

Smith: I fell victim to hate campaign

SACKED Wycombe Wanderers boss Alan Smith says he was up against it from day one and blamed factions within the club for hounding him out.

He refused to name names, but said supporters were being fed misinformation about him. Smith revealed that the roof of his car was even vandalised while it was parked inside the club grounds on one occasion.

Former player Terry Howard claimed this week that many of the players were pleased to see Smith go, but Smith hit back saying: "You are going to get that. But several of the players have rung me since Monday and if you spoke to most of them they weren't happy to see me go.

"I find it all very troublesome, I've left now and I still have to put up with these innuendos.

"I want to forget the whole thing really and I want Wycombe to get back on track.

"There was this whole anti-Alan Smith feeling from day one and every time I changed a player or changed something it seemed to get greater.

"I don't think people could see where I was coming from whether it was because I was not from Wycombe and they saw me as a London-type person I don't know. There seemed to be an undercurrent of people saying 'Why's he here? What's he doing? He's a big-time Charlie.'

"It seemed to me that the supporters were fed something about me that wasn't as I think I

REPORT

By Dave Peters
and Sharon Walter

am. Even in our own club programme there were sometimes critical things written about me which I could have done without. It hasn't been the best of experiences for me."

Smith, who was in charge at Adams Park for just 16 months, believed he could have got it right if everyone had been pulling in his direction.

He said: "I think I would have turned it round. I think a lot of the things I did went unnoticed.

"A couple of days ago I'm sitting there and we'd just beaten Nottingham Forest 1-0 in full time of a game and on Saturday I was sitting there at twenty to four and we were 3-1 up.

"I wanted the best for the players and I wanted the best for the club but there was always this undercurrent. I'm more disappointed than I'm letting on at the moment and I'll be more disappointed as I think about it over the next few weeks.

"But I must go on record and say that the chairman of the club and others were decent human beings. To build that stand was marvellous. There were so many things that were good."

Smith is backing the Blues temporary team of Neil Smillie and Terry Evans to get things going again.

He said: "I don't see any reason why they can't succeed. Neil is a

smashing guy and a good coach. Terry has the enthusiasm and the respect and that's a hell of a start. He will have people on his side and that could be that that is the answer. I don't want anything bad to happen to either of them and I wish them the best."

Smith says he wants to stay in football but added that he does not want to get into another 'political' situation.

Smith's assistant Dave Kemp, who has also left, said: "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 the results, they have been very poor.

The chairman here is first class, the club is superbly run from the top but I do think there are problems within the club and until they are addressed the club cannot go forward as the chairman hopes."

■ Alan Smith's son Matthew has decided to stay on as the club's Community Officer.

He said: "The chairman and Neil have made it clear that they would like me to stay and that is what I intend to do."

He got the job after Alan Smith arrived as boss in June last year.

CATALOGUE OF EVENTS

BLUES manager Alan Smith made a series of unpopular moves which saw fans lose faith.

● June 1995: Smith arrived at the club following his sacking at Crystal Palace, and stepped into the shoes of fans' favourite Martin O'Neill

● 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

● May 1996: Popular defender Terry Howard was dropped from the team. 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 1996: Striker Steve McGavin was put up for transfer

● 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 into the dug-out following his substitution in the game against Luton Town. Blues lost 1-0

● September 28: Wanderers were beaten 6-3 by Peterborough United proving the final straw in the Smith reign

● September 30: Smith sacked