

Back Smillie

OFFICIAL LINES

By Keith Blagbrough of the
official supporters club

DIVISION Two is going to be harder this year. The relegated clubs have money and so have a couple coming up, and experience showed that, with injuries and suspensions, our squad is certainly on the small size.

Suspensions will be a problem because no one knows the effect the latest directives to referees will have. If the World Cup showed anything, it indicated that if refs apply the rules as FIFA would like many more cards will be shown, and we could be in serious trouble with our squad size.

The manager needs more resources to get the squad he wants. The board have managed it in the past so let's hope they make sure Neil gets the backing he needs.

It is time for our members to renew for next year and get a range of discounts. Renewing members will get a £1 discount on their fee by renewing before July 31. For only £6.50 it is cheap at the price, particularly as the first 300 members who join or renew will get a free Official Supporters diary.

KINGSTONIAN have retained the playing registration of Terry Evans, and could use him in the Vauxhall Conference next year, even though he has quit the club to rejoin Wycombe as youth team physio.

K's boss Geoff Chapple reluctantly agreed to let Evans walkout halfway through his two-year contract to return to Adams Park.

But he has kept Evans' playing registration and says he could call him up again to play the odd match if Kingstonian have an injury crisis.

Chapple said: "I'm thinking of keeping his playing registration so if we need him he can still come down here and turn out for us."

Chapple did that with northern-based player Jeff Wrightson last year - drafting him in to make guest appearances when the K's were hit by injuries and suspensions.

Chapple is devastated to lose Evans, who he described as one of the key reasons behind Kingstonian's promotion to football's fifth division last season.

He said: "He has been brilliant

for us on the pitch and very influential in the dressing room. We are going to miss him greatly.

"I have been sympathetic to him. He's made a career move."

Evans meanwhile, is delighted to be back at Adams Park after his first week in his new role.

He said: "It's brilliant. I'm loving it being back at the football club again."

Wanderers reserves will kick off their first ever season in the Avon Insurance Combination League with a match at home to Porstmouth on Wednesday, August 19.

The Combination League represents a huge step up in class for Wayne Turner's reserves who quit the Capital League last year.

They will now be up against the second strings of Arsenal, Spurs, Chelsea and West Ham, instead of facing Welling reserves.

And that means Wanderers fans could be watching some of the biggest names in football at Adams Park this season.

Blues secretary John Reardon said: "Our youngsters could play against Dennis Bergkamp if he's making his comeback from injury

when we play Arsenal."

Wanderers have certainly done their bit to make it easy for their fans to catch the big clubs' reserve sides.

They have switched their home fixtures against Arsenal, West Ham, Chelsea and Southampton from afternoon to evening fixtures in a bid to make it easier for people to catch the match. All the Blues other home reserve matches kick off at 2pm on Wednesdays.

Blues first team manager Neil Smillie is not worried about the step up in class.

He said: "I've seen Spurs reserves and their side is worth millions. It doesn't worry me whether we can cut it against them because reserve football is about developing players."

Former Wycombe Wanderers youngster Grant Smith is training with Reading.

The young midfielder, whose father Gordon played alongside Neil Smillie in the 1983 FA Cup final for Brighton, was released by Smillie last season after failing to make an impression in Capital League matches.

Bed manufacturers Hypnos are the new sponsors of the Family Stand at Adams Park.

The Princes Risborough-based company has signed a three-year deal and the stand, formerly sponsored by the Bucks Free Press, will now be known as the Hypnos Family Stand.

Wanderers' compilation video, All Smiles At The Finish, is now available, containing all the goals and important moments from last season as well as interviews with former boss John Gregory, Neil Smillie, chairman Ivor Beeks and some of the players.

For the fourth year running the video is £14.99.

Triallist keeper Mark Westhead, who sat on the bench against Crystal Palace, will play in tomorrow's friendly at Hemel Hempstead.

The former Bolton reserve and Telford keeper was recommended to Smillie after a spell in Ireland with Sligo.

Westhead is hoping to make a big impression tomorrow, and a contract-winning performance would be the perfect present for his 23rd birthday on Sunday.

ALL three local Ryman League clubs have returned to pre-season training as their respective managers continue to plan for the big kick-off on Saturday, August 22.

Berkhamsted Town boss Neal Bartlett has already recruited the bulk of the squad which will seek to improve on last season's 13th place in Division One.

However, the manager will have to make do without influential central defender Pete Clifford, who has moved to Premier Division outfit Bishops Cleeve, and Mark Knight. Bartlett revealed the combative midfielder is currently training with local rivals Hemel Hempstead although he has yet to put pen to paper.

"I am now working on people that I want to come," said Bartlett. "I have got the nucleus of what I want but need a few more bits and pieces."

Goalkeeper Neil Spencer has been recruited and one or two other new faces could be wearing a Lilywhites shirt next season.

Meanwhile, Tring Town manager Danny McGrainaghan is still coming to terms with his new job at Pendley.

"It is early days and we are just working on getting our own people in and giving ourselves a structure for the season," he explained.

But an integral piece of the behind the scenes jigsaw has been completed with the appointment of Alf Coulton as coach.

Coulton has worked with the FA for a number of years, which included a spell at the Lilleshall school of excellence. "What he doesn't know isn't worth writing on a postage stamp," said McGrainaghan.

The first local team to return to competitive action will be Division Three champions Hemel Hempstead who have a prestige friendly against Wycombe Wanderers at Vauxhall Road on Saturday, which kicks off at 3pm.

The club are hoping for a big crowd who may be given the chance to see a number of new players in a Hemel shirt.

Six prospective signings trained last week and manager Mick Vipond was expecting two more "with a bit of pedigree" for the second session at the ground on Tuesday evening.

The boss will not reveal any names until the moves are completed but he is also planning to involve more of last year's impressive contingent of youth players in the first team set up over the forthcoming campaign.

He said: "We never know - there might be another Gary Dixon, Matt Rawdon or Vinnie Somers out there."