

Hope everyone can function

VIEW FROM THE STAND

By Ron Barnett



IT seems much longer than three weeks since our last competitive home match but let's hope the players and fans will not be too rusty on Saturday.

Our tough programme during the next 11 days sees the Blues taking on the fourth, first and third-placed sides – with the last two away from home. We couldn't have had a much harder start to the new year.

As our last two matches were against Shrewsbury and Swindon, we will have played the current top five clubs in succession.

Having taken four points from the last two games, another six or seven from the next three would be a great way to kick off 1996.

Noise

At least we can expect a decent sized crowd on Saturday, with Notts County sure to bring a reasonable number of supporters. Hopefully the fans will start the new year by making as much noise at Adams Park as we do on our travels.

■ Our old Colchester villain Roy McDonough was in the news again last week. The man we all love to hate was given a four-page feature in the Daily Telegraph magazine, covering his life both on and off the field, each being as colourful as the other.

Big bad Roy is now playing for Canvey Island and he reckons he has been sent off 19 or 20 times in senior football.

This sinner's red-card record makes Vinne Jones and Julian Dicks seem like angels.

Ryan's return is good sign

By Claire Nash

KEITH Ryan won't be letting superstition distract him from continuing his comeback from injury.

He is set to return in Monday's Berks and Bucks clash against Aylesbury United at Adams Park (ko 7.45pm), almost a year to the day from suffering a crippling knee injury against Chalfont St Peter at the same stage of the competition.

Torn cruciate ligaments in the low-key fixture last season threatened to wreck the stalwart central midfielder's career.

But Ryan's recovery has been carefully monitored to get him shipshape again without risking further damage or secondary injuries.

Viewing the prospect of the county cup clash, Ryan said this week: "Some superstitious people would be a bit sceptical about it. But it doesn't bother me. I'm just dying for a game of football to be honest."

While some will wince at the memory of what happened to Ryan last year – the midfielder played due to an inclement weather-induced dearth of first team league fixtures – many long-time Blues fans are looking forward to seeing Wycombe inflict a heavy defeat on their old rivals.

Blues have long since left Aylesbury trailing in their supersonic slipstream of a rise from the Isthmian League to the Football League.

But a bitter rivalry used to exist between both sets of supporters, and still does to an extent.



Ready to roast Ducks: Keith Ryan (right) in training

While Blues have gone from strength-to-strength, Aylesbury face an uphill battle to salvage their season. After the excitement of last year's FA Cup run which led to a third-round tie at Queens Park Rangers and an appearance on the They Think It's All Over sports quiz TV show, they now have little hope of gaining promotion to the Vauxhall Conference.

The dip in stalwart striker Cliff Hercules' enthusiasm and his subsequent departure to Slough was a major factor, as is the lack of new players – the Ducks favourite's £10,000 fee mainly being spent on upgrading Buckingham Road to Conference standard.

Icicle League journeyman Kevin Davies was signed from Chesham last week to curb the amount of blanks Aylesbury are firing up front.