

OUT OF THE BLUES

DEAN JONES reports on Wycombe Wanderers' progress

ROLL on Saturday.

The next game cannot surely come soon enough for Football League new boys Wycombe Wanderers after two weeks in which they have damaged their rivals' promotion chances as much as they have enhanced their own.

Endsleigh Division 3 front-runners Crewe Alexandra and Preston North End have both bitten the dust at the hands of the Blues in the past eight days. Now Wycombe are fourth in the table and surely ready for anything the Football League can throw at them.

With confidence riding on a crest of a wave, Wycombe take a break from league action this week for the so-called romance of the FA Cup.

Let's hope this season's cup adventure turns out not to be a brief flirtation but a full-blown love affair.

Wycombe will be praying that their destiny will be Manchester United away somewhere along the route to Wembley.

But first there is the little matter of Cambridge United in the second round. The visitors at Adams Park this Saturday may not be the force that John Beck guided to two successive FA Cup quarter finals in 1990 and 1991 but Wycombe must respect a team that toppled Endsleigh Division 2 leaders Reading at Elm Park in the previous round.

I wouldn't think Cambridge will be looking forward to a tie at Adams Park given that FA Carling Premiership Coventry City came close to losing a three-goal advantage there. And Cambridge may choose to defend in depth in the hope they can take Wycombe back to the Abbey Stadium.

In my teens I used to watch Cambridge in the days of Steve Fallon, Steve Spriggs and Aylesbury lad Floyd Streete. The Cambridge ground is a compact little stadium and would provide an intimidating environment for Wycombe in any replay.

But big — if hostile — crowds do not seem to worry Wycombe as they showed when they beat Preston North End 3-2 in front of nearly 10,000 Lancastrians at Deepdale last Saturday.

There, by all accounts, Martin O'Neill's team deserved their win and won in a manner that would have pleased soccer legend and the now Preston club president Tom Finney. The former England winger could not have failed to be impressed with Hakan Hayrettin's 40 yard injury time winner, if not the style of their play.

"They (Wycombe) played it quite nicely around and they scored three nice goals," Finney told Blues clubcall line afterwards.