

What a contrast to the O'Neill era

HAVING witnessed the dramatic decline in the morale and playing standards at Wycombe Wanderers since the advent of Alan Smith and his management team, it must be obvious to the chairman and directors that drastic remedies are necessary.

We have acquired a manager who, from his comments to the press, treats both fans and players with contempt.

He appears to have no management skills and his behaviour towards Terry Howard, Simon Garner and Paul Hyde is nothing short of disgraceful. Indeed his confrontations with the latter resulted in the start of a real slide into mediocrity.

Alan Smith's inability to motivate, or to have a rapport, is a particularly disturbing feature of his management style and the stark contrast between his laid-back attitude on match days, leaning against the stanchion in the dugout, apparently unconcerned, and Martin O'Neill's bubbling enthusiasm, only serves to deflate.

It is suggested there will be major

changes this summer, but it is not necessarily a change of player personnel which is required but a complete tactical overhaul, which I feel is beyond Alan Smith.

Under his management all personal skills have been neutralised and replaced by the ugly sight of what is laughingly referred to by spectators as the 'Smith hoof' from defence to attack.

We were asked by Alan Parry and Co to be patient, but recent displays bereft of skill and ball control have the Blues faithful very angry and depressed, hence the natural derision at the Rotherham and Swansea games.

Please take heed Mr Beeks and your fellow directors, otherwise the club is on a self-destruction course.

The motto for the coming months should be 'new stand, new manager'.

**Brian Hughes
Plomer Hill
Downley**

Encouragement not criticism

I THOUGHT I must reply to the letter last week from D Unson. I

thought what a good letter it was.

Last Saturday's match against Swansea was awful. The team seem to have lost the team spirit. The whole atmosphere has gone sour.

We can take defeats as long as we know that the team have played to their best. The manager should encourage them not criticise all the time.

Martin O'Neill left us in a good position and it is sad to see Alan Smith destroying all he had built up.

Supporters are already voting with their feet and lots will not be renewing their season tickets.

I hope the problem at Wycombe Wanderers will soon be sorted out.

**Joan Walker
Copes Shroves
Hazlemere**

This manager is a pure comic genius

I AM writing in the hope that you will publish and therefore make public my heartfelt thanks to Alan Smith for his services to comedy.

I greatly appreciate his approach to humour, which I find more cerebral than the, admittedly more successful, slapstick of Martin O'Neill.

For instance, after the home defeat by Swansea, he claimed that the team had been roundly booed and that he would be making changes, bringing in more experienced players. Hilarious, especially since he had previously dropped the experienced Terry Howard and Simon Garner.

If the banality of his logic was not rib-tickling enough, his blinkered ignoring of the fact that the crowd had been jeering him was a stroke of genius.

In my opinion, it takes a rare comic talent to blame our longest-serving and best players for his own inability to motivate his way out of a paper bag.

I am almost breathless with anticipation to watch his summer clear out, as Keith Ryan, Dave Carroll and Steve Brown are given free transfers to make room for the Mr Bean-like talents of McGrory and Hardyman. One can hope that Alan Smith can repeat his masterstroke of this season and spend more of the club's money on players like John Williams.

Although they lost a genuine trier, apparently it is the memory of the deal which has kept Coventry smiling throughout their otherwise grim campaign.

I must say, though, that amused though I am by Alan Smith's consistently mediocre signings, I think playing Coco the Clown in goal may be going a little too far.

It can only be a matter of time before the Bald Eagle will be able to reproduce at Wanderers the farce that was Palace's relegation season, and he must surely be given that time. Otherwise he might depart, Simon Garner would take over and Wanderers could play football again. And that just would not be funny.

**I Magee
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