



**Poise under pressure:
Paul Hyde**

FACT FILE

Wrexham are riding high after causing one of the shocks of the FA Cup third round.

Brian Flynn's men beat Ipswich Town 2-1 at the Racecourse Ground two weeks ago which earned a crack at Manchester United and sparked a return to emphatic form in Division Two.

The Robins crushed Leyton Orient 4-1 at home last weekend. They inflicted the same score on Wycombe in their last League defeat before Saturday's lapse at Rotherham.

Wrexham are merely mid-table in Division Two. But they have games in hand and should be in the top five, come the end of the season.

KEY THREAT

Gary Bennett, who scored a hat-trick against Blues in Wrexham's 4-1 win last November, is now the nation's leading scorer with 28 goals.

It is amazing the 31-year-old striker has never played for a top-flight club, as his predatory instincts around the penalty area are second to none. Bennett causes a host of problems for defences, not just by his freescoring tendencies, but also by setting up chances for his team-mates.

Kieron Durkan is also a threat, the 21-year-old scoring that impressive volley on the run against Ipswich.

The strikers are effectively serviced by skilful playmaker Gareth Owen and winger Karl Connolly.

HOW THEY STAND

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Birmingham	25	7	4	1	29	8	7	4	2	18	9	50
Huddersfield	26	9	2	2	24	13	4	6	3	22	19	47
Crewe	26	9	1	3	30	18	5	3	5	22	27	46
Oxford Utd	25	8	2	2	18	11	6	2	5	25	20	46
Brentford	25	8	1	4	24	9	6	2	4	22	14	45
Wycombe	24	7	4	1	18	9	6	2	4	17	18	45
Hull	26	8	2	3	26	13	4	4	5	16	23	42
Bristol R	23	8	5	0	32	14	3	4	3	9	7	42
Blackpool	26	8	1	4	25	18	4	2	7	16	26	39
Stockport	25	7	1	5	22	15	5	2	5	17	18	39
Bradford	26	5	3	5	16	17	6	3	4	19	19	39
York	25	7	2	3	22	12	4	3	6	14	13	38
Wrexham	23	7	3	2	26	14	3	4	4	16	18	37
Swansea	25	5	5	2	13	7	4	5	4	19	19	37
Rotherham	25	8	2	3	23	15	1	3	8	8	16	32
Peterboro	25	2	7	4	15	22	5	3	4	16	21	31
Brighton	25	5	5	2	13	8	2	4	7	13	25	30
Cambridge	25	5	4	3	22	18	1	4	8	12	25	26
Shrewsbury	25	5	3	4	19	15	2	2	9	12	19	26
Plymouth	23	3	2	6	12	24	3	2	7	11	24	22
Cardiff	26	2	4	8	13	18	3	2	7	14	22	21
Bournemouth	26	3	3	7	14	24	1	3	9	9	26	18
L Orient	25	4	4	4	11	10	0	1	12	6	29	17
Chester	25	3	2	7	12	25	0	2	11	4	22	13

RESULTS

Saturday, January 14: Blackpool 2, Cambridge 3; Bournemouth 0, Plymouth 0; Brentford 0, Swansea 0; Bristol Rovers 3, Oxford United 2; Cardiff 0, Huddersfield 0; Crewe 4, Brighton 0; Peterborough 0, Bradford 0; Shrewsbury 1, Chester 0; Stockport 4, Hull 0; Wrexham 4, Leyton Orient 1; York 2, Birmingham 0.

BLUES' LEADING GOALSCORERS 1994/95

Simon Garner	10
Cyrille Regis	9
Keith Ryan	6
Terry Evans	4
Dave Carroll	3
Steve Thompson	2
Mickey Bell	2
Jason Cousins	2
Lee Turnbull	2

The dragon roars down on Wycombe

Gary Bennett is the man to watch at Wrexham. He is in white-hot form and topping the goalscoring charts.

Manager Brian Flynn, a Welshman with 66 caps to his name, told me: "Gary's a great goalscorer, who suits the style we play, which is all about creating chances. He'll look for those chances and get them!"

But Wycombe fans mustn't be lulled into a false sense of security by thinking Wrexham are a one-man team.

Brian said: "Last season I would've said we relied heavily on Gary's contribution. I don't think anyone else got into double figures last year from other departments. This year Steve Watkin has been scoring regularly as has Karl

WYCOMBE take on Wrexham tomorrow (Saturday) so reporter Ian Rodgers sneaks into the enemy camp to get some tips for Martin O'Neill.

Connolly who is on seven or eight goals. This year we're scoring from all areas."

On the plus side for Wycombe, Cyrille Regis and Simon Garner will be looking to Wrexham's defensive frailties this season to secure the three points. Brian is quick to point out that his defence is only suffering because of the forward-thinking style adopted by the Robins.

He said: "At home and away, we'll go out and attack people – that's our philosophy,

going at the opposition. We paid a lot of money for our goalkeeper, Andy Marriott, and I can't think of one single goal he can be blamed for. We've still conceded far too many this year but as an attacking team we will concede goals."

Brian uses Wycombe Wanderers as a prime example of what can be achieved by the smaller club.

"It's just greed," he said. "Pure and simple greed. Wycombe have shown if you work hard enough, make the right decisions and learn from your mistakes, you can achieve anything and Martin O'Neill has proved that. It just goes to show how you can progress through the league – you can go all the way. And that's the beauty of the game here, dreams can come

true.

"Watford, Wimbledon, Tranmere and Swansea, although they came down again, were all the same and showed what can be achieved. You've got to keep people's dreams alive for the game to survive.

"It's all about getting into Division One and from there, the Premier League. You mustn't deny players and fans that dream."

One thing's for certain, the game at Adams Park tomorrow (Saturday) is likely to be exciting for fans. Wrexham are on a high after recent victories over Ipswich Town and Leyton Orient. And remember, the men from North Wales will be competing for that elusive first team place against Manchester United in the FA Cup fourth round.

RAIN HITS BLUES' POCKET

WEEKEND storms robbed the county of hundreds of sports fixtures, and Wycombe Wanderers of between £5,000 and £10,000.

That was the club's estimate of money spent on arrangements and lost on revenue for their abandoned Division Two match at home to Wrexham.

Only a modest amount will be recouped by the extra mid-week fixture when the Wrexham game is finally played, and policing and catering costs are expenses that will have to be met again.

Saturday's torrential rain turned Adams Park into a quagmire, and referee John Holbrooke duly called the match off just before 1pm, two hours before the scheduled kick-off.

Club spokesman John Reardon confirmed the referee, who made the three-hour trip from Ludlow to arrive at the ground by 9.15am, had no choice but to call the game off when he did.

"It was the torrential rain between 12 and one that was the deciding factor. There

By DAVID CLOUGH

was just no way – the ball just would not have bounced, and the weather was not expected to change all afternoon," Reardon reported.

Wycombe and Wrexham fans were luckier than thousands nationwide, with many of the 50 senior football matches that fell foul of Saturday's weather not being abandoned until much nearer kick-off time.

The Wycombe game was one of the first cancellations to appear on the BBC's Grandstand and Radio Five Live. Nearby, Oxford United's home game with Stockport was not called off until after 2pm.

As well as Oxford, other Division Two high-fliers Birmingham City and Huddersfield had to cancel their games on Saturday.

Crewe were also thwarted at Swansea, but Brentford moved into second with a win at Hull, who are seventh, one place behind Wycombe.

Martin O'Neill's men, in action in the Berks and Bucks

Senior Cup against Chalfont St Peter tonight, are storing up plenty of fixture congestion. They had already played two games less than most of their promotion rivals, before the latest cancellation.

Rain-ruined fixtures were not restricted to the Football League on Saturday.

Marlow and Chesham United had both their FA Umbro Trophy matches cancelled, and only four Diadora League matches, including no local teams, were played.

The storms also accounted for most rugby matches, and even High Wycombe Hockey Club's Nastro Azzurro League game against Lyons had to be abandoned after ten minutes of play – on the "all-weather" Cressex Astro-turf pitch.

Sunday's Alan Grimsdell Bucks Cup, due to involve five South Bucks rugby teams, was badly disrupted too.

But one fixture did survive, between High Wycombe and Beaconsfield at Kingsmead, where the National League team proved their superiority in a convincing 56-17 win.