
Colchester win to sustain their title march

WYCOMBE have to win the Conference the hard way — after Kettering were unable to do them any favours on Tuesday.

The Us were back to their formidable best at Layer Road and Kettering, who had almost put paid to the Blues' hopes last week, had no answer.

"It was a magnificent display," said two-goal player-manager Roy McDonough.

"Whenever we've been under a bit of pressure this season, we've responded in exactly the right way. If we roll up our sleeves and produce the goods, no-one will live with us at this level."

He added: "Wycombe might have expected us to slip up tonight but this result will surely put the title out of their range."

The largest crowd in the Conference this season, 6,163, saw Colchester press from the start — although they needed the help of referee Bill Norling to take the lead in the 27th minute.

Norling adjudged that Poppies' keeper Paul Bastock had pulled down Tony English in the box as the midfielder was running away from goal.

Bastock was booked for his angry protests, and then suffered a double dose of misery when he managed to save McDonough's penalty, pushing the ball onto the post only to see

Colchester 3, Kettering 1

it run straight back to the United player-manager who tapped in with ease.

The Poppies' cause wasn't exactly helped when skipper Paul Nicol had to leave the action at half time with a knee injury — and four crucial second-half minutes saw Colchester strengthen their claims on the title.

A loose Trevor Slack back pass only found Us striker Steve McGavin and he squared for McDonough to add a simple second.

Kettering were still recovering when McGavin robbed Dougie Keast on the goal-line, then cut inside and shot past Bastock into the far corner.

Marc North scored an 89th-minute consolation goal for Kettering.

Gardner able to keep an eye on his pitch

WANDERERS' groundsman Rod Lavers hands over his rake after tomorrow's final game of the season at home to Witton — to a man named Gardner.

After nine years' employment with Blues, Lavers is leaving to start his own business, opening the way for Wanderers' season-ticket holder Jim Gardner.

Gardner, 42, has been an employee of the John Lewis store, working at Odney Sports Ground at Cookham and as head greenkeeper of Winter Hill Golf Course near Bisham Abbey for the past six years.

Blues' new groundsman should certainly be able to keep his eye on the Wycombe pitch: he will be living in the flat above one of the turnstiles.

The pitch is due for reseeding the week after next.