

TAKING THE MIKE FOR THE BLUES

ALAN Hutchinson is the voice of Wycombe Wanderers, totally biased, totally outspoken and proud of it.

His away match commentaries on 1170 radio built up a cult following which he has now transferred to the Wycombe Wanderers website.

His commentaries have become part of Wanderers folklore and also landed him in bother with other clubs fans who occasionally tell him where to stuff his mike.

He is a fan first and he gives it as he sees it.

He gets frustrated and excited by his team, infuriated by referees – and the listeners who tune in from all over the world get it all in both ears and love it.

He said: "I'm totally biased. I admit that. I set out to be because I support the club and so do the people who are listening, but at the same time I don't mind criticising the players but I will never say anything that I wouldn't say to their faces."

"Occasionally one of them will take me to task because their wife or girlfriend has heard it."

"Keith Scott once took exception when he missed an open goal and I said my 84-year-old mum could have done better."

"I used to criticise Michael Simpson on air. I could see what a good player he was but he would drive me mad passing it backwards all the time. But I told Simmo that to his face and we've never had a problem."

"I think the lads know I'm professional and they know how much this club means to me."

The players love him and they give as good as they get. Hutch is always the butt of their jokes on the team bus and in a football club that is the ultimate mark of respect being let into their dressing room banter culture.

But Hutch's mouth has got him into trouble on occasion. He was once confronted by a hate mob outside Manchester City's Maine Road after Wycombe had won 2-1 there.

He said: "Manchester was the worst time. We were bottom of the league. There

FOOTBALL By Dave Peters

were 32,000 people there and we played brilliantly and won.

"I got out of my tree when we scored. And some young yobs took exception to it and started chucking orange peel at me."

"When I got out of the ground they were there waiting for me and they didn't look like they wanted to just throw oranges this time."

"They started coming towards me, but when Alan Parry came around the corner he told them to go away and watch Jackanory and they lost interest."

Hutch has never been one to keep his emotions in check when he gets behind the mike.

He said: "When we scored with seven minutes left at Lincoln to stay in the second division I went ballistic. Gina the club doctor was sitting next to me and I gave her such a big bear hug that we nearly toppled over."

Leicester City in the quarter-finals was another occasion when he got carried away with the excitement.

He said: "Sometimes I forget I'm on air. That was the best game I've done."

He had double reason to get carried away at Leicester because he had a big say in the signing of goalscorer Roy Essandoh – who Wycombe signed after Hutch put an advert on teletext.

He said: "We had all our strikers out injured and I was sitting in the office with Sanch when he said we should advertise for one."

"He was joking but I said I could put something on teletext and I did. Within 15 minutes of the ad going on, Essandoh's agent was on the phone. It was a real fairytale."

Hutch has got Wanderers in his blood. His grandad was involved with the club when they moved from Springs Meadow to Loakes Park. His great uncle was left back in the first game at Loakes Park and Alan used to be a right winger for the reserves.

But the biggest surprise to Alan's army of listeners is that Alan is actually a qualified referee – which is



Winning duo: Alan Hutchinson with Roy Essandoh

strange when you hear how much stick he gives the officials on air.

He said: "I make comments about referees. Some people like it, some people don't. I don't set out to criticise them and if they have a good game I will say so. I say it how I see it."

"But sometimes I might come away from games regretting it if I think I have said too much about the ref."

His style may not be everyone's cup of tea and he may not always be politically correct but his irreverent style is certainly

entertaining and different.

He said: "If a pretty girl walks past the press box I tell the listeners. Why shouldn't I. It's part of the picture. If I can see everyone else's head turning to look at her and my job is to tell people what's going on."

But at the end of the day Hutch is there to keep people who can't get to the matches in touch with what's going on.

He said: "I think the fans have come to rely on the away match commentaries."

I can be in Tesco and someone I have never met before will come up and say

they heard the commentary and that they can tell how Wycombe are doing just from the tone of my voice."

● Alan Hutchinson commentates on all Wanderers away league matches on the Blues website show Wanderers World.

His first commentary was for Wycombe Hospital Radio in a match against Oxford City at Loakes Park under Brian Lee.

Jom Rosenthal was sitting beside him covering the match for the Oxford Mail. Rosenthal is now one of the key men at ITV.