

Blues axe boss as club sinks to bottom

SMITH IS SACKED

By **PAUL HARRIS and SHARON WALTER**

WYCOMBE Wanderers manager Alan Smith was sacked yesterday after the club slumped to the bottom of their league.

Mr Smith and his assistant David Kemp were axed by club chairman Ivor Beeks following a terrible start to the season.

The Blues languish bottom of Nationwide League Division Two and were thrashed 6-3 at Peterborough on Saturday. They are now one of only three Football League teams in the entire country still without a win - which led incensed fans to chant 'Smith Out' after the latest fiasco.

Ivor Beeks said yesterday afternoon: "When Alan came we fully expected him and David to take us further than they have."

"I can honestly say that my relationship with both Alan and David has been excellent, I have always been kept informed of everything that has gone on. We have parted on the best of terms this morning."

He went on: "The board of directors decided that the results dictated the situation. You are judged on points and results and both of them accepted that situation."

Mr Smith's contract runs out in June 1997. He told fans: "It's a fantastic club and there's a lot to be proud of here. There are so many good things here. I just hope they can be built upon."

"I think one has to be honest and say the results have not been what we would have wanted, but there have been lots of reasons for that. I am not going to go into the ins and outs of it now," he added.

He went on: "I have always put the club first. I have never put my own thoughts first, and if any of the players think about it they will realise that I have put the club first."

"They may not have liked some of the decisions that I made, but I really did it on the basis that I thought they were right for Wycombe Wanderers. There are too many good things at this club for it not to go on and be successful."

Assistant boss David Kemp, who was also shown the door, added: "I don't think Alan was particularly accepted when he came here and it's not run smoothly since and it's been very difficult for him."

"You cannot argue with the results, they have been very poor."

Youth team coach Neil Smillie has taken control of team selection, and a short-list to replace Mr Smith will be drawn up soon.

Club captain Terry Evans commented: "The lads who did not get on with the boss are over the moon and they will be pumped up, and others may not."

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Axed: Wycombe Wanderers manager Alan Smith

PLAYERS WILL BE 'OVER THE MOON'

By **PAUL HARRIS and MARIANNE SUMNER**

Poor results made dismissal inevitable, says club captain

WYCOMBE Wanderers team captain Terry Evans has revealed that some Wycombe Wanderers players are 'over the moon' about the sacking of manager Alan Smith.

Terry said the axeing was 'almost inevitable after the am were thrashed 6-3 against Peterborough, leaving them bottom of their league.'

"The chairman has to do what is right for the club and being bottom of the league is no good to us," he said. "Lads who did not get on with the boss are over the moon, and they will be pumped up and

others may not. Personally, I got on quite well with him and it is a bit of a shame, but it is not whether you are a nice bloke but where you are in the league and how the results are going."

Meanwhile, reactions from fans and town leaders at Smith's departure have varied from shock to celebration.

Andy Dickinson, who helps run Blues fanzine Adams Family, described Smith's management of the club as appalling. "I have been keen for it to happen for a while. I

am celebrating really because, after Saturday, it was quite clear that no one wanted to perform for the man," he said.

High Wycombe Mayor Sebert Graham said: "It was good for the town of High Wycombe when they got their promotion. I was disappointed in the way this season had gone for them."

Bob Officer, chairman of the Wycombe Wanderers Independent Supporters Club, was expecting Smith to go. "I think the writing has

been on the wall," he said. "The fans had lost confidence in his ability to manage the side and it was obvious on Saturday that the team had lost faith in him too." He added: "The next thing now is who do we get in?"

Andy Fawbert, who runs the new Wycombe Wanderers band Adams Apple, said: "It's a shame that it hasn't worked since he's been there. I am always prepared to give someone a fair crack of the whip but he didn't seem to be on their wavelength."

How fans lost faith in Alan Smith

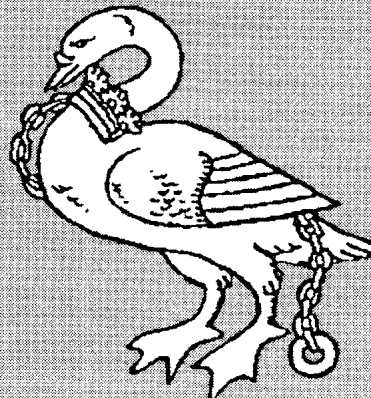
BLUES manager Alan Smith made a series of unpopular moves which caused fans to lose faith in his management of the club:

June 1995: He arrived at the club following his sacking at Crystal Palace, and stepped into the shoes of fans' favourite Martin O'Neill, who had left after taking the team from division three to division two in the play offs.

May 1995: Popular defender Terry Howard was dropped from the team after Smith decided his contract would not be renewed. He left for Conference side Woking at the end of the season.

Forward Simon Garner, another well-liked player who had not featured in Smith's vision for the club, also left on a free transfer to Woking

May 1995: Striker Steve McGavin was put up for transfer. It was another nail in the coffin for Wanderers



November 1995: Smith fell out with goalkeeper Paul Hyde over his contract. Hyde subsequently asked for a transfer and was put

on the list on November 17

August 1996: The new season kicked off, but fans became disheartened as Wanderers drew and lost opening games

September 1996: Striker John Williams was fined after he threw his shirt at Smith following a substitution in the game against Luton Town. Blues lost one-nil

September 28, 1996: Smith's final humiliation as Peterborough United beat Wanderers six-three. In total the club have won just one match this season (against Reading in the Coca-Cola Cup), drawn five and lost seven in league and cup competitions

September 30: Smith is sacked by the club after just over one season in charge

What Wanderers' supporters said

CHRIS CRONK believes Smith failed to motivate his players enough.

The 32-year-old auditor, of Campbell Close, High Wycombe, said: "When he took over, I thought he was going to be better than Martin O'Neill. Organisationally he is a good manager, but he hasn't imposed himself on the players enough. He had a difficult job though."



PETER STEVENS said the club had to sack Smith.

Peter, 52, a local government officer, of The Chase, Tylers Green, said: "They would have lost support if he hadn't have gone."

He said the club should sign old boy Keith Scott as he has Premier League experience.



WILLIAM FENTON thinks Smith did not have the right players in the team.

William, 34, a surveyor, of Conegra Road, High Wycombe, said: "I am not surprised he has gone as their performance has been atrocious."

He suggested that Smith might be a jinx as he had not been successful at Crystal Palace either.



GORDON RICHARDS called this season a disaster.

Gordon, 44, of Booker Common, High Wycombe, said: "Last season was a disappointment, but this was a disaster."

He called for new blood in both team and manager. "The Nottingham Forest game showed we can do it."



MARGARET WHIDDETT felt sorry for Smith and said players have to win matches.

Margaret, a van driver, of Pinions Road, High Wycombe, said: "Perhaps if they changed a few of the players they would have done better."

"I don't know why they haven't done well this season. Something was wrong."



NOREEN CORCORAN thinks it is excellent Smith has been sacked.

Noreen, 44, a housewife, of Hampden Road, High Wycombe said: "It's about time too. The club has been going downhill badly this season."

"When O'Neill was manager I went every week. Now I don't enjoy the game enough."

