

A VIEW FROM THE STAND

By Ron
Barnett



Hit and hope is not enough

LAST Saturday my company were match sponsors so, as well as enjoying an excellent pre-match meal, I was able to listen to Alan Smith handle a questions and answers session.

Quite rightly, the Bald Eagle is proud of the club's unbeaten run of nine league matches but like many people at the club, he is disappointed in the home attendances and feels that some supporters expect too much of the team.

Whilst I agree we have more than our fair share of whingers, who seem to enjoy baiting particular players (John Williams being the current vogue), the vast majority of Blues fans try their best to lift the team.

However, having paid good money to follow Wycombe the fans deserve to be entertained and, unfortunately, the entertainment level has been pretty low this season. Saturday's match was a prime example – whilst it was great to chalk up three points, the atmosphere during and after the game was very flat.

This is hardly surprising when the slick passing movement that produced Dave Carroll's goal stood out like a shining pearl amongst a pile of discarded oyster shells.

Our two front players are not the tallest of men and were unable to shake off their markers. Despite this we spent much of the match pumping high 50/50 balls at them straight out of our defence.

This meant we were often by-passing our midfield where, in Steve Brown and Dave Carroll, we have two players who can carry the ball and pass accurately to feet. This was proved by Dave Carroll's excellent one-two with Miguel Desouza for the winning goal.

This neat piece of approach play was typical of many Wycombe goals over recent seasons and reminded me of a five-a-side move. Of course, we're pretty successful at that game! Can we have more of that please Alan?

At the moment the Blues seem to have a hard core support of around 4,000 with the remaining floating punters needing to be enticed along. A string of good results and a place amongst the league leaders helps to get these extra fans to the ground but they still want to be entertained.

Whilst the committed fans may be happy to see the team grind out a 1-0 win, the number of floaters will only substantially increase if they feel they are seeing exciting and attractive football, and not a succession of hit and hope balls.

Hopefully we can extend our unbeaten run at this week's local derby with Oxford.

To show how much of a hypocrite (and committed fan) I am, I'll be delighted if I am bored rigid providing we beat the Yellow Perils!

Living just across the county border in Oxfordshire, I am surrounded by United fans who give me plenty of stick for following the Blues. Last year's two wins over them meant that I enjoyed a profitable supply of free drinks from Keith the local barman, who is a very sad case of Oxford optimism syndrome.

I hope to be downing more free beers this week and I'll be even happier if we can win by playing neat and stylish football.