

Blues fans had bat for protection

BROTHERS Jamie and Robert Stone were caught by police taking a baseball bat to a Wycombe Wanderers away match to use in self-defence, a court heard on Monday.

The pair received a conditional discharge for a year with £12.50 costs each. The bat was also confiscated by Wycombe magistrates.

Wycombe Wanderers' club secretary John Goldsworthy, speaking after the case, condemned the action taken by the men even if it was for self-defence.

"We don't call them supporters of Wycombe Wanderers," he said.

He added that there was no need for the men to have taken the bat to the match. "It is not difficult to stay away from trouble," he said.

Craig Brewin, chairman of the Football Supporters Association, said: "People should not carry weapons for whatever reason." He added: "It just escalates the violence."

The Stone brothers admitted possessing an offensive weapon in a public place in their car on the way to the match at Kettering on April 22.

Roger Coventry, prosecuting, said police had found the bat in the car of Jamie, 21, and Robert, 32, when they were stopped in Arnison Avenue, High Wycombe.

He added that police had mounted a search operation because they feared trouble between Kettering and Wycombe Wanderers' football supporters.

By LUCY HYSLOP

Stephen Bennett, defending, said the men, who live in Gayhurst Road, High Wycombe, took the bat only for self-defence.

He added that Jamie knew two people injured in a previous attack between Kettering and Wycombe Wanderers' fans.

Mr Bennett added of the Stone brothers: "They are genuine supporters. They are not supporters looking for trouble."

Chris Jones, Press spokesman for the Vauxhall Conference League, said violence was rare at their matches. He added in principle that they stood by the police who helped to prevent trouble.

● Philip Crawley, 23, of Lime Avenue, High Wycombe, pleaded not guilty at Wycombe magistrates on Monday to possessing three steel pipes and two wooden clubs in Arnison Avenue, High Wycombe, on April 22.

His case was adjourned until July 8.