

FANS DIG BLUES OUT OF TROUBLE

By DAVE PETERS

SUPPORTERS answered the clarification call to help ensure Saturday's fourth FA Cup tie with Wolves went ahead after a white-out threatened to make play impossible.

Wanderers' chairman Ivor Beeks arrived at 7.20 am after an urgent wake-up call from groundsman Jim Gardner to find the ground under snow.

Mr Beeks said: "You could have had the European ice skating championships in the car park. It was horrendous and the pitch was totally covered in snow."

Operation Match-On then swung into operation.

Mr Beeks rushed to Ecovert, road gritting company at Wycombe Air Park, in a bid to bring in some extra help in the race against time.

He said: "There was no-one around. I sat in the car for a minute wondering what to do when a road sweeper came down the road and a man opened the gate for him."

"I ran to the gate, told him who I was and said that we had a major problem. They were brilliant. Within an hour they had two lorries gritting the car parks."

As the gritters went to work an appeal went out on elevenSEVENTY local radio for supporters to come and clear snow off the pitch.

A spokesman for the station said: "It was a brilliant response. We issued an appeal and after an hour and a half 150 people had turned up with their shovels."

Mr Beeks said: "It was fantastic. There were supporters there and people



Avalanche: Andy Rammell, teammates and fans celebrate his goal in what remains of the snow 01-217 F23

from my own company. Everyone was pulling together to get the game on."

Even assistant manager Terry Gibson and midfielder Stewart Castledine joined the five-hour effort to clear the pitch while local company Eros Hire Tools provided two dumper trucks to take the snow away.

Beeks said: "The match would not have happened if it wasn't for all those people. They were fantastic and all their hard work was worthwhile."

"In my 14 years as chairman we've had an enormous amount of success and now we've gone and surpassed that."

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Appreciative: Ivor Beeks