

Carlisle have bogey to break

CARLISLE have an added incentive in getting their season off to a good start — they have not won an opening game at Brunton Park for 29 years.

It may be an omen which bodes well for Blues. But it is just one ingredient which — combined with the 13 new faces their hype-fanning chairman Michael Knighton has drafted in — has got the Cumbrian outpost abuzz.

“The town is very excited about this game for two reasons. The first is that Wycombe Wanderers are having their first game here. The second is that people here want to see how our 12 new players will fare,” said the club secretary Jim Thoburn.

Tomorrow’s game will reunite Martin O’Neill with his Northern Ireland team-mate David McCreery, who was appointed by Knighton as Carlisle’s player-coach at the beginning of last season.

But the chairman, who tried to take over Manchester United a few years back (remember the Bryan Robson hug, and cringeworthy penalty attempts on the Old Trafford pitch), has expanded his managerial team to include Mick Wadsworth as director of coaching, and Mervyn Day as a second player-coach.

The crowded dug-out is part of Knighton’s plan to put Carlisle in the Premier League within ten years.

“We stopped losing money last year and are now going forward,” said Thoburn.

George Oghani, Carlisle’s top scorer from last season, is expected to be part of their new-look line-up tomorrow.