

# Cup fever's ok, but now it's a real sweat in league

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VIEW FROM THE STAND

EVER since those high octane celebrations to mark the Blues' progress into the fifth round of the cup, the team seem to have been suffering from a cup hangover of George Best proportions.

First of all, we are shunted out of the LDV Vans Trophy by a very poor Swindon side.

Then we all have to suffer another desperate no-score bore draw with Brentford.

Mind you, that's a result that is almost a racing certainty whenever the Blues meet the Bees. In 12 league meetings between the clubs there have been seven draws of which six have been goalless.

In fact, there have only been 16 goals scored in the dozen matches, and seven of those came in the very first league meeting between the two clubs. So, there have only been nine goals scored in the last 11 games. Hardly a good recipe for entertainment.

Finally on Tuesday evening, we were well and truly beaten by the university city boys from Cambridge.

They were certainly several degrees brighter than us on the night and deserved their double first over the Blues.

Thank heavens we decided to pull out of the Berks & Bucks Cup. I dread to think what the mighty Windsor & Eton would have done to us in our current hung-over state.

On a brighter note, thanks to our record-breaking cup win over Wolves, Lawrie Sanchez will be going topless this summer.

Before the fourth round tie kicked-off Graham Hurley of Haymill Saab rashly promised the Big Chief the use of a Saab convertible if Wycombe went through to the fifth round.

Sanchez, who already drives a Saab 9-5 which is sponsored by Haymill, will now have the use of the stylish convertible throughout the summer.

Commenting on his generous win bonus, Hurley said: "I made the offer in a moment of pre-match madness but I'm delighted to be able to keep my promise to Lawrie".

I can't wait to see what offers the Blues boss will receive for beating Middlesbrough or Wimbledon. Maybe Booker Air Park will give him the use of a private plane.

So now it's onwards, and hopefully upwards, to Oxford. Let's hope the Big Chief can find a magical potion to cure our hangover.

Anything other than a win will leave our hopes of a promotion play-off place in a terminal condition.

# McCarthy may be back for the M40 derby

DEFENDER Paul McCarthy could return to the Wanderers side for tomorrow's M40 derby at bottom club Oxford United.

He is on standby to replace Jamie Bates who is still suffering from blurred vision from his clash of heads against Cambridge in midweek.

Bates was ordered to rest for 72 hours after the collision and Sanchez will monitor his progress before naming his side tomorrow morning.

McCarthy resumed training this week after being out with ankle ligament damage and Sanchez will check on his fitness before making a decision.

Fit again Dave Carroll could claim a seat on the subs bench. The midfield playmaker came through 70 minutes of the reserves' 2-0 defeat against Gillingham in midweek but Sanchez is loathe to chuck him straight back in.

Keith Ryan could continue up front because Sam Parkin has only been given a very slim chance of returning from his back injury tomorrow.

Sanchez is demanding a much-improved performance from his team and admits the club's priorities have now changed from play-off pursuit to cup glory and that will affect his selection tomorrow.

He said: "We are now building our season on the cup. The last ten days have brought it down to that and we are prioritising that."

"The players want to get back to winning ways. They are up for it and we don't need another performance like the last three going into the cup game."

Troubled Oxford lost Joe Kinnear, their director of football to Luton, this week.

To ensure the game goes ahead, United groundsman Mick Moore has enlisted the help of contractors from the Oxford University Parks Department.

They have arranged for a machine to spike the pitch 12 inches deep, an operation that was set to take eight hours, to reduce the possibility of the match being called off because a waterlogged pitch at The Manor Ground.

## HOW THEY STAND

| Team         | P  | W  | D | L | F  | A  | W | D | L  | F  | A  | Pt |
|--------------|----|----|---|---|----|----|---|---|----|----|----|----|
| Millwall     | 29 | 10 | 1 | 4 | 34 | 11 | 9 | 2 | 3  | 27 | 18 | 60 |
| Walsall      | 30 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 35 | 12 | 5 | 4 | 6  | 16 | 18 | 56 |
| Wigan        | 30 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 23 | 9  | 3 | 8 | 4  | 17 | 18 | 54 |
| Rotherham    | 28 | 7  | 4 | 3 | 27 | 18 | 7 | 4 | 3  | 18 | 16 | 50 |
| Stoke        | 28 | 8  | 4 | 3 | 21 | 11 | 5 | 6 | 2  | 22 | 17 | 49 |
| Reading      | 27 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 42 | 15 | 3 | 3 | 6  | 12 | 18 | 47 |
| Bristol City | 28 | 8  | 3 | 4 | 35 | 18 | 5 | 5 | 3  | 14 | 10 | 47 |
| Northampton  | 29 | 5  | 5 | 3 | 16 | 14 | 6 | 4 | 6  | 17 | 19 | 42 |
| Notts Co     | 27 | 6  | 4 | 3 | 23 | 18 | 6 | 2 | 6  | 14 | 22 | 42 |
| Bournemouth  | 27 | 4  | 5 | 4 | 17 | 14 | 6 | 4 | 4  | 27 | 19 | 39 |
| Brentford    | 28 | 5  | 6 | 2 | 17 | 17 | 4 | 6 | 5  | 14 | 21 | 39 |
| Wycombe      | 27 | 7  | 2 | 4 | 18 | 14 | 3 | 6 | 5  | 9  | 13 | 38 |
| Oldham       | 30 | 7  | 4 | 4 | 21 | 15 | 2 | 6 | 7  | 12 | 24 | 37 |
| Wrexham      | 26 | 5  | 4 | 5 | 16 | 18 | 4 | 4 | 4  | 20 | 20 | 35 |
| Colchester   | 27 | 5  | 3 | 5 | 14 | 13 | 4 | 5 | 5  | 15 | 20 | 35 |
| Camb Utd     | 29 | 5  | 5 | 5 | 22 | 18 | 4 | 3 | 7  | 17 | 27 | 35 |
| Peterboro    | 28 | 7  | 3 | 3 | 21 | 14 | 2 | 4 | 9  | 13 | 23 | 34 |
| Bury         | 28 | 6  | 4 | 5 | 14 | 16 | 3 | 1 | 9  | 10 | 22 | 32 |
| Swindon      | 27 | 4  | 4 | 6 | 19 | 24 | 3 | 2 | 8  | 8  | 21 | 27 |
| Bristol R    | 25 | 0  | 7 | 4 | 8  | 15 | 5 | 3 | 6  | 20 | 17 | 25 |
| Port Vale    | 25 | 4  | 5 | 4 | 18 | 12 | 2 | 1 | 9  | 7  | 21 | 24 |
| Swansea      | 26 | 3  | 5 | 4 | 14 | 13 | 2 | 3 | 9  | 13 | 29 | 23 |
| Luton        | 26 | 3  | 1 | 9 | 13 | 24 | 1 | 5 | 7  | 14 | 27 | 18 |
| Oxford U     | 27 | 3  | 2 | 9 | 13 | 19 | 1 | 0 | 12 | 16 | 41 | 14 |