

# Away form let us down this season

**RON BARNETT**

**VIEW FROM THE STAND**

WELL at least Wanderers' home season finished on a winning note. Our 13 league victories at Adams Park means we won more home games than either Reading or Cardiff, who both finished in the top six. If only our away form had been anywhere near as good, we could have also been in the promotion pack.

In fact, Wanderers fans have managed to outperform the team this season. Our average home crowd of 6,681 for league matches puts the club in eighth place in the Division Two attendance table. A great result considering the fact that all the seven sides who finished above us are much bigger clubs with larger capacity grounds and greater fan bases.

We managed to attract larger home gates than all the clubs of a similar size to us. This includes both Brentford and Brighton who have finished in the top three.

The increase of an average of more than 1,000 fans at every home match has obviously been a direct result of last year's cup run. The trick will now be to ensure these new fans stay on board for next season and that could well depend on what additions The Big Chief makes to the team this summer.

Our new sponsors, Integrity Software, certainly appear to be taking an active role in trying to help Lawrie with their Friends of Wycombe Wanderers initiative. It's very encouraging to hear that around £30,000 has already been raised in the first week and that Martin O'Neill and John Gregory have put their hands in their pockets to support the scheme.

As the club has guaranteed that every penny will be given to The Big Chief for new players, I sincerely hope that all Wanderers fans and local businesses will support this innovative initiative by making a donation.

The scheme can only succeed if both the fans and club officials take an active part in encouraging local companies and retailers to give some "Lolly to Lawrie".

If the club are committed to mounting a serious promotion challenge, then the Friends of Wycombe Wanderers initiative provides them with their best opportunity to achieve this aim. Therefore, the promoting and selling of the scheme to supporters and businesses should be their priority over the next few months.

Imagine if a war chest of, say, one million could be raised in time for the summer sales. I'm sure Lawrie could invest this in new players who would help us mount a serious promotion challenge. It would also encourage him to stay with the club and not be enticed by offers from other clubs that are bound to come in for him.

Judging by his column in last week's programme, The Big Chief was more than a little upset by some adverse comments from a few fans on the websites. Whilst everyone is entitled to their opinions, the truth is that the vast majority of Wanderers fans fully support Lawrie and realise that keeping him at Adams Park is vital to the club's long term plans and future success.