

Youngsters make grade

WYCOMBE Wanderers youth team striker Damian Markman and defender Graham Hall have been offered professional contracts after helping their side finish third in the South East Counties League Division Two.

The team's showing has exceeded manager Neil Smillie's expectations with it being only their first term as a full-time youth training scheme set-up. Blues were pipped for second position by goal difference.

"I am highly delighted with the overall season in terms of the league position," said Smillie this week.

"The boys have performed

excellently. The team's position has exceeded all my early-season expectations and some of the boys have given themselves a chance to become professional footballers.

"Two members of the team have progressed into the pro ranks which puts us ahead of ourselves for our five-year plan. While we have had a good season results-wise, the main objective is to produce excellent footballers for the first team."

Blues boss Alan Smith confirmed yesterday that Markman, 17, and Hall, also 17, will be involved in the first-team set-up next term.

Watch it, the Millwall are coming

BLUES will have some new mouthwatering encounters next season after the final relegation places in Division One were resolved on Sunday.

Millwall's 0-0 draw at Ipswich was not enough to avoid the drop, while Wycombe's nearby neighbours Watford failed to pull off an amazing escape by going down 1-0 to Leicester City, managed by ex-Blues boss Martin O'Neill.

Both clubs join already-relegated Luton in Division Two, which should ensure some bumper derby gates at Adams Park next term.

Millwall's presence, though, is

one that not many expected even as recently as a few weeks ago, with Portsmouth and Reading also looking like relegation candidates as matters went down to the wire.

The east London club have suffered an incredible demise after leading Division One just last autumn, and the fans' reputation nosedived once more after trouble at Ipswich last weekend.

Wycombe are not perturbed about some sections of Millwall's support, however. "Their reputation goes before them because of what has happened in the past. The present fans are probably much better than they used to be

but when they have got a history, it colours people's views," said Blues secretary John Reardon.

Coming up, meanwhile, is the potential prospect of Blues battling against old rivals Colchester United next season, should their former foes win through the Division Three play-offs. Plymouth, Darlington and Hereford are also in the frame. Preston are champions, while Gillingham and Bury won automatic promotion.

Wycombe won't have quite so far to go on their travels next season. Carlisle were relegated after York beat Brighton 3-1 yesterday and join Swansea, Brighton and Hull in Division Three.

We owe it to Blues to cheer our lads

I REFER to the letter from N Major of Aylesbury on April 26. I have been standing in the AXA Equity & Law stand for a few years and I am also disappointed at the comments made recently.

When the Blues were in the Vauxhall Conference they were supported more. For a long time they did very well which was probably due to the lower standard. Now we are in Division Two and playing better opposition, we are suddenly booed off the pitch. Does this really help the players? Surely they need more encouragement now.

Shouting abuse at the officials is something fans do all over the country, but why go on and on. The players will not be helped by this constant moaning.

Think of what the Blues have achieved for us, particularly at

Wembley. We owe them something in return.

Mrs A Horwood
High Wycombe

Smith doesn't take responsibility

WELL, it's the end of a disastrous season for Wycombe Wanderers under the supervision of their new manager Alan Smith.

As a supporter, I find it very hard to express my feelings about the present situation. Never once has Smith taken responsibility for the poor results that the supporters have to put up with week after week. I don't think anyone who has followed Wycombe during the last few years would mind not getting results at matches, as long as the standard of football was good and entertaining.

Unfortunately, the way Mr Smith has turned our team inside-out from

a great winning attitude, to a boring, non-committal game where not only the supporters were fed up and demoralised, but also the players.

Never once did Smith or Kemp take responsibility, dumping good players along the way who have done so much for the club, only to be replaced by much more expensive players that were no better than the players they replaced. Even the Blues quartered strip that most supporters preferred is being axed and replaced with a dreadful kit that nobody likes, conned into thinking they were choosing something they wanted.

Doesn't Mr Smith listen to what is being said by the people that pay his wages - the supporters? Doesn't Mr Smith understand that when the supporters are booing at the end of a pitiful performance, it is him we are reacting to, and his boring style of play, not the players as they have already proved themselves.

Lastly, let me say, that this man

does not appear to be a man of his word. In past weeks, he has always denied his intention of getting rid of Vauxhall Conference players as not good enough for the league, but that is exactly what he is doing.

Hyde for a start, replaced with more expensive, less-abled goalkeepers. Now the next 12 players: Jason Cousins, Keith Ryan, Terry Howard, Matt Crossley, Dave Carroll, Simon Stapleton, Simon Garner included. It's about time the chairman realised that the main factor in the club's decline is in fact his manager, Mr Smith himself. Wake up Ivor! or you won't have a club to chair.

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May I be smug as I'm an Oxford fan

MAY I just take this opportunity to

thank the Wycombe faithful for the splendid entertainment that their bickering and moaning has provided us with this season.

It would seem that all is not well at Adams Park, and that Alan Smith is about as popular as a fart in a spacesuit. Good.

Maybe it will stop any more spotty teenagers jumping on the bandwagon, parading around in their team shirts and insisting that they have 'been a fan since the Conference'.

Maybe these people will look along the M40 to a team with a history, fans who care about their team, and realise that you have to go through the hard times to make the good times that bit more magical. We have particularly enjoyed our 3-0 wins at our two local rivals, our cup runs, and the exciting passing football which is seemingly so rare in Wycombe. Oh yes, and our promotion.

Name and address supplied

■ More letters next week