

Switch off costly for Wanderers

WYCOMBE Wanderers' expensive habit of switching off and conceding goals in the last five minutes of each half has cost them 13 league goals and 12 points already this season.

If Blues had learned to shut up shop in those vital periods they would now be sitting fifth in a play-off position, ahead of Burnley and Stoke, instead of resting in 11th spot.

More than one third of all the league goals Wycombe have conceded this season have come in the final five minutes of each half.

And the problem has not just been confined to the league. In cup competitions, Wolves scored in the 90th minute against them, Oxford City got an 87th minute goal and Wigan struck on the stroke of half time.

The costly problem is baffling Blues boss Lawrie Sanchez, who admits he has never known anything like it.

He said: "It's not fitness, it's concentration. They don't concentrate for the whole time for whatever reason. It's gone beyond coincidence now and I don't know what to do about that. We tell them about it, we remind them during the game but it still happens, they continue to do it."

By far and away their most susceptible period is the five minutes before half time.

Blackpool and Stoke both managed to score twice in that period while Bournemouth, Notts County, Wigan (in the league and cup), Millwall and Preston, last Saturday, have all hit Wycombe in that spell.

Defender Matt Lawrence said: "I don't know why we give late goals away. If we could put our finger on what the problem is we would've put it right. I don't know if we switch off but whatever it is we've got to put it right."

Last Saturday, it happened twice in Blues' 3-2 defeat at Preston.

They conceded on the stroke of half time, and even though Lawrence equalised in the second half, Wycombe did not learn their lesson and conceded a killer late winner with just four minutes of the match remaining to undo all their previous good work.

It was a sickener for a patched-up Wanderers side who had taken a fifth minute lead through Matt

Blues concede another game in closing stages



Group hug: Blues celebrate at Preston on Saturday, but it was shortlived

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Brady's debut goal only to trail 2-1 at the break after conceding goals to Colin Murdock (34 minutes) and Macken late on (45 minutes).

Wycombe, who began with just Sean Devine up front, and strung five across the midfield as they reacted to their casualty list which saw Andy Baird (flu), Jamie Bates (ankle), Paul Emblen (ankle),

Jermaine McSparran (appendix), Jason Cousins (suspended) all missing and centrebacks Paul McCarthy and Mark Rogers playing with the flu, clung on like limpets. They fought back with Matt Lawrence hitting a 57th minute equaliser against the run of play.

It had looked good enough to earn Sanchez's side a share of the

spoils until Macken popped up again to score during Wycombe's dozey period.

Afterwards Sanchez said: "We've been ahead against most of the top teams.

"They gave everything they've got but at this moment in time we're not quite as good as the top six. It's as simple as that."