

If only cup form could have run over into the league

WHAT a second half to the season this has been.

When I forecast last August that the Blues would reach the fourth round of the cup, for the first time in our history, I never dreamt we would still be there at the semi-final stage.

And who knows, Cardiff is now only 90 minutes away.

While the management team and players have justifiably received praise from all and sundry for their magnificent exploits, everyone at the club has played a blinder throughout this cup run.

It was especially pleasing to see Ivor Beeks savouring the delights of victory at Wimbledon and Leicester, as well as Alan Parry cavorting across the pitch at Filbert Street. These pair are probably one of the best combinations of chairman and director in league football.

When the board appointed new directors and asked fans to invest in the club last autumn they couldn't, in their wildest dreams, have expected such a dramatic season.

Their appointment of Mike Sullivan to strengthen the sales and marketing was also perfectly timed. The question is, was this a lucky coincidence or have we got a psychic on the board?

Like everyone else I just can't wait until semi-final Sunday. My lucky cup pants that have been ever present in our nine game unbeaten cup run are now safely stored away so that they are ready to tackle Liverpool.

Whatever happens at Villa Park, we are guaranteed a happy ending to our cup fairytale. A jackpot of gold, worth

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VIEW FROM THE STAND

at least around a million pounds, is waiting for us at the end of the rainbow.

It looks like the Big Chief is already planning to invest some of his jackpot winnings on new recruits. As we are bound to see several squad players departing at the end of the season, now seems as good a time as any to bring in some new faces.

After disappointing home defeats to Stoke and Rotherham; followed by tough looking matches against Walsall, Millwall and Wigan during the next week; our push for a promotion play-off place now looks very unlikely.

As has happened to so many clubs in the past, our league form is now suffering because of our cup success. We just do not have a big enough or experienced enough squad to cope with the number of games or the injuries and suspensions.

Looking back on our cup run again, well it makes such pleasant reading, it suddenly dawned on me that we've won three away games at Grimsby, Wimbledon and Leicester plus a draw at Millwall. Meanwhile in the league, we have only won four games out of 16 on our travels. If only we could convert our cup form into league matches.

As the Big Chief is going to spend some cash in the transfer market, I think now may be a good time to start saving a few quid to put on us getting promoted next season.

Mind you, I can't see the odds being very attractive.

Rammell and Carroll make good return in the reserves

ANDY Rammell took just 13 minutes to announce his return to fitness with a goal for the reserves in their 3-2 defeat at home to Reading on Tuesday.

The Wanderers striker showed no ill-effects from his five-game lay-off as he signed back on with the opening goal in the Avon Insurance Combination match.

He took the ball down on his chest before firing a vicious shot past the Reading keeper for the opening goal.

Rambo will now be kicking down manager Lawrie Sanchez's door for a place in the first team for tomorrow's match against his old club Walsall at The Bescott Stadium.

Dave Carroll also made his comeback in the same game following his

groin injury and both are now pressing for a return to the first team.

Reserve team boss Terry Gibson said: "They were both outstanding and both showed no ill-effects."

Carroll and Rammell's return could not have been better timed with the FA Cup semi-final against Liverpool on the horizon.

Neither have played since they both pulled up lame in the fifth round replay win over Wimbledon on February 17.

Gibson pulled them both off after an hour satisfied that both had done enough.

Leeyon Phelan got Wycombe's other goal in an entertaining game but despite twice leading they were beaten by a strong Reading side.

Record radio numbers for quarters

WYCOMBE'S local radio station ElevenSeventy recorded their largest-ever audience figures since going on the air seven years ago with 25,000 listeners for Wycombe's FA Cup sixth round commentary from Leicester.

Several pubs in Wycombe carried

the commentary along with shops in the High Street and thousands huddled round to listen.

The station is planning to broadcast live commentary of the semi-final at Villa Park with Blues press officer Alan Hutchinson behind the mike.