

Safety measures restrict Blues fans

By TIM SINGLETON

DISGRUNTLED Wycombe Wanderers fans are being asked to show understanding towards the restrictions on spectator movement at Adams Park.

Brian Lee, the ex-Wycombe chairman who masterminded the move from Loakes Park, stressed this week that the new ground was "compartmentalised" rather than segregated – and that it was the result of safety regulations imposed on the club.

The safety certificate given for Adams Park by Bucks County Council allows for 1,500 spectators behind each goal with 1,267 seated in the main stand and a further 1,733 split into two segments on the Woodland Terrace.

Lee told the Bucks Free Press: "All eyes are on us because we have a new ground. When there is a disaster the size of Hillsborough everybody becomes over cautious.

"We've been caught in the wake of the new legislation. We're happy to adhere to it but we want our supporters to understand that it has been imposed upon us."

Lee added: "Why are they trying to make the First Division all seater? It's all about safety now."

According to Lee, in the event of a disaster "we would know exactly how many people we are looking for," with fans automatically counted as they go through the turnstiles.

He added: "God forbid there should ever be a disaster. But this is being done for you the spectator. The only inconvenience is that you can't walk round the ground. And to counteract that there are the improved facilities.

"Compartmentalisation is in your interests and the

interests of safety. It is not segregation."

This is a condition for membership of the Football League, while Conference regulations to be phased in over the next two to three years will ensure that any member of non-League's top flight will have to have facilities to match possible League status.

Even if Wycombe were still in the Vauxhall Conference League, Lee claims that the restrictions would be the same although other Conference clubs may have different arrangements because each Local Authorities can differ in their interpretation of the law.

Lee is adamant that there can be no return to the good old days when fans could walk all the way round Loakes Park, now that the move to the new stadium is complete.

"We, as a board of directors, have made a firm commitment that our aim is to get into the Football



Martin O'Neill welcomes Simon Hutchinson after signing him up. Players' corner: Page 91

League," he said.

"We've done it now and we're going to make it work."

● John Stringer, the Northwich forward who sustained a broken leg and

dislocated ankle at Adams Park on Saturday, was visited in hospital on Monday for an hour by Blues' manager Martin O'Neill and a couple of Wycombe players.