

Will leading scorer show?

**WYCOMBE v
PRESTON NORTH END**
A guide to Tuesday's Division
Two clash at Adams Park

BLUES' match at Fulham tomorrow is off because Kevin Keegan's side have three players on international duty.

That means Blues' next game is at Adams Park on Tuesday night (7.45pm) against a Preston North End side who have never lost on their visits to Bucks.

And Blues boss Neil Smillie is likely to use his free Saturday to go and check out Tuesday's opponents.

Smillie has to decide whether to give Dannie Bulman his first start. Bulman is in the bizarre position of being the club's joint leading scorer in the league this season, despite having only had one touch of the ball.

He is tied on one goal with Nicky Mohan and Paul Read.

Bulman has certainly shown the desire Neil Smillie has been calling for from his players, making something out of nothing to earn Blues a point on Monday, but it is unlikely to earn him a start on Tuesday.

Smillie said: "Dannie has got a lot to learn. He's got a lot of natural talent and I want him to be part of the first team but whether it's sooner rather than later that he gets a start we'll have to wait and see."

● The postponed game against Fulham has now been rescheduled and will take place at Craven Cottage on Tuesday, September 29 (ko 7.45pm).

Energetic Emblem is Smillie's new standard bearer

LOAN-SIGNING Paul Emblem spent five hours stuck in bank holiday traffic jams after missing the team coach to York – but still showed more energy than most of his new colleagues when he got there.

That was the verdict from boss Neil Smillie who gave his team a rocket after they flopped 3-0 at York. He slammed their attitude and ordered them to go over and thank the 205 travelling fans.

He said: "People should be mindful that there are people who are prepared to come all the way up to York. The players have to realise

that there's something more at stake than their bonuses.

"We shouldn't be losing 3-0 at York we're better than that, but some of our boys are not at it. I can't honestly say that the energy I see sometimes is enough."

But Emblem, Alan Beeton and the excellent Jason Cousins were excused from his attack.

Emblem signed for a month on Friday after the team had left for York and the 22-year-old Charlton midfielder was driven to their hotel by Terry Evans in time for the evening meal.

Emblem, brother of Wolves' Neil, said: "I

never trained with the lads so it wasn't easy but I thought I got better as it went on."

Smillie said: "He didn't deserve to lose 3-0. He's got good energy and you can see he's played at a higher level."

Blues lost it in a woeful first half in which York led by Neil Thompson's deflected free kick. They improved vastly after the break but were undone when Richard Cresswell ran onto Mark Tinkler's 60 yard pass for the second before Thompson added a controversial third from the penalty spot after Cousins was adjudged to have tripped him.

Parry: Even champions Arsenal would struggle if they had our injury crisis

IMAGINE champions Arsenal without Bergkamp, Overmars, Adams, Vieira, Petit and Winterburn and you have some idea of the problems facing Neil Smillie.

However, whilst Arsene Wenger could call upon replacements from a squad of over 30 senior professionals, Smillie began the season with just 13 experienced players to choose from.

For the opening matches he had to do without the injured Steve McGavin, Michael Forsyth and Nicky Mohan, who was suspended. He has since lost the services of Keith Scott, Keith Ryan, John Cornforth, Maurice Harkin and Andy Baird.

To Neil's credit, he hasn't tried to blame our poor start on injuries.

FROM THE BOARDROOM

By Alan Parry
WWFC director

He doesn't hide behind excuses. However, even the biggest clubs could not have lost so many players without it affecting results.

Despite all the problems, morale is excellent. If you saw the second half performance against Bristol Rovers you must have been impressed by the spirit and determination of the players.

Dannie Bulman's bizarre equaliser summed up the desire to chase a seemingly lost cause and, incidentally, made him a quiz question of the future. Who scored a goal on his Football League debut with

his first and only touch without kicking or heading the ball?

But, clearly one point from a possible 15 adds up to a worrying start and it may be some time before we climb away from the foot of the table. I am reassured by what happened to Bournemouth four years ago.

They began with seven straight defeats. They lost 12 of their first 14 league games and when they drew 1-1 with us on December 31st, they were bottom with a mere 11 points from 23 games.

Remarkably, they won 39 points from their next 23 games, avoided relegation, and if you look at the current league table you'll find Bournemouth near the top. If they can do it so can Wycombe.

See the Blues for free, on us

THE Bucks Free Press has once again joined forces with Nationwide to offer our readers one pair of free tickets to see the Blues.

For your chance to get your hands on the tickets for Wanderers' home game against Bournemouth on September 19 simply answer the question below correctly and your name could be pulled from the hat.

Q. Which Wanderer was stretched off injured in Monday's bank holiday game against Bristol.

Send your entries to the Sports Editor, BFP, Gomm Road, High Wycombe, Bucks HP12 7DW by Tuesday, September 8.