
High Wycombe Rugby Club's efforts in bringing first-class sport to the town are not always easy. But DAVID CLOUGH discovers such hard work is invariably rewarding for their dedicated volunteers

A LOT of hard graft and plenty of enthusiasm have gone into making High Wycombe Rugby Club Buckinghamshire's only National League outfit.

Wycs' lot is not without its restrictions, though. Their Kingsmead ground, for example, is on trust land, leased from Wycombe District Council, and as such cannot be as autonomously managed as a private club base.

Nonetheless, the rugby club's achievements, rather than park-land base, place Wycombe at least on a par, nationally, with their footballing counterparts in the town – the much-vaunted Wycombe Wanderers.

It is a parallel not lost on Wycs' secretary Don Dickerson, but something he is careful not to dwell upon.

"They are two different sports, with two different followings," he accepts matter-of-factly.

The club, however, did beat Wycombe Wanderers to progressing to a first-class league in their sport. They moved up from South West Division One three years ago into Division Four (South), which has now become Division Five, thanks to some reorganisation.

But Wycombe have not reached their summit, Dickerson is anxious to stress. He and chairman Rod Hills are adamant the club can realistically expect to go as far as National League Three – or, put another way, among the top 30 clubs in the country.

Kingsmead, the rugby club's home since 1929, does put limitations on just what Wycs can do there, though.

First, they can play rugby, but byelaws prevent them charging anyone to watch the game.

More than 1,600 people watched Wycs in their Pilkington Cup match against Midlands club Moseley three years ago. Wanderers regularly draw

4,500 to 6,000 for weekly League matches.

Wycs' only source of revenue from their big game was from the sale of match programmes, which spectators could choose to buy or ignore.

"A lot do buy the programmes, but we are relying on the good nature of the people in the end," Dickerson observes.

Wycombe, though, are a club who help themselves whenever possible. Match programmes are of good quality and good value, and the patronage

of a hardy 300 or so regular supporters, from a club membership approaching 800, is assured.

Another option open to the Wycombe management is to put up a temporary stand at Kingsmead. Along with the possibility of fencing off the ground and charging admission on 12 occasions a year, it is something they have never yet considered worthwhile.