

WHITEOUT



O'NEILL: "It's been a terrific year."

But promotion hopes hot up

IT'S a lonely job at Wycombe Wanderers . . . all groundsman Rod Lavers can do is build himself a chum and watch the snow fall.

Rod (above) is responsible for the pitch that brought praise from the likes of QPR boss Don Howe, but now all he can do is sit back and watch it get buried under a white carpet.

He said: "There is nothing I can do to the pitch or the ground until the thaw comes. Underneath that snow the ground will be rock hard because of the frost. The drainage is very good here, but that can't do anything in these temperatures."

Rod also has to make sure the terraces are safe for the supporters. "Since Hillsborough and the Taylor report, their safety is very important — as it should be. Gone are the days of standing watching football in a foot of snow."

In the meantime Rod is catching up with general maintenance and clearing up around the ground. "All those jobs I kept putting off I now have no excuse not to do," he said, as Blues boss Martin O'Neill took time to look back over his first year at Wycombe.

In that year he has seen the club through from being dangerously near the bottom of the Conference to finishing a creditable tenth. Then there was the move to Adams Park, and the FA Cup run.

He said: "I've loved it, it's been a terrific year. Obviously I couldn't have come at a better time with the move to the new ground. I think my favourite moment had to be getting

By Claire Perry

on television with the Peterborough game. That was good news.

"Beating Kettering was excellent, but there were lots of league performances where we have played very well."

Ultimate

What about the year to come? "I don't think any manager can look a year ahead. Obviously my ultimate aim is to get into the fourth division.

"I think the hardest part is getting out of this division, but I want to achieve that in the next two years. Of course, we could still do it this season!"