

OUT OF THE BLUES

DEAN JONES reports on Wycombe Wanderers' league campaign

THE honeymoon is over for Football League new boys Wycombe Wanderers.

Wycombe had glided through their first six league games almost without blemish and certainly without defeat.

But could anyone have foreseen that when the Blues finally came down to earth, it would be with such an enormous thud?

Wycombe's 5-2 home defeat at the hands of Colchester United in the Endleigh Division 3 soon had the statisticians delving back through the club records for a defeat of comparable magnitude.

Apparently the Blues have not suffered such a mauling at home since they moved to Adams Park three years ago.

The shockwaves will no doubt reverberate for some time yet. But when Wycombe's usually watertight defence, which had conceded just eight goals in the first six matches, is ripped to shreds with such ruthlessness, it is bound to take time to sink in.

But there were extenuating circumstances. For almost the last hour of the match Wycombe played with ten men after skipper Jason Cousins had harshly been sent off for handball.

The sending-off could have pleased neither manager Martin O'Neill nor the 6,000-plus crowd. Particularly as the Blues were leading at the time with a goal from Keith Scott.

It has always struck me that sending off a player so early in the match is an affront to common sense and can ruin the match as a spectacle for the fans. But not this time.

Wycombe's ten men heroically, if naively, pressed forward only to leave themselves exposed to the counter-attack. They were murdered.

All of which left boss O'Neill licking his wounds and rueing a refereeing decision that he believes cost Wycombe the game.

Referring to the sending-off, O'Neill told the Blues clubline: "It's like a meteorite coming out of the sky and hitting you and changing the complexion of the game."

"It was not their (Colchester's) great play that changed the complexion. The game changed with the referee deciding to send someone off."

This might sound a little like sour grapes. But the thought of facing FA Premiership side Coventry City this week should concentrate the mind.

Should they sign former Arsenal and England star Kenny Sansom, as they would surely like to do, in time for the big game, it would add much-needed league experience at a time when morale may have ebbed in the face of the Colchester defeat.

**Words: MARK RACE
Pictures: MATT FOWLER**

A SPECTACULAR celebration of a century of first-class education attracted thousands of people to John Hampden Grammar School on Sunday.

Former Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington opened the day by releasing 100 balloons in the school's colours of yellow and black, and paved the way for an afternoon of outstanding entertainment.

Lord Carrington told the crowd: "People 100 years ago would not recognise what is here now, but one thing they would know is this is a good school, well run and something about which the people of High Wycombe can be very proud."

Highlights included a re-enactment of the Battle of Chalgrove, a five-a-side match between Wycombe Wanderers and the school's sixth-form team and to top it all, a parachuting display by the world-famous Red Devils.

Other attractions included a collection of vintage British motorbikes such as Triumphs, BSAs and Nortons, a collection of Mini cars and antique bicycles.

The school band entertained the crowds which flooded to the site



John Elsdon rides high

off Marlow Hill, High Wycombe.

A time capsule, which organisers had hoped to bury on the day, will now be embedded in the walls of a new technology block, because of fears that it would become water-logged.



Blues player Chuck Moussaddik (right) takes on a sixth former