

Bright start to the new Blues era



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VIEW FROM THE STAND

THE post Sanchez era got off to an encouraging start last Saturday.

As 0-0s go, this was an entertaining game and a far better performance than in recent home matches. You have to wonder why some of the players didn't play like that for The Big Chief.

Whether it was John Gorman or Terry Gibson who decided to select the senior players, it was certainly a smart move. Brownie and Rhino aren't going to hide when the going gets tough.

Love him or loathe him, you have to admit that Lawrie Sanchez did perform a couple of minor miracles during his reign at Adams Park. Escaping relegation, from an almost impossible situation, with that nail-biting win at Lincoln gave him a cracking start to his managerial career.

He then topped that with Wanderers great FA Cup run all the way to the semi-final meeting with Liverpool. Those giant killing victories over Millwall, Grimsby, Wolves, Wimbledon and Leicester were once-in-a-lifetime matches. Especially that penalty shoot-out win at Wimbledon which, along with the Milan derby, is the most exciting nights football I've ever had the pleasure to witness.

For a time we thought he could walk on water, but since then his record and popularity has been steadily sinking.

Personally, I would have liked to see him given until the end of October to try and pull things round. However, I equally understand the board's concern that if things did not improve we could be in deep trouble by then.

I must say that I always found The Big Chief to be very honest and open with his comments and opinions, even if I didn't always agree with them.

By finding time to write his own obituary I thought he left with great dignity which, given all the events in the Premier League this week, is a rare commodity in football nowadays.

The club should also be applauded for including this article in the Plymouth programme.

In retrospect, I think The Big Chief made the mistake of becoming too involved in the club's financial problems. He tried too hard to reduce overheads by releasing experienced heavy earners and replacing them with untried youngsters. He should have been more selfish and focused on results, arguing that by cutting back too much the squad would not be strong enough to survive.

After all, whilst saving money on the squad budget is very laudable, the quickest way to increase revenue is to put more bums on seats and sell more club merchandise, and you can only do that by winning football matches.

Since the departure of Martin O'Neill, the board have shown great synergy in their selection of managers and caretaker managers. After the S trio of Smith, Smillie and Sanchez; we are now on our second JG, first John Gregory and now John Gorman. Only time, and results, will tell whether the second coming of JG is here to stay.