

Big drop is coming into focus now

VIEW FROM THE STAND

By Ron Barnett

THE trap door is beginning to creak open and we are slowly, but surely, slipping towards it. We desperately need to find a superboss to rescue us from the dastardly drop.

Given our perilous position, it's hardly surprising that Micky Adams and John Ward decided to ignore Ivor Beeks' invitation to lead a rescue party.

Having been out of the country for the last month I cannot comment on recent performances but, wherever you are in the world, the results speak for themselves. Reading about those five straight defeats certainly gave me an unpleasant bout of travel sickness.

Talking of travel sickness, there appears to be a severe case of this among the Blues. So far, we've played 13 away matches and have yet to win any of them - only Blackburn and Bury can equal our fruitless record.

We've picked up just six points out of a possible 39 in our away fixtures - hardly the sort of form that is going to keep us in Division Two. Worse still, we have got to visit Preston, Bournemouth, Stoke and Manchester City - all sides likely to be involved in the battles for automatic or play-off promotion.

At least you can't accuse Terry Evans of being negative. He wrote in the Millwall programme "Our away record is fairly reasonable".

Like most Blues fans I was sad to see Neil Smillie depart but, it was the inevitable outcome to what I believe was a convenient and easy option last March.

At that time, I wrote in this column that our ideal candidate should have previous managerial or coaching experience with premier or division one sides. Someone with contacts at larger clubs who could bring in players who have performed at a higher level.

I still feel this is the type of manager we need.

Sadly, Smillie did not appear to have the required network of contacts. He is obviously an excellent youth team coach and regrettably we have now lost his services in this vital area.

Having to pay off the remainder of his contract has obviously left the club even shorter of cash. Given he was desperate for the job, it seems to have been over generous to have offered a three-year deal. Surely one year would have been a more prudent deal.

HOW THEY STAND

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Ps
Fulham	27	11	2	1	27	8	7	2	4	13	12	58
Preston	28	7	3	3	28	14	9	4	2	23	13	55
Walsall	28	9	4	3	24	16	6	2	4	15	16	51
Stoke	27	8	3	3	21	11	7	0	6	16	13	48
Bourn'th	26	9	3	0	26	7	4	4	6	17	20	46
Gillingham	27	10	3	2	28	10	1	9	2	14	15	45
Chest'field	28	11	1	3	25	10	2	5	6	7	13	45
Man City	28	6	5	2	18	9	5	6	4	15	14	44
Millwall	29	5	7	3	21	16	6	3	5	13	16	43
Wigan	27	6	3	3	18	7	5	4	6	20	20	40
Reading	27	6	6	3	21	18	4	3	5	12	19	39
Blackpool	28	5	6	3	18	14	4	4	6	13	19	37
York City	29	4	7	4	20	19	5	1	8	16	29	35
Luton	26	6	3	3	16	12	3	5	6	19	23	35
Burnley	29	5	5	4	13	14	3	4	8	21	33	33
Bristol R	26	5	6	3	23	18	2	5	5	14	12	32
Oldham	28	4	2	7	14	19	4	4	7	14	20	30
Colchester	28	3	5	5	11	19	3	6	6	18	23	29
Wrexham	27	6	3	6	15	19	1	4	7	10	24	28
Notts Co	26	4	3	6	17	18	2	4	7	10	20	25
North'pton	27	2	7	2	12	12	3	3	10	12	21	25
Lincoln	27	5	3	6	18	20	1	3	9	9	25	24
Wycombe	28	5	2	8	18	16	0	6	7	7	21	23
Macc'field	27	2	4	6	9	14	2	5	8	11	21	21