

'HUMBLE PIE' IS WAITING!



I HAVE just read Jonathan Acworths proposal in 'Team Talk' No.19 for a 3 or 4 up/down system between the GMVC and the Barclays League. Whilst I'm sure the idea appeals to the non-League fan, I don't consider it to be very practical in real terms.

Let us first consider the League clubs. With the exception of Colchester finishing runners-up to Barnet (and Newport going bust) we have seen the bottom League club win the GMVC the next year. In the case of Darlington and Colchester, the two most recent, they and their runners-up were about 18 points clear of the field.

I think it would be safe to assume that, for instance, if Torquay and Burnley had come down with Lincoln in '86-'87 they would have returned straight away. This is even more likely if you remember that, under Mr Acworth's proposals, that season's real runners-up – Barnet – would already have been promoted as runners-up to Scarborough. You would very quickly end up with a very weak GMVC dominated by the new ex-League sides every year.

On the subject of the League, if the bottom ten are the same every year, why are York and Wrexham currently second and third in Division Three? Why are Burnley and Exeter now in Division Two?

And what about the GMVC itself? How much excitement would have been generated in '91-'92 as Colchester and Wycombe powered their way up the table and away from the pack... safe in the knowledge that they had promotion sewn up weeks before the end of the season.

Then there are ground requirements and safety to consider. Could Runcorn have gained admission to the League? Could they or Kettering have survived the last two years in the League? Probably not: had Mr Acworth's proposals been in force in '86-'87 I would imagine that by now one or both of those clubs would be out of business.

As a Barnet supporter there is nothing I would like more than to see teams like Wycombe, Kettering and Telford in the League, but I want to see them strong and financially secure, like Wycombe are now and like Scarborough are becoming, *not* end up like Maidstone United. I feel that the current one up one down system should be maintained.

Incidentally, if the League's basement club this season doesn't finish in the top three in the GMVC in 1993-94, I will come down to the 'Team Talk' offices and eat a large portion of humble pie, but I think you'll find my comments bear out next year!

Mark Steele
Haywards Heath

History has proved you right so far Mark. However, I don't think Maidstone United's demise can be treated as a test case as they hadn't a ground. I look forward, perhaps, of seeing you in the 'Team Talk' office. Some of that 'humble pie' is waiting for you! S.W.

Kemp still eyes title

By CLAIRE NASH

GOAL-hungry football fans went home happy, but Slough Town and Dagenham and Redbridge have surely shot their hopes of catching Wycombe in the foot, after drawing 4-4 on Monday.

Slough now trail Blues by eight points and Dagenham and Redbridge sit 13 points behind the Conference leaders. Both no longer have any games in hand.

But the chasing sides' managers have sounded warning cries that they are not yet dead and buried.

"I feel we still have a chance to bridge the gap," said Slough boss David Kemp this week.

Kemp has been left utterly frustrated with injuries ravaging his side of some their best players. But they fought back from being 3-0 down at Dagenham to grab a point.

"We have shown a lot of character even though we have had disappointments. No matter how well you are playing, there is always bound to be a banana skin," said Kemp.

John Still, meanwhile, is determined his Dagenham and Redbridge side will play an open attacking game to cause an upset at Adams Park next Tuesday (ko 7.45pm). "We will go all out to attack. We have no option but to win the game."

He believes the season still has a long enough way to go for anything to happen to upset Wycombe's route to promotion. "I have been in football too long to believe anything is a foregone conclusion," he said.

Martin O'Neill was delighted to see his side's closest rivals' draw at Victoria Road.

"I think it was the best result for us," he said. Looking forward to next week's Dagenham and Redbridge game he said: "It will be tough, but very open and entertaining."

● THERE is a possibility that Blackburn Rovers defender Robert Dewhurst could remain at Wycombe even though his month's loan is up today, says Martin O'Neill. But he pointed out that Dewhurst will not be playing for anyone for at least 12 days because of a twisted knee.