

LETTERS

Saturday afternoons have become a drag

THIS is a copy of a letter sent to Alan Smith and Ivor Beeks. Please could you publish it as I would like it common knowledge what I think of Alan Smith. It contains not only my opinions but the opinions of a large number of the fans.

I have been a supporter of Wycombe Wanderers for six years and in all that time I have never seen them play as badly as they are now. I have been through the 'glory years' and with every club you expect to have a bad run, but does it have to last all season?

I have been a season ticket holder since I began supporting Wanderers and looked forward to my Saturday dose of football. I used to travel all over the country following them but now it is just not worth the effort.

Why should we have to travel hundreds of miles to watch 90 minutes of pure rubbish? It is bad enough going to home games. I will go to every home game this season and put up with the poor level of achievement purely because I have spent money on my season ticket and cannot afford to waste that.

Could you please explain to me what is happening to the team? The players used to enjoy playing football on a Saturday but now it just seems such a chore. What has happened to all the team spirit?

I will tell you. When you are getting rid of perfectly good players - Paul Hyde and Simon Garner if you haven't worked it out - then what do you expect?

You make such a fuss about the YTS opportunities given to young lads by the club and then you put one of our best young players, Anthony Clarke, on loan, when he was playing so well and scoring so often in the

reserves. You truly have made an impression on the fans since joining the club but I don't think it was the one you wanted to make.

We made allowances at the beginning of the season. You had just been given the job and needed time to adjust and get used to the way the club runs.

That time is rapidly running out and the fans that are backing you are few and far between. Is it not about time you started to achieve because the fans will not take kindly to watching their team being relegated?

This is the worst that we have performed for years and we are not going to put up with it for much longer.

You need to build up the team spirit, make them want to play football, keep the players that are performing well, and build up the right relationship with the fans.

There are many rumours flying around for the reason that Paul Hyde left. It cannot be good for the players trying to succeed in this sort of atmosphere.

Paul was a favourite among fans, old and new, and it will be a hard act to follow for whoever succeeds him. When we are reading in the papers that you may have to sell other players to get a goalkeeper it outrages the fans.

The main objective from now must be getting the team away from relegation and more geared towards promotion. If you get the fans on your side, you will have won half the battle. Let's have the old successful, happy, family club back and then all parties will be happy.

**Jennifer Hill, 16
Suffield Road,
High Wycombe**

When will Smith share in the blame?

RON Barnett hit the nail on the head with his column in last week's Bucks Free Press. Alan Smith must eventually take the blame for the poor performances of the Wycombe Wanderers team.

Before the season commenced we were informed that the players were unfit and badly coached, but this would be rectified in pre-season training.

This augured well for the coming season. After all, this was the team that finished sixth in the division last season, enough in any other year to make the play-offs, this while unfit and uncoached.

Attending the club's open evening last autumn, Mr Smith did himself no favours at all by running down the achievements of his predecessor.

This was compounded by further criticism of previous transfer policies and coaching in print. Meanwhile, on the pitch, Mr Smith's team continued to perform poorly.

Blame is laid at the players' doors as they are unable to

translate training and coaching methods into performances.

At home, attendances have dropped alarmingly and the games lack excitement and goals.

Away from Adams Park, results are erratic, with excellent results at Brighton, Oxford and Bradford matched by depressing performances at Walsall, Gillingham and Brentford, where the team were simply out-battled, something that rarely, if ever, happened in previous seasons.

Regarding the new players

■ If you have any views on how Wycombe Wanderers are performing, or any sports topic, you can write to Claire Nash, Sports Editor, Bucks Free Press, Gomm Road, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 7DW, or fax letters to (01494) 534015. Correspondents must sign their letters and include a full name and address. They may request that their details not be published. The Sports Editor reserves the right to change letters for space or legal reasons.

purchased at a cost of some £300,000, can anyone tell me they have performed better than those players released or no longer selected by the club.

Finally, there is the fiasco of Paul Hyde, an excellent goalkeeper being released by the club last week and snapped up by Martin O'Neill at Leicester.

The club will reply that great strides have, and are being made. The youth team set-up, the new stand (executive boxes and all), mean the club are in a much healthier position than many established league clubs.

But in the end it all boils down to the performances on a Saturday afternoon. It is through those that all the other things in the club progress.

What for the remainder of the season? Without a decent centre forward and team spirit, the lower reaches of Division Two beckon. For Wycombe that's not good enough.

**Bernard Carvell
Ridgeway Close
Marlow**

Complaints from the terrace are valid

I AM a season ticket holder at Wycombe and also attend some away games. I, therefore, always read the Bucks Free Press.

In Ron Barnett's column on Friday, February 2 he appears to be criticising the Wycombe supporters who booed and yelled their disapproval at some players and management following the Brentford game. I was one of the people voicing my opinion at a performance that lacked professionalism in

management, attitude and skill.

Why shouldn't supporters show their approval of a good performance and their disgust at a poor one?

We do not have the opportunity to go into the dressing room to address the players or visit Alan Smith's office to discuss his decisions, so we can only voice our opinion from the terraces.

I believe to have a go at the players and management

focuses their attention on just how bad their performance has been.

I would not criticise the team for putting on a good all-round show and being beaten by the better side on the day. But when a performance lacks guts, determination, concentration, and falls well below the level of skill you know is possible, of course you don't clap and say, 'better luck next time!'

Name and address supplied