

Probation over and now it's the real thing



RON BARNETT

VIEW FROM THE STAND

WHEN we start a new job we're normally given a three month probationary period after which our performances are assessed. Well now that Tony Adams has completed his first 90 days as Blues boss, it's time to review his progress.

After a few iffy comments and team selections Big Tony seems to be getting the hang of this managing lark. Following a string of disappointing performances things seem to be slowly but surely improving on the pitch as well.

The boss has certainly been very active in the loan market. No wonder the players have loans.co.uk emblazoned on their shirts. Maybe we should rename Big Tony the Loan Arranger!

The new formation of a five man midfield, supporting a lone striker, has worked well in our last two away matches. However, draws are not going to cure Wanderers' basement blues.

We need to pick up at least 30 points from our 17 remaining matches. The only way we can do that is by winning at least half of those games. Given that we've only collected three wins and 11 points from our last 17 fixtures, that's going to take a monumental effort.

There was an excellent turn out of members for Monday's 'Building for the Future' meeting.

After the usual depressing tale of the club's financial position, including a projected loss of £527K for this season, we got onto the main meat of the evening. Ivor Beeks introduced a representative from Baker Tilly, a financial consultancy with some previous experience of restructuring football clubs.

Baker Tilly have been approached as possible financial consultants should the proposed restructuring of the clubs constitution go ahead later in the year. Apparently, they have worked with four other Football League clubs in the past.

However, according to the brief explanation given of their work with Portsmouth, Luton, Chesterfield and Gillingham, their achievements seemed to have pretty limited to say the least.

Given the current situation and the projected worsening of Blues' financial position, it seems inevitable that the existing constitution will, sooner rather than later, have to be changed to a conventional Limited Company with a shareholding structure.

The challenge will be to prevent a number of individual shareholders getting together to effectively take control. This will be easier said than done.

You only have to look at what has happened at Old Trafford over the last few weeks, where two Irishmen, who are not interested in football, have joined forces and now hold over 25% of the shares. This entitles them to a place on the board as well as enabling them to demand an enquiry into recent transfer dealings at Manchester United and question the manager's new contract.

If this can happen at the one of the world's top clubs, what chance is there for the rest of us?

Having said all that, I firmly believe that if Wanderers are to progress we must embrace change. But, this must be done openly and honestly with extreme care and the approval of the membership.

With two tough home games coming up, things don't get any easier for Blues fans. Still let's look on the bright side, when you're bottom of the league the only way is up. Unless you go down that is!

Life of Reilly

ANDY Reilly's fairytale elevation from the youth team continued apace when he made his television bow in last Friday's visit to Sheffield Wednesday's Hillsborough stadium.

The left back said: "It was fantastic. To walk out there was completely different to anything I've ever been used to.

"You have to treat it as just another day at the office but it was difficult. I've never played in front of a crowd of that size. They were giving it plenty of welly but I loved it."

And Reilly made sure that he can't forget the experience by having five people video the match for him.