

SPORT 6

Boss joins panel beaters

WANDERERS boss John Gregory came face to face with the Blues supporters at a Fans Forum at Adams Park last Thursday.

Joining him on the panel was Inspector Roger Doe, who is in charge of policing at Adams Park and FIFA referee Dermot Gallagher.

More than 180 fans attended the evening, which was organised by the Blues Supporters Club.

Here is a brief guide to some of the main points of the evening.

The Wanderers Band

John Gregory came under pressure from fans to ban the Adams Apple band which plays throughout Wanderers home matches.

The call came from supporters sitting near the musicians, although Gregory said they didn't cause him a problem.

He said: "If it's something that supporters don't want in the ground then I will take it up with the board of directors."

Youth team potential

John Gregory says he has not blooded lots of youngsters into his first team because he wants to protect them for the future.

He said: "It is an enormous step up from the South East Counties League Second Division to Nationwide Division Two. People like Terry Evans are under enormous pressure to put in performances and it would not be fair to put that kind of pressure on a 17 year-old."

"Maurice Harkin came in for the FA Cup matches and did not disgrace himself but I have to think how much damage it could do to throw a young lad into a team that has not been very successful this season. I have to hold them back a bit and decide when it is right for them to come in. I don't want to put someone in and watch them get slaughtered by the fans."

"The Youth team is still in its infancy but I think next season we will see for the first time one of our kids coming off the production line to play at first team level."

Players living away from the area

Gregory admitted he has inherited a problem with several players living away from Wycombe. Paul McCarthy comes in from Brighton every day, other players come in from Colchester, Nottingham and Birmingham.

Gregory has now made it a condition that new players move to the area but he cannot insist players on existing contracts do the same.

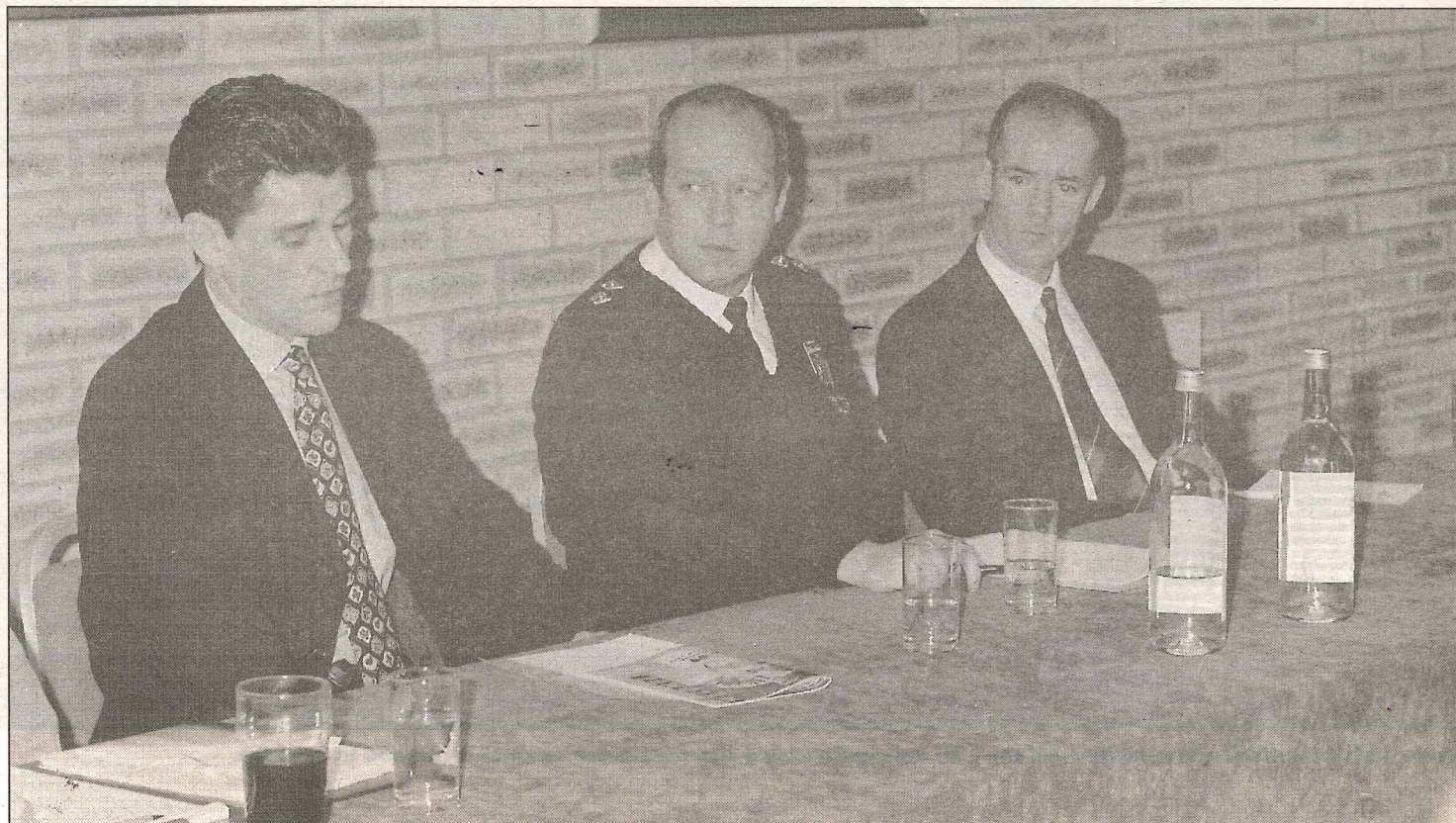
He said: "I don't think anyone can sit in a car for two or three hours and then be as fresh as a daisy for training or matches. New players have it stipulated in their contracts that they must live within a 25-mile radius of the club."

Contract situation

Gregory confirmed that 13 of his current squad's contracts expire at the end of the season.

Gregory on referees

He said: "I don't think they are any different now than they were 10 or 15 years



Question time: Blues boss John Gregory, Inspector Roger Doe and Dermot Gallagher formed the panel

ago. There is a lot more pressure on them now because every decision they make is scrutinised. They have got an extremely difficult job but if it's too difficult they shouldn't do it."

More signings

Gregory has brought five new players to the club (Simpson, Read, Cornforth, Forsyth and Kavanagh) but he wants to sign more.

He said: "There's still a few pennies left and I don't think my spending's over for this season yet."

He added: "There's not a lot of money left so I have got to use it very wisely."

Crowd noise at Adams Park

Gregory admitted: "I have been to noisier places but I'm sure this place was noisy when Wycombe won promotion. Supporters would be making more noise if we were attacking the goal more often. If you can get a good football team then the ground will become intimidating. It is up to us to provide the supporters with something to get excited about."

Terry Evans

Fans favourite and club captain Terry Evans has not been in the starting line-up recently. The match at Plymouth last Saturday was his first start since Boxing Day as Gregory has preferred to go with Michael Forsyth, Paul McCarthy and Jason Kavanagh as his centre halves.

Gregory said: "I'm still somewhat undecided about that position. Leaving Terry out was not a very pleasant thing to do. I

certainly wouldn't want to play against him. I would never ever doubt his passion and courage for the club. He has been a tremendous player for Wycombe Wanderers and long may that continue. The jury is still out in many respects on those positions."

Evans' contract is up for renewal at the end of the season.

John Williams

Gregory was asked why leading scorer John Williams was not playing.

He said: "John's played four or five games for me in the cup but he hasn't figured in the league. He got into the cup side purely and simply because I couldn't play Neil Davis."

"It's down to John at reserve team level and in training to try and get back in."

Exuberant goal celebrations

Dermot Gallagher was asked what he thought of the trend for enthusiastic goal celebrations to which comedian Gregory had a dig at his team by replying: "It doesn't affect us here at Wycombe."

Gallagher said: "If John has taught his players all week how to score goals it's very hard for an old trout of a referee to stop him celebrating. It's not a problem for me. All the while a player is celebrating they are leaving the referee alone."

Police-free games

This is the first season there have been police-free games at Adams Park. Inspector Roger Doe, in charge of policing at Wanderers said: "I'm very happy with

them and so are the club. Not every match will be police-free but there have been a lot that are and I hope there will be next season as well."

The decision on whether a match will be policed is taken by the club and the Thames Valley Police. Factors taken into account include the reputation of a club's fans, their method of transport and the numbers of supporters travelling."

Away fans drinking in club bars

Wanderers lose lots of money over a season by refusing to admit away fans into the bars at Adams Park. Supporters have long been arguing that away fans who are members of the club they support, should be allowed to drink at Adams Park.

Inspector Doe said: "I have no objection should the club want to admit away fans to its bars on the vast majority of games."

Video nasties

John Gregory has been making a bit of name for himself with referees this season by sending them videos of decisions he has disagreed with.

Dermot Gallagher said: "FA regulations state that there is no appeal against a sending off unless it is a case of mistaken identity."

But that rule has been bent slightly since West Ham's Alvin Martin was infamously dismissed only to have it chalked off after the ref saw it on video.

Gallagher said: "Clubs might win the odd one but sooner or later a referee will see something he missed and report that."