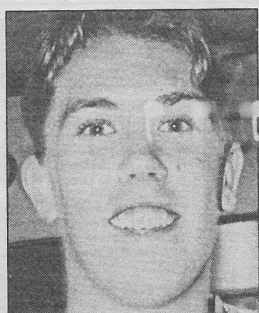


Wycombe Wanderers boss Lawrie Sanchez launched a scathing attack on the club's stay-away fans last week when less than 5,500 turned up to see his brave Blues bow out of the Worthington Cup. Was it justified? Reporter GURBAKSH KALSI asked shoppers

Sanchez points the finger

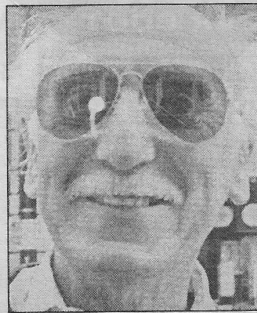


RICHARD WILSON, 19, from High Wycombe, said he preferred to watch Notts County play than Wycombe Wanderers. He said: "I don't go to the matches but they are a decent team. I have seen them play a couple of times and they were all right."

The leisure management student added: "The ticket price is quite high as well. I think it is about £12 when they should be asking £7 or £8 from fans."



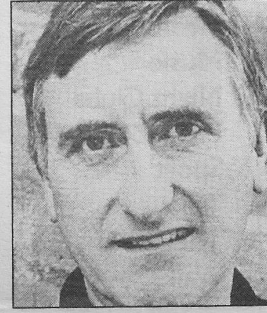
SEAN McCOLGAN, 26, from High Wycombe, said he supported London teams and went to see them play. "I don't like following the lower teams," he said. The financial adviser added: "There's nothing wrong with Wycombe Wanderers. I have seen them play and they do seem to be a good team. It is just I follow London teams like Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal. I also go to see Watford games now and again."



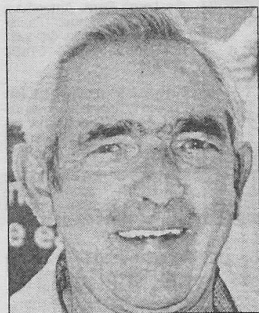
JOHN PARSLow, 73, of Ash Road, Princes Risborough, said people should play football because they enjoy it and not to become a top league club. The retired aircraft mechanic said: "Going to see the Wanderers play at amateur level was much more pleasant than seeing them now. A lot of teams in the First Division have got loads of money but still don't win matches. Too much emphasis is put on winning."



SUE SHIRLEY, 38, of Eastwood Road, High Wycombe, said some of her family were avid Wycombe Wanderers' supporters and tried to attend every Blues' game but she and her husband, a Manchester United fan, did not go. The housewife said: "They probably went to see the match against West Bromwich Albion because they don't miss many games. I don't go because I just don't like football."



GEOFFREY RUFUS, 47, of Almond Walk, Hazlemere, High Wycombe, moved from London to Wycombe in 1980 and is a loyal supporter of Arsenal. The retired firefighter said: "I have never supported Wycombe Wanderers but did go to see them play once. They were playing against Arsenal in a pre-season friendly in 1986. I didn't pay that much attention to them. I can't remember who won."



KENNETH MAYO, 73, of The Chase, Tylers Green, has been a fan of the Wanderers for 50 years but no longer goes to see them play. "I stopped going to the matches because of hooliganism, that spoiled the game for me. I still read about how the team are doing in The Star," said the retired printer. "I think Sanchez is very good and certainly picked them up. I think he is right to attack stay-away fans."



ANDY FOX, 32, of White-lands Road, High Wycombe, said his favourite teams were Manchester United and Derby County. "I've never been to a Wycombe Wanderers match," said the Wycombe District Council employee. "The council provide free tickets for employees to see them but I can't because I go to Derby." He agreed that Wycombe would not become a top division club if fans stayed away.



JOHN WALTERS, 19, of West Wycombe Road, High Wycombe, said he did not attend any of the Wanderers' matches because he does not like football. The music management student said: "It is not in my blood. I prefer to concentrate on music and other things. The last time I heard about the team was last year and they were not doing too well. The most important thing for the team is to play and win."



JAMES SHELTON, 26, of Priory Avenue, High Wycombe, said Sanchez was correct in claiming that fans failing to turn up for matches would hamper the team from progressing. The information technology worker said: "Wycombe is quite a big area so I am sure they can muscle up more supporters. Less than 5,500 people attending a match is not a lot of people. I think Manchester United get about 50,000."



JAMES SUMMERLIN, 19, of Juniper Close, Hazlemere, High Wycombe, supports Arsenal but watched the Blues when he was 14: "They were bad. I watched them when Martin O'Neill was manager because he made them play good passing football. Then Alan Smith came, followed by John Gregory. They brought in new players and the team didn't gel. That turned me off, they were playing for money, not fans."