

Put Wanderers' bad patch into right perspective

I HAVE been a long-time supporter of Wycombe Wanderers, regardless of the fact that I have lived in Surrey for the past 12 years, and have been to by far the greater percentage of Wanderers' matches, both home and away.

In this context I would take serious issue with your Steve Warren, and his totally out-of-place comments, reference Wake Up Blues, in a recent Midweek.

May I say that most teams in a season hit the proverbial dodgy period, but clubs with backbone usually come through it.

In the Wanderers' case, the injury list has not helped. However, I do hope that Mr Warren was among us last Thursday evening at Dagenham, when, with a much changed line-up, we witnessed one of the great Wycombe performances, showing the marvellous spirit within the club.

Every player on the field played for each other as though their lives depended on it, and no more so than Mark West, reborn as one of the great leaders of the front line.



Reborn? Mark West

Manager Martin O'Neill and his players were given the most marvellous ovation at the final whistle, richly deserved. So will your columnists please get things in perspective in future, and stop making comments which do not do justice to events as they really unfold?

I am sending this letter to the club and hope that the management find it worth making reference to in a forthcoming programme.

**Derek Easden
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Disgruntled fan ignored facts

ON behalf of the club, I feel I should reply to the provocative letter published in last week's Bucks Free Press from a clearly disgruntled Slough Town supporter, Mr Dennis Proctor.

In his letter, Mr Proctor made several accusations, namely that the organisation at Wycombe is "no better than Sunday League standard", and that Adams Park is "a disaster area waiting for a tragedy to happen".

Use of that kind of emotive language is highly irresponsible and I feel that Mr Proctor should be made aware of a few facts.

He criticises the location of Adams Park and the fact that his 12-mile journey to the ground took an hour. Mr Proctor admits to having visited our ground before and makes no mention of encountering problems on previous occasions.

As he says himself: "It was always obvious that there would be a large crowd," so he might have been well advised to leave home a little earlier – but that's his business.

We are sorry that there is only one road leading to the ground, but there is nothing that Wycombe Wanderers FC can do about that.

I would remind Mr Proctor that the club wanted to have the new ground built on several more suitable sites only to be consistently rejected by the local authority, but that's history.

Our club secretary, John Goldsworthy, has already dealt with several of Mr Proctor's accusations. The club decided not to make the game all-ticket following consultation with the police, who also liaised with the match referee before deciding not to delay the kick-off time.

This is normal procedure for any major sporting event. Only one turnstile was opened because the club and the police felt that this would facilitate more effective crowd control.

I do not know which Sunday League Mr Proctor has been lucky enough to attend, but suffice it to say that I have found the organisation at Wycombe Wanderers second to none in non-league circles. In fact, the Football League, of which we hope to be members next season, are satisfied that our club already has the administrative ability to cope with life at a higher level and I do not know of a secretary more highly regarded than John Goldsworthy.

Over 100,000 spectators have now attended Adams Park since August, easily a record for the non-league game, and there have been no major problems and only a few arrests (most of them visiting supporters). This club has consistently coped with very large crowds in the past three seasons and police have

praised the standard of spectator behaviour and co-operation from club officials.

On the only occasion when there was a potential problem – a fire on the adjoining industrial estate – the club and our supporters drew praise from the police for the way the emergency was handled.

Adams Park was built to comply with the most stringent safety standards in the wake of the Taylor Report, it has the most modern facilities for crowd control, and the capacity has been set at a figure which allows everyone a safe and comfortable view. It is one of the safest football grounds in England.

I was very disappointed with Mr Proctor's letter and with the decision of the Bucks Free Press to publish views which so clearly ignore the facts. I strongly uphold the right to freedom of speech and I hope that the BFP will safeguard that principle by agreeing to publish this article to set the record straight.

Alan Parry, Club Director
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IN OFF THE POST

Dear Sport,

AS AN occasional visitor to Adams Park I feel obliged to present a different view of the Wycombe versus Slough match than that from Mr Dennis Proctor in last week's paper.

With family and other football commitments coming first, I am only able to visit Adams Park about a half dozen times a year. I find it an excellent ground at which to watch football.

On the night in question, I miscalculated the time required to get into the ground and only arrived at 7.20pm. The crowd was obviously going to be at least near to capacity so I had no-one to blame but myself when I was confronted by a choice of queues.

I opted for the queue which was intended for away supporters, along with many others from Wycombe. We waited patiently as the queue moved slowly but steadily towards the turnstiles, and I made it into the ground at 7.50pm.

These are the same turnstiles allocated to all away fans who use the terraces. It is a simple system: first come, first served. I do not know of a ground in the country where particular provision is made for neutral spectators.

A regular fan told me at work the next day that he had arrived at the ground at the same time as me. But he went to the far end and was inside within ten minutes. I should have done my homework!

I was just pleased to get in and see the game. I should have arrived earlier to get a better view, but that is my fault. Not Wycombe Wanderers', not The Thames Valley Police's.

I am not surprised Mr Proctor's journey took one hour as there is an awful lot of traffic in this area at any time. The reference to the Hillsborough tragedy is the usual red herring. That situation was caused by people (at an all-ticket game) arriving too late to get into the match on time in a safe and orderly manner. Again as usual, the authorities and Police were deemed by many to be culpable. What nonsense!

As to Mr Proctor's question as to why Slough lost? I would suggest that they were just not good enough on the night. The Slough supporters around me had come to that conclusion well before the end of the game even when Andy Kerr disgraced himself and his club. Wycombe were actually looking very much more like the team with the extra men before the end.

The reference to 2,500 Slough fans is interesting. Wycombe's average gate is over 4,000. Many 'casuals' like myself made the effort because of the importance of the match. It's a pity for the future of Slough Town that some of their "casual" locals do not make the effort to attend home games in such big numbers.

With the lift this would give their club, perhaps in a few years' time this part of the country could have more representation at Conference and Football League level. I'm thinking of Chesham United and Aylesbury United too.

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