

Supporters pay more as Wanderers budget for £250,000 loss

Prices up as debts grow

FOOTBALL

By Dave Peters

BLUES are set to announce an annual loss of £250,000 this year – and fans will have to pay more at the turnstile to help cover it.

The Blues, who have only made a profit once since joining the Football League, will announce the latest crushing loss at October's AGM.

The directors reacted to the crisis – which they put down to insufficient crowds and a rising wage bill, by going back on their promise to freeze terrace prices, and putting them up by £2.

Adult terrace tickets bought on match days will now cost £12, making Blues the second most expensive Division Two ground to stand at next year, behind Oxford (£12.50). Season tickets and other home prices are unaffected.

Watching Blues will now be £2 more than fans of Brentford, Cambridge, Colchester, Peterborough, Rotherham, Swansea and Walsall will pay to stand at their clubs next year, while Wrexham charge just £9.

Away fans visiting Adams Park will pay even more. They will now pay £15, a rise of £2, to sit behind the goal.

The price hike comes after a season when boss Lawrie Sanchez was forced to sell the club's only right back, Matt Lawrence, to Millwall for £250,000 and keeper Martin Taylor took a pay cut.

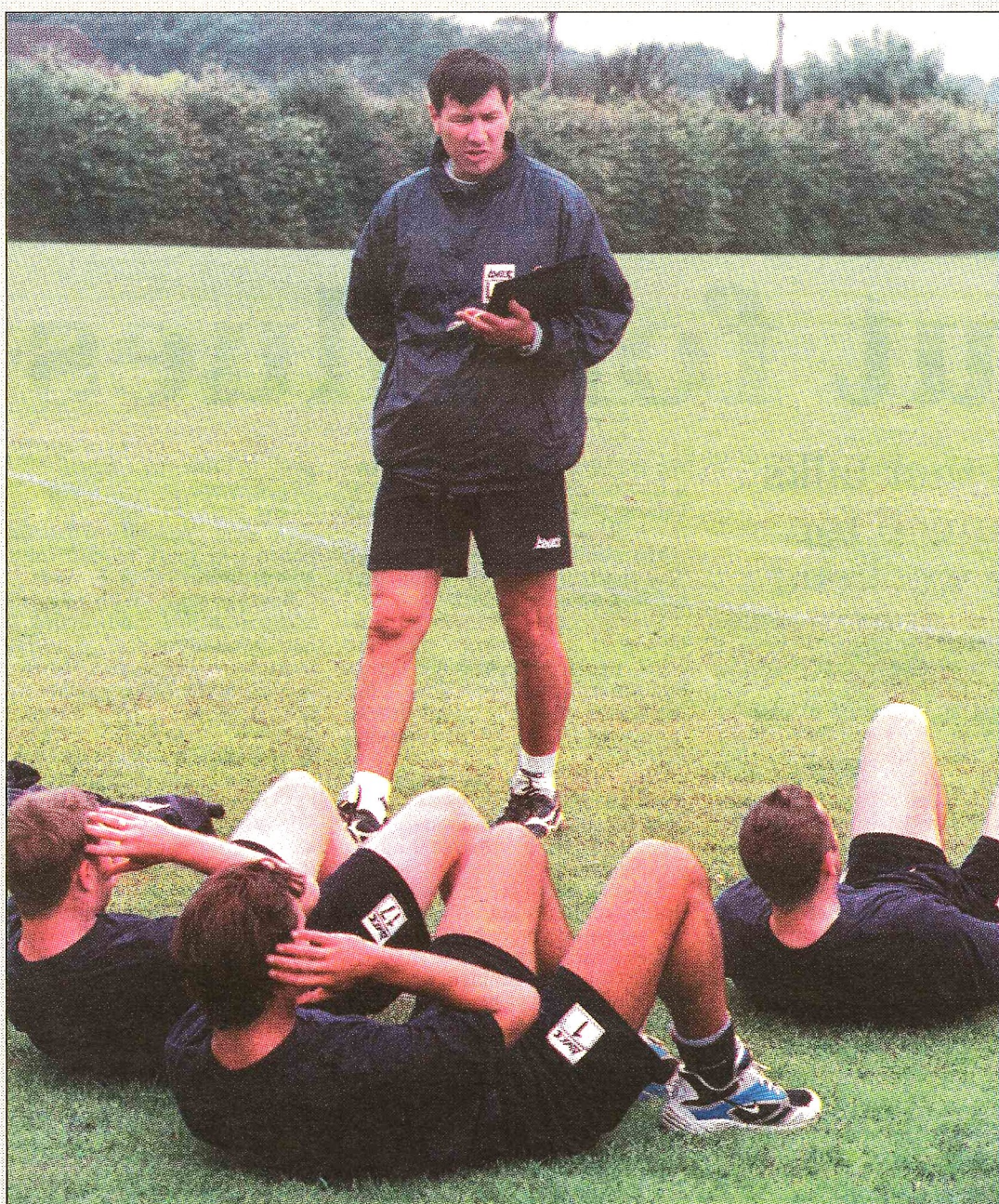
But with other players' salaries going up this season and Blues trying to sign Bristol City striker Steve Jones, Wanderers insist they had no option.

Director Graham Peart said: "One player's taken a pay cut but quite a few will be getting a pay rise. In any job people expect an annual rise so you can't have static turnstile fees."

Sanchez insists no one is overpaid. He said: "We aren't big payers. I'm struggling to sign people because I'm asking them to take a pay cut."

Fans have criticised the rise. Dale Hurman, editor of the Tales of a Chair-boy fanzine, said: "It will achieve our lowest gate since entering the League."

Independent supporters club chairman Ted Wheller said: "If we do well they might get away with it but if we're struggling crowds will plummet."



ROLL CALL: Stars Sean Devine, Dave Carroll and Paul Emblen were again absent from pre-season training this week when manager Lawrie Sanchez held the roll call. The injured trio have missed out on a week of solid running at RAF Halton as the rest of the squad bid to get fit for next Saturday's first friendly at Boreham Wood. Picture by STUART LLOYD Ref: 00-2161F36