

BOSS GREGORY SAYS DEFENSIVE HOLES NOW PLUGGED

Blues look for victory

WANDERERS boss John Gregory believes Wycombe fans can look forward to a rosy New Year - despite needing a long run of victories to even reach the promotion play-offs.

The manager says supporters will enjoy his New Year promotion drive now that the Blues have plugged defensive holes which threatened to sink their league chances and the team is playing with new-found confidence.

He said: "I'm much happier than when we were third in the table. We've nothing to fear in this division.

"We're good enough now. We weren't before, but there's a lot of belief in my side now."

The Hillbottom Road side will need to score 17 wins out of their 21 remaining matches to challenge for a place in the end of season play-offs.

Gregory's 1998 promotion bid kicks off at Adams Park on Saturday with a match against Wigan Athletic - the side which humiliated Wanderers with a 5-2 hammering on the opening day of the season.

Problems could result from the absence of first team regulars Paul McCarthy, Michael Forsyth and Jason Cousins, who will all be left watching from the touchline on Saturday while they serve out two-match bans.

But the manager believes a repeat scoreline is extremely unlikely after working hard on tightening up Wanderer's defence, with some success, during December.

"We've conceded three goals in the whole of December which is a major improvement. We don't have to score four to win now," he said.

On a positive note, defender Nicky Mohan looks likely to reclaim his place in the team this weekend.

Mohan, who returned from a match-ban several weeks ago, has not played first-team football for a month after Gregory's boys hit a run of good form over the Christmas period and saw no reason to bring him back.

The former Bradford back-boy no doubt realises that the bad luck of his colleagues is his chance to show the boss what he is made of.

Overall 1997 has been a mixed year for Wanderers. Out of 22 games played only one was lost at home - to Carlisle United back in September.

For fans of hard statistics the Blues scored an average of 1.7 goals per game.

Promotion bid kicks-off on Saturday