

# Deadline postponed as Blues are left in limbo

By PETE LANSLEY

WANDERERS' faint hopes of a League place linger on after Colchester were granted a week's stay of execution to prove they can afford to upgrade Layer Road.

The Football League have this week told GM Vauxhall Conference champions Colchester United that more documents are needed before the club can take their place in the new Division Three.

The documentation must arrive seven days before the 70 League clubs meet for their Annual General Meeting on June 5 — and that means more uncertainty for Blues and the Us until next Friday at the earliest.

Colchester claim the £85,000 target is no longer a problem. Chairman James Bowdidge says they have £50,000 in cash and pledges of labour to sufficiently improve their Layer Road ground to satisfy the Football League's requirements.

The 'Promote Wycombe' campaign was officially blocked when a letter from the League secretary, David Dent, explained the shadow board's confirmation that Aldershot will not be replaced.

Now Blues are hoping the uncertainty over Colchester's promotion will end soon so that they can gear themselves up for next season — in whichever league they are playing.

A League spokesman said: "An offer of membership has been made to Colchester subject to additional financial documentation being received." He said he was unable to go into any more detail.

Bowdidge said some volunteers were out working on the Layer Road terraces yesterday afternoon, and the credibility of this support's value is surely crucial.

The Colchester chairman added: "We have over £50,000 in cash, and while we're still seeking extra funds, we have effectively reached our target. We have to finish the process by a week Friday. Otherwise? I presume there would be further discussions or we would miss out."

For Wanderers, a decision can't come soon enough. Martin O'Neill said: "It's very frustrating because we can't go ahead. If someone would only give a final answer, I wouldn't mind, but our planning has to go ahead as two-pronged: one as a Vauxhall Conference side, one as, possibly, a Football League side."

The drawn-out saga has prevented O'Neill from considering which players will be retained for next season.

The manager added: "By June 5, one way or the other, surely someone will tell someone else what's happening."

Director Alan Parry said the uncertainty was getting to people. "We're in limbo: we literally don't know what the future holds for Wycombe Wanderers. You can start to knuckle down to thinking next season may see us start in the Conference, but we hope it's in the Football League. I just wish we knew."

And the director offered these words for supporters wanting to buy season tickets. "We would like to apologise to supporters for the fact that there are no season ticket details for next season. But as we are not sure which league we'll be in, or what the fixtures will be, we hope they will bear with us."

## League replies to BFP

Dear Sir

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of May 14.

At the time when Aldershot went out of the League a decision was taken not to fill the vacancy. That decision was enforced by member clubs at a meeting on April 27 and subsequently re-affirmed at a meeting of the League's Shadow Board last Friday.

Two clubs will be shed from the Premier League in the near future and if at that time we were operating at a 72 club level it would mean the new Third Division operating with 26 clubs. The alternative

would be that three clubs would be relegated to the Conference. Neither option was felt to be acceptable.

So far as promotion from the Conference is concerned, Colchester United have not yet satisfied the membership criteria. Should they fail, then Wycombe Wanderers will be admitted, again subject to meeting the criteria.

You will, I am sure, excuse me from acknowledging individually all the submissions from supporters enclosed with your letter.

David Dent  
League Secretary