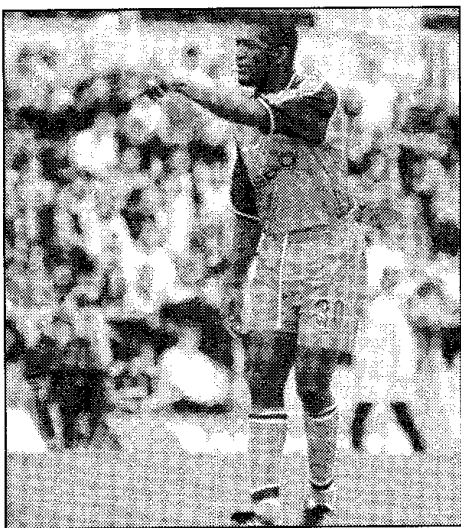


We will all be just fine



STEVE BROWN

PARKLIFE

I WOULD like to start by wishing all our readers and all the Wanderers fans a happy Christmas.

I know we didn't give you the best of presents last week but I'm sure we'll put that right tomorrow.

Every team has one bad result in a season and we had ours at Stoke. But we're not panicking. Look at Liverpool they lost 4-0 at Chelsea last week but they're still many people's favourites to win the title.

Part of our trouble at Stoke was that we had to play with ten men for so long. The gaffer is trying to clamp down on our discipline record this season and I'm one of those he has back-fined for being sent off.

He wasn't fining us at the start of the season but everyone who has been sent off has had to pay up now.

It's funny, football must be the only job in the world where you get fined for doing something wrong.

We get docked if we're late for training, late for the team bus or if we're not wearing flip-flops in the shower. Fans are very quick to say players should be fined when they do something wrong but imagine how they would react if they were fined because they got into the office late.

Still, as I say, I take it on the chin because the fines are then spent buying Christmas presents for the the kids in Wycombe Hospital.

We went up there on Monday and as usual it was a very moving experience. It was particularly emotional for me because for the first time ever they let us into the Special Care Baby Unit.

Having spent so much time in hospital with my baby boy Maxwell, I really appreciate what the parents were going through, so it was nice to be able to share a bit of happiness.

Going to the hospital was a tradition which John Gregory started when he was manager and I'm a glad it has stayed.

However one tradition that has disappeared is the lads buying each other presents like we did under Martin O'Neill. We all used to pull a name from a hat and then have to buy that player a present.

It was all a bit of fun and it's a shame it's disappeared because I can think of a few things I'd have bought the lads.

I'd have got Stewart Castledine a half-hour session on the sunbeds and some leeks for Stuart Roberts to make him feel at home. I'd have bought Mark Rogers a book on British culture and tradition; Alan Hutchinson a book on learning to cope with modern technology and Paul McCarthy one of those self-help books on how to be cheerful, because he's always moaning.

And I know what the lads would have got me. It would have been a pair of matching his and hers towels because they reckon Martin Taylor and I are like a married couple because of the amount of time we spend together.

HOW THEY STAND

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Stoke	21	8	2	1	21	6	5	2	3	13	12	43
Brighton	21	8	1	1	18	6	4	6	1	12	9	43
Brentford	22	8	3	0	28	8	4	3	4	15	17	39
Bristol C	23	7	2	2	19	9	5	3	4	18	14	41
Reading	21	6	1	4	17	12	6	1	3	13	9	38
Cardiff	22	5	5	1	19	12	4	4	3	15	12	36
Tranmere	22	6	3	2	28	11	4	2	5	14	21	35
Wycombe	22	7	4	0	23	10	2	4	5	10	18	35
Huddersfld	21	6	3	2	19	12	3	3	4	12	11	33
QPR	22	5	4	2	18	10	4	2	5	14	16	33
Colchester	22	7	1	3	19	11	2	3	6	16	23	31
Oldham	22	6	3	2	21	9	1	6	4	15	20	30
Blackpool	22	4	6	1	15	12	3	2	6	14	22	29
Wigan	22	3	3	5	17	15	4	3	4	15	14	27
Peterboro	21	6	1	3	23	11	2	2	7	7	18	27
Swindon	21	4	3	3	11	12	3	3	5	11	16	27
Bournemouth	22	6	2	3	16	11	1	3	7	9	21	26
Chesterfld	22	4	1	5	16	16	2	5	4	8	11	24
Port Vale	22	4	3	4	17	13	2	3	6	9	18	24
Bury	22	4	2	5	13	15	3	1	7	10	22	24
Notts Co	22	2	5	4	12	15	2	3	6	15	23	20
Wrexham	23	3	3	6	14	20	2	1	8	13	33	19
N'thamptn	22	3	1	7	9	19	2	1	8	12	23	17
Cambridge	22	3	5	3	15	18	0	1	10	6	27	15