

Better if you say it quick

VIEW FROM THE STAND

By Ron Barnett

FOR the third season running, under three different managers, we find ourselves embroiled in a desperate relegation struggle.

However, our record this year makes nightmare reading compared to the same period in previous seasons.

With over a quarter of the season completed we have scraped together three paltry points and six measly goals from 12 games.

In October '96, after the demise of Alan Smith, we had accumulated a comparatively comfortable ten points and 14 goals from the same number of games.

Meanwhile last year, under the guidance of John Gregory, our first dozen games had resulted in a very respectable 16 points and 18 goals.

Given our relegation battles over the last two years, and our lack of investment in strengthening the squad over the summer, we can hardly be surprised that we're back in the mire again. The problem this time is that an escape route is going to become more difficult each week.

Based on last year's end of season tables, we need 51 points to avoid the drop. That means we've got to get 48 points from our remaining 34 games. In other words, 12 wins and 12 draws should do it - sounds simple if you say it quickly.

The truth is, that's the sort of form that would put a team in a position to challenge for a play-off place and we certainly look a long way off that at the moment.

So, who is to blame for our predicament? Presumably not the manager as he is the third boss to be in this position. Although, his failure to land several targeted players in the summer and early season was disappointing.

The club directors, in the main, seem to be doing a decent job but not making money available for new players in the summer was a mistake. Neil Smillie is now having to buy when clubs realise we're desperate for new blood and up the price.

Finally, we come to the players. It seems some can no longer perform, or no longer want to perform, for the manager and club.

Whatever the reasons for our plight we need management, players and fans working together to turn things around.

Saturday's clash with Macclesfield is the first of many six pointers, let's hope it is also the first win in a long unbeaten run.

A Blues offer the Dons can refuse

ATTEMPTS to bring Wimbledon striker Stewart Castledine to Adams Park on loan have failed.

Wanderers boss Neil Smillie made an approach for the Dons frontman in an attempt to harden up Blues' powder puff attack, which failed to get off the mark at Gillingham last Saturday.

But Smillie was knocked back by the Premiership outfit.

He said: "Stewart Castledine is only a few games into coming back after injury. Although he wanted to come to Adams Park the request was turned down because of that."

But Castledine is just the type of player Wanderers need to get them going.

The Top Man model, who is the fans' favourite at Wimbledon, is known for his aggressive style and can as easily play in midfield.

Wycombe's attack has only managed to put six goals past their opponents in 12 league games so far this season.

But Smillie is not giving up on his quest for new players.

He will still be looking to bring another new face in before tomorrow's clash at home to Macclesfield.

The game is vital for Wanderers, with struggling Macclesfield just two places above them in the division.

Smillie said: "The boys should be up for this game. It should be a game that the season could turn on."

The two sides, who meet in the Football League for the first time tomorrow, last met when they both played in the Vauxhall Conference.

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Mac attack

WYCOMBE

v MACCLESFIELD

A guide to tomorrow's clash at Adams Park

WANDERERS will be attempting to get that elusive first win and shed their unfortunate statistic at Adams Park tomorrow.

And Macclesfield, who they meet for the first time in the league tomorrow, could be the perfect opponents.

To date, both teams remain the only Nationwide teams never to be relegated, but that statistic is now under serious threat.

A win for Wycombe will pull them closer to their struggle rivals