

Mum slates Blues' ticket deal for kids

MUM Sharon Deighton says Wycombe Wanderers' youngest fans are being ignored in the rush for FA Cup tickets.

Her own son Steven, 11, is a member of the Junior Blues. He has seen every Wycombe home game this season.

The club refuses to guarantee him a ticket for the big match against West Bromwich Albion in the FA Cup second round on December 6.

But chairman Ivor Beeks says Sharon is overreacting. He said the club is operating the fairest system possible. He said leagueline members, season ticket holders and vice-presidents are all entitled to one ticket each. "The fairest system is you make a ticket allocation where everybody is able to buy a ticket and nobody has more than one ticket," explained Mr Beeks.

Moreover, he pointed out Sharon is a

member of leagueline and entitled to a ticket which she can pass on to her son.

Sharon, of Queen Street, High Wycombe, said: "They are taking the kids bloody money off them but when it comes to this they are unimportant."

She added: "What is now going to happen is all those kids who watch Wycombe Wanderers every Saturday are now going to have to queue up with the general public who last saw Wycombe play at Wembley.

"If they are going to allocate tickets it should go across the board - from vice-presidents to Junior Blues."

Sharon and work colleague Steve Spriggs, whose son is in the same boat, faxed Wycombe chairman Ivor Beeks a letter last Tuesday outlining their protest.

Mr Beeks said that was the only protest he had received. "She is going over the top," commented Mr Beeks, "This is the fairest system of all."

Youngsters are being belittled

IN THE Midweek (November 24) you kindly wrote an article regarding the letter we sent to Mr I Beeks (Wycombe Wanderers) regarding our sons who are members of the 'Junior Blues' (young supporters club) and the way they had been ignored as far as allocation of tickets for the WBA FA Cup tie was concerned.

In the letter we sent to Mr Beeks, we stated that we felt the Board were belittling their youngest fans and questioning their importance to the club.

Mr Beeks did not redress this when we spoke to him, and indeed the article in Midweek, also contained no evidence of Mr Beeks' apparent concern about the young fans.

When it was suggested to Mr Beeks that a voucher system should have been used, he commented that it would not work. We wonder why all the major league clubs manage to make it work, and Wycombe Wanderers don't think they can?

According to Mr Beeks, we've been the only protest, does that make it less important.

Mrs S Deighton

Queen Street

High Wycombe and

Mr S Spriggs

The Crescent

Princes Risborough

Fans are being treated badly

MAY I, through your columns, ensure Ivor Beeks and Wycombe Wanderers Football Club, that the subject of ticket allocation and the way they treat regular and long-standing supporters is a very topical talking point.

Not content with the hefty fee from BSkyB Television, WWFC have now invited us to join the league-line for 13 weeks (fee £26), or buy a reduced rate season ticket (fee £44), so as to have a ticket opportunity for the West Bromwich game, which amounts to commercial blackmail and shows total disregard for both children and OAPs.

Even being a member of the Blues Club does not improve one's chances, the only tickets WWFC are concerned about, are the raffle tickets they send you to sell for them.

As a non-league club exempt to the first round of the FA Cup, it is obviously quite likely that this situation could arise, and with a little forethought fairer ticket allocation would have been possible.

A programme voucher scheme instantly springs to mind, provided the programmes not sold on match days have their vouchers cancelled.

I invite comments from Wycombe Wanderers, but will they charge me for the privilege?

David Williams

Croftwood

High Wycombe

Supporters will be disappointed

AS a season-ticket holder at Wycombe Wanderers, I am eagerly awaiting the December 6, clash with West Bromwich Albion, along with all Blues fans. The forthcoming occasion is marred, however, by the sad inevitability that many fellow supporters will be forced to view the match via the medium of B Sky B, as demand for tickets is sure to exceed supply.

The match capacity appears to have been set at 7,100, in line with the ground capacity stated in a recent match programme (v Bath City, October 17). FA regulations require that the visiting team be allocated 25 per cent of all tickets; that is to say 1,797, enough to fill the Hill-bottom Road end.

Presumably, they will also be allocated stand tickets on the same basis, allowing a further 320 tickets. This leaves marginally under 5,000 tickets for Blues fans, ensuring that many of the 4,000 regulars will lose out to the casual observer attracted by this particular tie.

Whilst this eventuality is to a certain extent inevitable, a simple remedy appears to suggest itself in the aforementioned programme article.

This clearly states that the stadium capacity will be increased to 8,500 following the installation of crush barriers to the Woodland terrace side of the ground. Had this option been followed, a further 1,400 tickets would become available, earning an extra £6,000 for the club, ensuring that nobody is denied the opportunity to watch the game, with the bonus that the match would go ahead without one side of the ground being filled to only 60 per cent capacity.

The club's failure to act in this matter is all the stranger when one considers that the said improvements are a condition of acceptance to the Football League should Martin O'Neill's team maintain their superb form to the end of the season.

I shall be at the West Brom game as I am already in possession of a ticket. By taking this simple course of action, the club are able to ensure that everyone who wants to be there is afforded the opportunity.

S F Parker
Edinburgh Avenue
Rickmansworth

We are disgusted with football club

OPEN letter to John Goldsworthy, Wycombe Wanderers FC.

As long time supporters of Wycombe Wanderers, we feel we must put pen to paper to voice our deep disgust at the allocation of tickets for the forthcoming FA cup tie with West Brom.

We are both league members and are, therefore, eligible for a child's concessionary season ticket, which our children make full use of.

On Sunday, we came down to Adams Park to purchase our tickets for the West Brom match and were appalled to find that we were unable to buy a ticket for the children, under your ruling of only one ticket per person.

While we do understand that there have to be restrictions on the purchase of these tickets, we feel that it is very unfair to penalise the children in this way. We are not asking for any extra tickets, just the usual allocation we have each home match.

Obviously, we shall have to queue again next Sunday, but there is now no guarantee that we will be able to obtain tickets for the Bucks Free Press stand for the children, in which case they will of course not be able to attend.

Maybe your reason for making this ruling is so that you will sell more adult tickets and therefore increase your revenue, but if that is the case, this is very bad public relations towards your future long-term supporters.

Both of these children are also Junior Blues members, but this does not seem to count towards any concessions by yourselves. We hear a great deal in the press about encouraging children to come along to matches, but maybe in your case this does not apply to FA cup ties.

We would like to point out that we are committed supporters of the club in many ways, but we feel this situation could have been handled in a much better way by including coupons in the programmes in recent weeks, and then the true supporters would not be experiencing the difficulties in obtaining tickets that they so obviously are.

P Griffiths and P Carter
Arundel Road
Sands
High Wycombe

Money continues to be squandered

IT has been obvious for some years that the majority of Wycombe councillors have been lacking in the necessary financial and planning abilities.

Had this not been so, I feel sure that Wycombe General Hospital would have now occupied the whole

of Loakes Park, and that Wycombe Wanderers Football Club would have been sensibly re-located south of the Cressex Roundabout and close to the M40, as recommended by the late Frank Adams.

Also I feel that millions of pounds would not have been squandered on the Stewart & Arnold site fiasco, and that the Swan Theatre would have been a much better building at a much lower cost to the rate-payers.

Until we elect councillors with the necessary qualifications, I feel our money will continue to be squandered.

Monty Seymour
Daws Hill Lane
High Wycombe

How would you allocate tickets?

STANDPOINT

IN THE week that hopeful Wanderers fans queue for football's gold dust, tickets for a big FA Cup game, letters are still bouncing in to our sports desk concerning the role of Blues fans.

The freedom to express your views is a crucial liberty; it's the reason for this newspaper's name. So Michael Payne's letter deserves its space, however much it will needle people down at Adams Park.

But its elements of utter bunkum need pointing out. Michael writes: "I can't remember any praise from Wycombe at all." Turn to a recent match-day programme, and read the manager's column. Last week: "Moaning, cheering, arguing or remaining silent, without you the club would not exist, and I am, despite everything, deeply indebted to you. Thanks!"

Sadly, some regular supporters are bound to miss out on Albion tickets, as a few fair-weather supporters get in first. A programme voucher scheme is a good suggestion. But other than that, what could the club do? Serious suggestions on a post-card please: we'll print your ideas in time for Liverpool in the Third Round.

Dear Sport,

WITH our results this season it is perhaps hard to criticise Martin O'Neill or the board who pull the purse strings at Wycombe Wanderers FC. But like other ardent supporters I've spoken to, and three of us go by car to 90 per cent of away games, we feel the squad is unbalanced.

For instance, we have in Scott, Casey, Greene, West, Guppy, Gooden (when fit) a surplus of forwards, plus goal-scoring halfbacks in Carroll, Thompson and Stapleton. But where mishaps occur, like this season when Creaser and Kerr are banned, what happens? Invaluable Stapleton is switched to left back, making us lopsided.

I feel the squad would be strengthened by the addition of two defenders, including a dominant central player and a good all-round midfield player, before the WBA game if possible.

I also feel, because of the intransigence of Wycombe District Council in not sanctioning a proper training ground, our preparation on Cressex School's plastic pitch will be a big disadvantage now the heavier grounds predominate (the Runcorn game last Saturday a good example).

Martin says we're at another disadvantage with the big clubs in full-time training. Brian Lee, manager during the golden Seventies, realised this and brought players in for extra training on Wednesdays and even Sundays I remember, and their stamina showed against teams like Bournemouth and Middlesbrough FCs.

Richard Brown
Booker Hill Road,
High Wycombe

Dear Sport,

JUST to reply to Arthur Church's letter in BFP on November 20.

I take it you are a director of Wycombe Wanderers or something to do with the running of the club.

I have spoken to dozens of Wycombe supporters who praised my letter. Also I have had phone calls from Wycombe supporters I don't know, supporting my letter.

I don't know where you get your information from. I would love to know. The only time I can remember getting any praise was when we were in the Isthmian League playing Kingstons away, and the programme read "We welcome directors of Wycombe and their coachloads of supporters." I was there, and for the last 17 years have hardly missed any games, home or away.

So I'm not a once-match wonder like many will be at the West Brom match. I can't remember any praise from Wycombe at all.

To cap it all, it looks like I will not be getting a ticket for the West Brom match, because I only follow them all over the country. This ticket fiasco. Why didn't Wycombe Wanderers give out vouchers at home matches? I will tell Mr Church why. Because Wycombe don't care about local supporters one bit.

If I don't receive a ticket for the West Brom match, and I speak for many others as well, I won't be following the Blues any more. Hopefully I will save a fortune.

I would love to have been a season ticket holder, but cannot afford to pay up front. Many other Blues supporters must be in the same position.

Michael Payne (painted blue man, Trophy Final)
Hillary Road,
High Wycombe