
Blues need to wipe slate clean

MARTIN O'Neill and his players face their toughest challenge yet in stemming their current bleak run of results.

The Wycombe manager has not yet spoken to the press about Saturday's defeat by Wigan or given his reaction to Tuesday's match against Rochdale being postponed because of a snowbound pitch.

His players lack of confidence, following their third League defeat on the trot, has to be boosted for tomorrow's crucial trip to Gillingham.

It is followed by Tuesday's Autoglass Trophy regional final first leg at Swansea.

Gillingham are fifth from bottom in the table, but, as has been illustrated repeatedly by other lowly-ranked Division Three teams, they will be as difficult to beat as anyone else.

First team coach Paul Franklin was the only member of Blues' dug out team discussing the present atmosphere.

"I'm disappointed the lads did not play well. We were lacking in confidence which is amazing considering we were second in the

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league beforehand," he said.

"We know we can get enough points to win promotion. We will put out teams we think are capable of winning the matches for us."

Franklin admitted that skipper Terry Evans' absence has been a blow, both to the team's performance and morale.

"The injury problems have not helped. Losing Terry was a massive blow as is Duncan Horton being out with a hernia.

Evans' injury problems echo what happened last season when club captain Glyn Creaser was ruled out for the rest of the season after his heel was crippled.

Creaser is set to return from a month's loan at Yeovil after this weekend.

●Triallist Paul Shepstone has been released after two months. The former Motherwell player has joined Vauxhall Conference club Stafford Rangers. Another triallist Steve Prindiville, who joined Blues from Doncaster Rovers, has left to team up with Halifax boss John Bird.