

This is a real nightmare

ONE night last week, I had a fearful nightmare.

My team, Wycombe Wanderers, were playing a non-league side in the FA Cup. This side were bottom but one in their league, which is just one rung below the Conference.

I thought easy pickings here. Oh dear, how wrong I was! Wycombe lost the game. Not only that but the non-league side were technically superior in all departments.

They had wide players who could get forward and deliver a decent cross, they had midfielders who could win a tackle and pass to a teammate and frontmen who had good ball control. Unfortunately, Wycombe had none of these.

I cheered up on awaking when I realised that those dark old days under Alan Smith had gone and we had a new management. I also felt safe in the knowledge that our trusty board of directors couldn't possibly make the same mistake again. Or could they?

Colin Swakeley
Earl Howe Road
Holmer Green

The fans have heard it before

IVOR Beeks has given John Gregory a vote of confidence and the directors are blaming fans for lack of support.

It seems that we have all heard these statements before, a kind of déjà vu from the Alan Smith era. It's as if the board of directors seem to think the best form of defence is to attack the fans and players, but not the manager.

There are a few things the directors and chairman should consider before they jump to the defence of John Gregory.

Before the start of the current 1997-98 season, rumours were that Chris Waddle may be coming to Wycombe. The rumours were quickly quashed by John Gregory with the statement: "If he comes here, I'm off".

Nice one John, and his comment about the Carlisle chairman after Carlisle's win over Wycombe at home was: "That's his 15 minutes of glory".

Then he made a total fool of himself again by saying the same after the first Basingstoke game: "That's their 15 minutes of glory."

It just about says it all now we have been dumped out of the FA Cup by Basingstoke. It's an absolute disgrace.

The club have now gone ten games without a win and are back in the relegation fight after spending half a million pounds and letting some of our best players go.

John Gregory knows the chairman has given him his backing and a vote of confidence. Don't hold your breath.

Barry Styles
Hazlemere Road
Penn

Demo was to back Parkin

Re: 'Parkin attacked in clean sheet demo', BFP 14.11.97

AS the fans involved in the above occurrence were not given the chance to put their side across before the above article appeared, I would be grateful if the BFP would put the supporters' side across.

It came as much of a surprise to us as anyone else that our actions were given such a high profile by the paper. I suppose that this was a reflection of how poor a game the encounter at York was.

What had started as a morsel of an idea in The Adams

Family Fanzine, and matured into a mole hill of a gesture at Bootham Crescent, all of a sudden seemed to have been turned into an enormous mountain of a demonstration by the BFP.

The spin of the story used by the paper left a worse taste in all of our mouths than any dish ever created on Ready, Steady Cook. I can assure Brian Parkin and WWFC that if any offence was taken, then none was intended.

The actions witnessed at York on Brian Day were neither an attack nor a cruel taunt towards Mr Parkin, but a show of support from the travelling fans.

The word supporter was conspicuous by its absence from the article. One would have thought the word more than fitting for a group of individuals that had travelled halfway up the country in order to fly the flag for Brian.

The fans were genuinely full of pride, both parties brimming with anticipation for the battle that was to come.

The stadium vibrated from the noise as his name [Parkin's] was chanted by the crowd in one united voice.

Far from being downtrodden by the attention and pressure to perform, Brian

greeted the crowd with the beaming face of a child at Christmas.

The history books will forever recall that on his special day, Brian did not let the hopes of his followers slip between his hands. A faultless display was pulled out of the bag, Brian being responsible for neither goal.

A moral clean sheet was in our minds recorded against Brian's name even if The Telegraph wouldn't have officially counted it as one. Surely it is no coincidence that such a fine display was put in by the man with the crowd in his pocket, on a day when the rest of the squad produced such a lacklustre and disjointed performance.

Perhaps there is a moral to this story – eternally banish the whingers and moaners from our stands and terraces, and for once get behind all the players, not just those like Brian who deserve our adulation.

As for the future, it's only a matter of time before another Brian Day descends upon us. I'm sure the fans will greet him with relish. Yours, hoping to see another day in the Life of Brian.

Rob Barber
The Fairway
Flackwell Heath

What now Mr Peart?

WELL here we are and our season is all over, bar the inevitable fight against relegation. No doubt we will have Mr Peart writing in the Blues News blaming the fans for either not buying shirts so that we can buy players, or not going to matches to see whether the team can be bothered to put in any effort.

The only thing that lost us the game against Basingstoke was arrogance. We now have a team of first division has-beens who thought that they only had to step out on the pitch to win.

The whole club has forgotten where we came from. I agree that you should not look back, but there are certain things that should count no matter what.

Mr Peart moans about people not coming to games. Is it any wonder that they don't, when they are treated like away fans at certain matches. People who were there supporting the club when we were a Conference club are now told by stewards that they have to move to make way for extra away fans.

Now to Mr Peart, who has no problem with his regular seat in the directors' box, this may seem trivial but to the ordinary fan this is important.

Opposing fans think that Wycombe is a lovely place, so accommodating.

That's nice from a PR point of view but not good if we wish to make Adams Park a fortress.

We seem to be so concerned that we are nice to away fans, who come maybe once a season, that we forget about our own fans who would come every week if they felt that this was 'home'. Still, if we can fill the ground with away fans, who cares?

Roll on Boxing Day when no doubt Watford will be accommodated once again by moving our family stand members and if we're lucky we might even let them beat us and gain three more points.

Unfortunately for Wycombe fans they will have to come to terms with the fact that what we have now is as good as it is going to get.

Once again we will have to rely on John Gregory to somehow get the players to realise that, to us who will be there long after they have all gone, Wycombe Wanderers is important and that it does matter if we don't win.

The only good thing to come out of supporting Wycombe at the moment is that my eight-year-old son realises now that winning is not an automatic right, you have to work at it and want it.

Mr M E Beard
Bierton Road
Aylesbury

Resigned to survival battle

AFTER a few days recovery time from the shocking debacle at Basingstoke, I would have to point out an overwhelming feeling of resignation among the hardy (or

should that be foolhardy) Wycombe fans who attended the humiliation.

Having paid £9 to witness an admittedly difficult encounter with lowly non-league opposition, what can only be described as gallows humour was evident among the Wycombe contingent from the outset. It was almost as if the majority of Blues fans had turned up expecting us to go out.

So far this season, we have been at least a goal up against Brentford, Burnley, Luton, Plymouth and Basingstoke (twice), yet none of these games have resulted in a win for the Blues. A real case of 'we've started, but we can't finish'.

I do not make a habit of criticising managers because they have the unenviable task of trying to please all the people all the time, but I do feel that this statistic indicates a degree of tactical naivety and mental fragility.

The Basingstoke game also threw up an interesting contrast in management style. Throughout the game whistles and hoarse instructions were emanating from one dug-out, while the other dug-out appeared relatively calm and composed.

Should it really be necessary for professional footballers to be told at almost every set piece where they should be standing and which player they should be marking?

And finally, when players who are given shirts for nothing frequently show a lack of commitment, why does Graham Peart expect me to fork out over £35 to demonstrate how I feel about WWFC? Isn't it enough to know that there are season ticket holders who make a 140-mile round trip to every home game?

Philip Saich
Natal Road
Cambridge