

Vinnie takes over as Brown pays penalty

PARK LIFE

By Steve Brown
Wanderers midfielder

THE big news this week is that I have lost my job. I am no longer the club's penalty taker after my miss at Brentford on Saturday.

Having never missed a penalty before I have now missed my last two. Against Luton, my kick was pushed onto the post by the keeper but I scored the rebound but my luck ran out against Brentford.

It was a poor penalty on my behalf. I changed my mind and changed everything I normally do and the keeper saved it.

I think taking penalties is getting harder now because highlights of every game are shown on TV giving goalkeepers the chance to work out where you like to put them.

The boss then held a penalty competition in training and I missed in that one as well. I didn't even hit the target.

It was a knockout competition and Chris Vinnicombe eventually won it and is now our new penalty taker. Martyn Lee ran him close but with Martyn not being in the starting line-up at the moment it was always going to be Vinnie.

He's never scored for the club before so hopefully he will be able to put that right with a penalty.

I'm disappointed to be giving the job up and if Vinnie doesn't fancy it in a match situation I would have no hesitation taking another one. It wouldn't bother me.

Losing the penalties means I will have to score more goals from open play if I am to continue as leading scorer.

I told Jermaine McSparran before the Barnet match on Tuesday that he needed to score because I'm getting dizzy at the top of the club's goalscoring charts. It did the trick, he did score but I'm still leading the way.

I'd love to get another one in tonight's televised match against Oxford.

As players we've got to shut it out of our minds that its being shown live on Sky because if we get caught up with the concept of it being on the telly we will be onto a loser.

But, that said, it is a fantastic opportunity for us to show people why we have started the season so well. It's certainly good to see the chairman with a big smile on his face. He's an avid fan.

He even came in and thanked the players for beating Barnet in extra time on Tuesday and getting the club through to the second round of the Worthington Cup.

It was a good game as it turned out and Barnet's keeper made sure it was a much longer night than we wanted with some outstanding saves.

Adams Park away end's cash boost

WANDERERS will start work on doubling the size of the away end at Adams Park in the summer after the Football Foundation agreed this week to give them up to £285,000 in grants.

Blues have already got planning permission in place for the scheme which will increase the away end's capacity to around 2,000.

Wanderers decided to develop that end of the ground after conceding defeat in their battle to fill the stadium with home fans.

Blues have never filled the ground's 10,000 limit but have frequently outsold the allocation they can give away fans.

Chairman Ivor Beeks said: "We're now in a position where we can go forward next year and develop that stand. And, in the long term situation, once we get to Division One we will need that extra capacity."

The new plans include the provision of a clock and scoreboard. But the extra seats will not increase the capacity over its current 10,000 limit after planners ruled that Blues would have to cut capacity from other areas of the ground to comply with parking and access restrictions.

● Lawrie Sanchez is hoping Blues' dramatic extra-time Worthington Cup victory over Barnet will provide him with the financial impetus to go into the transfer market.

He said: "You just hope that you can draw a big team and make lots of money and use it to improve the squad."

"That's what we play this competition for. We are never going to win it. It should be called the Strengthening of the Squad Competition."

Telly stars hunt record

WANDERERS will be bidding to equal their best ever start to a season when they entertain struggling Oxford United in tonight's live on Sky match at Adams Park (ko 7.45pm).

If they avoid defeat against their neighbours Blues will equal their record of six unbeaten matches which they set in their very first season in the Football League.

Regardless of what happens on the pitch Wanderers will be winners off it tonight. They will receive £30,000 from Sky who are making their first ever visit to Adams Park for a League match.

Oxford are without a win in the league and are hovering just above the relegation zone. They were also knocked out of the Worthington Cup, which they won in 1986, by Wolves in midweek.

Blues were hoping to tie-up the signing of new striker Andy Ram-mell in time for the clash which boss Sanchez knows won't be easy despite Oxford's precarious league position, he remembers that Oxford won 1-0 at Wycombe last year.

Jamie Bates is hoping to shake off the knock he received against Barnet and Sanchez is desperate to beat Blues' local rivals in front of the cameras.