

Highs and lows of a fan's week

WATCHING Wycombe in the past week has been a trip to the highs and lows of football supporting.

The ecstasy of Saturday's stuffing of Colchester was replaced by the agony of watching Watford's late winner on Tuesday evening.

The last 20 minutes at Colchester was certainly nail-biting, after the mindless minority of Colchester fans had played their part in their side's goal.

Most of us were distracted by the comings and goings of the Colchester hooligans.

And I'm sure the Blues' defenders were finding it equally difficult to concentrate.

Even if the referee failed to spot the fan on the pitch, how come the

VIEW FROM THE STAND By Ron Barnett

two linesmen didn't see him cavorting around the Wycombe penalty area?

I hope Roy McDonough was lurking somewhere in the ground to see sad Colchester beaten by the Blues again.

Roy has recently been sacked as boss of Chelmsford. He must now have had almost as many clubs as he had red cards!

Talking of highs and lows, I have visited four football grounds in the

past week, including both the sublime and the ridiculous.

Last Friday I spent the day touring Old Trafford.

Now I'm no United lover, but you have to admire their magnificent stadium and facilities.

In complete contrast, I spent the next day crammed into the Colchester Cowshed.

How did they get back in the football league with this ground, when Macclesfield and Stevenage were refused entry?

On Tuesday, I and a group of Wycombe DIY retailers were lucky enough to enjoy the Watford match from the luxury of the Solvite Hospitality Box at Vicarage Road.

However, no amount of their

excellent food and drink could take away the bitter taste of defeat.

Finally, it was back to good old Adams Park for Thursday night's Managers' Forum.

Our ground may not have the glitz and glamour of Old Trafford but, it's far better than the vast majority – and we don't have any unruly elements such as the mindless minority at Colchester.

Like many other fans, I've been very impressed with John Gregory's method of attracting his players' attention to issue instructions.

His whistle is as good as any on One Man and His Dog. Maybe we should change to a curly white woollen strip for next season – as long as it is sheared in quarters!

FOOTBALL

All Smillie for Neil's young hopefuls

NEIL Smillie's youth team will play Wolverhampton Wanderers in the second round of the FA Youth Cup at Molineux.

The youngsters hammered Corinthians of Kent 5-0 at a frosty Adams Park on Wednesday night to earn their right to play at one of the best stadiums in the country.

Two goals from Andrew Baird and one from Frank Brannon gave the Blues a 3-0 half-time lead and Maurice Harkin's double after the break completed the scoring.

Manager Neil Smillie said: "The lads played well but I know they can perform better. It was one of those tricky games where you are expected to win because we are the league club and the boys coped well with that."

But despite their convincing lead Smillie criticised his players at half-time.

He said: "I wasn't too happy with a lot of the things that were going on I felt we over-complicated things at times."

The win keeps the youngsters chasing cups on two fronts. They are also through to the quarter-finals of the Southern Junior Floodlit cup where they will play Birmingham City on Wednesday, December 11 at Adams Park, kick-off 7.45pm.

Wycombe's young cup fighters included six first year players and Smillie said: "I have got high hopes for a few of the players in this squad."

FOOTBALL

Sly Preston foiled by Free Press writer

SATURDAY'S opponents at Adams Park, Preston North End, tried to tap up the Bucks Free Press for inside information on the Blues squad – and got nowhere fast, writes Blues correspondent Dave Peters.

Proud Preston sent their undercover scout into the Press room at Watford's Vicarage Road to try and glean information about our team, in a bizarre bid to gain every possible advantage for Saturday's six-pointer.

It is normal for journalists to trade information during the match to help each other compile their reports and their spy in the stand thought he would try his luck alongside the Press pack.

At half-time he sought me out and without first revealing his identity he came up to me and began quizzing me on Wanderers' tactics and players.

Luckily I became suspicious and asked him what paper he was from. When he told me he was working for Preston North End I clammed up.

Blues Boss John Gregory said: "I've never heard of that happening before."

It is unclear how much information the spy got from watching the Blues go down to a last-minute goal at Vicarage Road, but he was lucky to see the match at all. Gregory revealed that earlier in the day Preston had faxed Adams Park asking for a pass to see the match, thinking it was taking place at Adams Park!