

Sad Wanderers tackle stand off

WYCOMBE Wanderers had to bite the bullet this week because their new all-seater stand is unlikely to be finished before their first home game of the season.

Blues, who kick off the new term at Shrewsbury on Sunday and then travel to Reading in the Coca-Cola Cup first round two days later, have drawn up an emergency plan for their first home game next week. Season ticket holders will be re-seated in the main stand.

The news is a massive blow to the club as they hoped to get the balloons and streamers for their encounter against Gillingham at Adams Park on August 24. Construction company Linpave have worked around the clock since April to meet an ambitious completion deadline.

There is still a chance that the stand will be ready at the 11th hour. But Wycombe have wisely not waited until the last minute before making a decision on what to do if it isn't.

The lower tier, which contains

REPORT By Claire Nash

the family stand and was the last section to be filled with seats, will be ready for the first home match but work on other parts of the structure may not.

"It will be no good arriving on the Friday and saying it won't be ready," said Blues spokesman John Goldsworthy.

The associate director added: "Every effort is still being made for it to be completed on time. The contractors have done exceedingly well. It was always going to be a tight job. But Linpave have worked hard and the workmanship is very good."

Holder of upper-tier season tickets should now enter the ground at Entrance Four and present their vouchers so they will be issued with a numbered seat ticket for the main stand.

Season ticket holders in the main stand should use Entrance One for both matches. If the club

manage a last-minute completion of the stand, supporters will be redirected on the day.

Meanwhile, Alan Smith and his squad have been putting the finishing touches to their preparations for the big kick-off, albeit one delayed for 24 hours due to Shrewsbury's predilection for flower shows.

"I think it's panned out quite nicely. We are up for the game. The lads have done the hard physical bit and have got a good result under their belt," said Smith.

Remarking on the brief recovery period before embarking on their Coca-Cola Cup campaign, he said: "In an ideal world I would have preferred that was not the case, but we have to do it."

Also in an ideal world, Smith would rather the club's supporters were not so intent on thinking about the past. The Blues boss is looking forward, not back.

"It's gone and that's that. The players have had a year of our type of training. Last year was a shock to the system. But they are more used to the ways and means

of doing things." He added: "The fans always have a right to high expectations. But the reality is that there will be a lot of big clubs, with big support, in contention this year."

Wycombe will have their summer signings, central defender Paul McCarthy, and goalkeeper Brian Parkin in the fold on their trip to Gay Meadow this weekend.

Smith had been impressed with the performances of triallist Jim Rodwell, from Halesowen Town.

But the central defender was signed for £50,000 by Rushden and Diamonds this week.

■ Former Wycombe defender Andy Kerr is a new signing for Sky Sports who unveiled their plans for the football season this week.

With a new third sports channel due to cover Football League fare this term, Kerr, who was a disc jockey with elevenSEVENTY, will host a show called Football Extra which goes out on Sunday.

He joins Wanderers director Alan Parry who joins Sky from ITV.