

Disgruntled fan airs Blues views

I WRITE to you in the hope that you will print this letter and it will encourage enough of the disgruntled Wycombe Wanderers' supporters to speak up and eventually persuade the club to treat the fans with respect for a change.

My husband and I are both season ticket holders at the club and feel that we must write and complain following the treatment we and other fans received at the opening game of the season.

The police, the stewards and the club (to a degree) seem to be making rash decisions and the fans seem to take the brunt of it.

Our season tickets were bought at the earliest opportunity as it is cheaper for us and it also gives the club ready capital to use or invest.

Several weeks later, the club decided to introduce an instalment scheme. Why on earth did they not introduce this at the beginning, so that everyone had the opportunity to purchase their season tickets in this way?

We have also been asked to specify which stand we want to be in for the whole season. Again, we have had to move out of the Hillbottom Stand to accommodate the away fans.

We watched the game on Saturday and were enjoying the game from our new position in the Davenport Vernon Stand and, as usual, a number of the fans were leaving the game early.

It was with great surprise that the stewards were refusing to allow the fans to leave via entrance three, which is where we came into the ground. Apparently, a decision had been taken ten minutes before the end of the game that the whole of the Davenport Vernon Stand would have to leave the ground via entrance six.

A number of fans complained as we did. I asked the steward to explain the reasoning behind this and of course he had not got a clue. As this stand holds the largest number of fans, it is ridiculous to expect them all to leave by one gate.

We spoke to a policeman who was guarding entrance three, who advised us that it was for our own safety because the away fans' coaches were outside.

This, of course, does not take account of the several hundred Cambridge fans who were quite happily mixing with the Wycombe fans and walking back to their cars down Hillbottom Road together.

We are told by the stewards that it is done on police orders. Do the police now own and run the football club? It is certainly beginning to look that way.

I have been a football supporter for many years now, and the majority of other clubs that I have visited in the upper levels of the Football League make the decision to keep the away fans back for five or ten minutes if they feel there might be trouble after the game.

As there was no indication that there might be trouble, there seemed to be no reason why we could not have left through the entrance through which we came.

It seems to me that every time something happens at the football club, the stewards and the police behave in the exact opposite way in which you would expect them to.

Some incidents that come to mind are Colchester - where some of their fans spent the whole game chanting racist slogans; Swansea - where we had a pitch invasion; and Carlisle - where the same people invaded the pitch as they did three days earlier at their home ground in Carlisle.

I am sending a copy of this

letter to both the club and the police's controller of football matches. After all, it is time the club remembered that without the paying fan, the club would disappear and we certainly heard enough people state that they would not return to the club to be treated like this.

Unfortunately for us, the club already has our money, but hopefully this letter may make them think and start to put the paying fan at the top of the list, instead of the bottom of the pile to be trampled all over.

Name and address supplied

A WYCOMBE Wanderers fan has praised police bosses for punishing a Metropolitan officer who taunted supporters at Wembley stadium.

The 48-year-old High Wycombe man wrote to police boss Sir Paul Condon complaining that PC 186SV John O'Donovan was inciting the crowd to cause trouble during Wycombe's Third Division play-off final against Preston, in May.

Now the offending constable has been reprimanded and banned from doing crowd control at the famous football stadium.

The fan who complained about PC O'Donovan

thanked West Hendon police station for their rapid response.

"I was very impressed with the reaction and the way my letter went down the line so quickly.

"They have taken it on board and responded well to a public complaint."

The man said he was outraged by PC O'Donovan's behaviour at the match, which Wycombe won 4-2.

"I felt that he was intimidating our supporters.

"He was persistently pointing at people in the crowd and was distracting from the action that was happening on the field. Then we had the heavy boys coming in and ejecting people.

"There was no trouble when the stewards were there - only when he was."

Chief Superintendent Robert Spencer-Knott, of West Hendon police, said his officer had been loaned to Wembley for the play-off match.

He added: "I was so horrified I just hope it never happens again.

"He will never be given the chance to take part in an activity like that again."

Chief Supt Spencer-Knott refused to disclose details of PC O'Donovan's punishment to the Bucks Free Press but said he had not been sacked from the force.

PC O'Donovan was unavailable for comment.