

Not bad for a week's work Wanderers

VIEW FROM THE STAND

By Ron Barnett

WE'RE less than a week into the new season and Wanderers have already upset the promotion favourites.

Not only did we come away from Stoke with a well-deserved point, we also had the temerity to be a little tough in the tackle department.

With their manager Gudjon Thordarson enrolling in the Alex Ferguson School of Whingeing, the Stoke prima donnas could well be Man United in disguise.

The bad news is that, even before the season kicked off, we had lost the services of our top goalscorer and our main midfield playmaker.

What's more, they both look like being out of action for some time.

This puts pressure to perform on new boy Steve Jones as well as providing opportunities for youngsters, such as Mo Harkin and Dannie Bulman to stake a long-term place in the team.

After our successful trip to the Potteries, we have a couple of home games coming up against other trade related teams.

The Chairboys take on the Cobblers and the Hatters in a fixture list that sounds more like a Trade Union Congress conference.

Let's hope by the time these games are over, the Chairboys will be sitting comfortably at the top of the table.

As this is my first column of the season, I thought I would consult my crystal balls to see if they could predict what's in store for the Blues. For what it's worth, here's my predictions.

The Blues will improve on last year's 12th spot but will miss out on a promotion play-off place.

Club finances will be helped by a good run in either the FA or Worthington Cups. The Blues will reach the fourth round of one of these for the first time in their history.

Jock McSporrán will continue to improve and someone will make the club "an offer they can't refuse" before the transfer deadline.

Graham Peart will then try his best not to smile when he announces a balance sheet with black rather than red figures.

Don't hold your breath on any of these forecasts though, they carry a serious health warning.

This time last year I tipped that Lee Holsgrove would be a first team regular by Christmas.

Still this season he may make it – at Aldershot!

Baird answers his critics

STRIKER Andy Baird continued his rich scoring vein by hitting the winner in the reserves 1-0 victory over Swindon on Wednesday. His second half strike took his tally to three goals in reserve and friendly matches this term.

Reserve boss Terry Gibson said: "We criticised him last season for not scoring enough goals and he's responding in the best way."

But it was another disappointing performance from summer signing Stewart Castledine who was upstaged in midfield by pocket dynamo Martyn Lee as the reserves got their campaign off to a winning start.

After just one match they have now won half as many games as they won last season.