slid towards the edge of the box, he released the ball, and it fell to Dave Carroll, who kept his cool and slipped the ball home.

On the Saturday, it was again Dave Car-

roll who scored the goal that beat one of the Conferences' strongest sides of the moment, Welling.

Blues boss Martin O'Neill said: 'I thought we were desperately unlucky on Tuesday not to win. The players showed a lot of enthusiasm and thoroughly enjoyed the game.'

'The crowd on both days was great. They were really behind us which is very important to the players.'

Wycombe have no match on Saturday due to Runcorn's involvement in a cup clash.

SO the parish council at Chalfont St Giles might employ Soviet satellite photographs to aid its consideration of planning applications. Good idea.

Wycombe District Council should follow suit since its maps are clearly so out of kilter that it declared the Sands area of High Wycombe to be an Area of Natural Beauty in refusing Wycombe Wanderers' plan to construct a training pitch by the club's new stadium.

Are we all going barking mad?

—Charles Mann—