

The fault lies with Gregory

I AM writing in response to a letter in the BFP (March 19).

Although I was not a great admirer of Mr Smith, I do not believe that the current league position is due to him.

It was mentioned that he decimated the playing staff. However, the players that were talked about were no great loss to the club. Steve Thompson was almost let go by Martin O'Neill because of off-field matters and has failed to hold a regular first team place. Simon Hutchinson was never a regular in the Football League. Terry Howard did not want to train (which he admitted in his autobiography), and Paul Hyde had contractual disputes which would have been avoided had

he waited until the end of the season to ask for a new contract.

The current situation I believe is due to John Gregory, because he brought in numerous players, who this season have put us straight back into relegation trouble and have left the club in financial difficulties with Sanchez told to raise £200,000.

Players such as Mohan and Kavanagh have only been a financial burden, both showing they did not (deep down) want to play for Wycombe. He also chose to let Matt Lawrence go cheaply, Martin Rowlands, even though he was the youth team captain and was recommended to him by Neil Smillie, and Jason Roberts, who is now scoring regularly for Bristol Rovers.

How can our current position have possibly have anything to do with Alan Smith?

The only players left at the club

who were bought by Smith are Paul McCarthy and Matt Lawrence, who are valuable members of the squad.

It was also stated that a player such as Regis or Creaser should have got the job, even though both had no experience of management. At the time, most people who I spoke to, wanted Alan Smith as manager. It did not work out so we have got to put that behind us and concentrate on the present.

David M Finch
Saltash Close
Loudwater

Macca's the man in defence

LAWRIE Sanchez has adopted a refreshingly positive approach in his first six weeks as manager. He has also displayed welcome decisive

qualities, not least in offloading several of the products of John Gregory's extravagance.

However, defensive frailties since Nicky Mohan's departure have highlighted the need for a commanding central defender, preferably as part of a three-man central defence plus Lawrence and Vinnicombe as wing backs.

As Lawrie Sanchez and Neil Smillie, before him, have discovered (Smillie against Brentford) playing three forwards or four midfielders at the expense of a central defender tends to leave our defence vulnerable to counter-attack. The 4-4-2 (as at Reading) is better than 4-3-3 but 3-5-2 (or 5-3-2 according to the situation at any given time) with at least one commanding physical presence in the centre is, in my opinion, better still.

Part of Mr Sanchez's quandary

may well lie in the difficult decision of whether to keep faith with either or both of those loyal stalwarts – Keith Ryan and Jason Cousins – as central defenders – one clean sheet in seven games (before Rovers) compares unfavourably with the nine clean sheets in Smillie's last 19 games.

Perhaps significantly, all of these clean sheets were achieved when Paul McCarthy was the third central defender. We collected 15 points – more than half the season's tally – in seven of those clean sheet matches between mid-October and the end of December.

I can't understand why McCarthy has only started one match since his suspension for a questionable sending off at Luton in January.

M C Ralph
Brimmers Hill
Widmer End