
WINTER WIPE OUT

The big freeze wrecks New Year sports programme

By **CLAIRE NASH**

THE big chill saw to it that the New Year failed to see in last weekend's bumper sports programme.

Most of the football and rugby action was called off due to sub-zero temperatures, with a thaw on New Year's Day coming too late to save the day.

Wycombe Wanderers were among the worst hit with both their holiday games at Brentford on Saturday and at home to Rotherham on New Year's Day postponed due to freezing pitches.

It now means that Blues will not have another league game until their home date with Notts County on Saturday, January 13. They do not have a Division Two fixture this Saturday because opponents Blackpool are involved in the FA Cup third round.

Tenth-placed Blues will now play Queens Park Rangers reserves to help blow the cobwebs away and try and get their momentum going again, while their match at Blackpool will now take place on Tuesday, January 23.

Before the double postponement, Wycombe had hoped to continue their unbeaten Christmas record, taking on two sides who are struggling at the foot of the division following a win over Shrewsbury and a draw at highfliers Swindon.

The enforced fixture gap means that Jason Cousins, who had served two games of a four-match suspension, will not return until Wanderers entertain Brighton on January 27, missing the encounter against Notts County and a further game against Crewe.

Wycombe, who are set to lose up to £4,000 from the Rotherham postponement, will also face a potential fixture headache with the two axed games still to be rearranged and the chance that further matches may fall victim to the weather before this winter is out.

The icy conditions, which basically made pitches too hard and slippery to play on, also put paid to Icis League fixtures across the board on Saturday, with Marlow, Chesham, Thame, Chalfont St Peter and Flackwell Heath all having an extra day's rest.

There was a few success stories on Monday, however, with Chesham playing out a 0-0 draw at Uxbridge and Thame drawing 2-2 at Wembley.

High Wycombe Rugby Club's friendly against Ruislip was called off.

But the club didn't seem to mind despite their Courage League Division Five (south) campaign starting up again at Henley on Saturday after a two-month gap.