

The lowdown

Dave Peters runs through Blues' opposition

BOSTON 14/1: Have become football's most unlikely glamour club with the arrival of Paul Gascoigne as player coach. Whether he will still be around to give Wanderers a bumper attendance when they visit Bucks on February 5 remains to be seen.

With boss Steve Evans back at the helm following his ban from the game, Boston have been busy in the transfer market in the summer.

Free Press predicts: Mid-table mediocrity

BRISTOL ROVERS 12/1: Wycombe relegated them to the basement division for the first time in their history with a 2-1 win at the Memorial ground in 2001. Since then, the Pirates have spent the last three years desperately fighting to stay in the Football League but with the arrival of Ian Atkins as manager at the end of last season they could be surprise promotion contenders.

They have signed former Wycombe transfer target Jamie Forrester and ex-Wycombe loanee Richard Walker up front while the experience of Paul Trollope in midfield should serve them well.

Free Press predicts: Championship contenders

BURY 40/1: Manager Graham Barrow has gone as record as saying his main priority is to avoid relegation to the Conference. Barrow has got no money at his disposal and could be set to the start season without midfielder Terry Dunfield who has been called into the Canada World Development squad.

Free Press predicts: Relegation candidates

CAMBRIDGE 20/1: Saturday's visitors to Adams Park are a mirror image of Wycombe. They have scrapped their reserve side because of a player shortage and have lost key player Georges Mongin for six months with a cruciate injury he sustained on the training field one hour after passing his medical.

French manager Herve Renard steered the Us away from relegation trouble last season and will be looking for an even better showing this time as he bids to bring Arsene Wenger-style footie to The Abbey.

But he has warned fans his team has no chance of automatic promotion.

Free Press predicts: Mid-table mediocrity

CHELTENHAM 20/1: Managed by John Ward who was twice piped to the Wanderers job, the first time by John Gregory and the second time being by Tony Adams.

Led Cheltenham to 14th last season but had to cut the budget in the summer and will go with a youthful squad this term. His most experienced player, striker Steve Guinan who was captured from Hereford, has spent most of the pre-season on the treatment table.

Free Press predicts: Relegation candidates

CHESTER 15/2: Back in the Football League after an absence of four years, the Conference champions are many people's predictions to go straight through the division. They are unbeaten in pre-season and boss Mark Wright has so far managed to keep hold of last season's Conference Golden Boot Daryl Clare. Wright has also strengthened his championship-winning squad with ten new faces including striker Michael Branch from Bradford City.

Free Press predicts: Championship contenders

DARLINGTON 33/1: Darlo will be restricted to a squad of just 20 players for the next 12 months after coming out of administration. Former safe cracker and chairman George Reynolds has now gone with a £21 million hole in his pocket.

With no money to spend, manager David Hodgson has scoured the world for players with 21 triallists from all over the globe coming over. One of them Argentinian striker Leandro Scartascini has been taken on but the best-know of the Quakers' five new signings is ex-Middlesbrough and Crystal Palace defender Curtis Fleming.

Free Press Predicts: Relegation candidates

GRIMSBY 11/1: Bidding to bounce straight back up after suffering consecutive relegations. New boss Russell Slade has been brought in to stop the rot and has made several signings. But he was unable to persuade ex-Blues skipper Michael Simpson to sign, losing out to Leyton Orient.

Free Press predicts: Mid table obscurity

KIDDERMINSTER 50/1: Former Liverpool ace Jan Molby in his second stint at the club guided Harriers to safety after they flirted with relegation last year. He has made wholesale changes with ten new signings in the summer but still only has a 19-man squad. Has brought in Micky Mellon and Dean Keates who are proven in the division above and has also raided the continent to bring in French duo Youssou Djop and midfielder Ferderic Advice-Sruisseaux.

Free Press predicts: Relegation candidates

LEYTON ORIENT 28/1: Snapped up Michael Simpson from Wycombe in the summer as one of their four newcomers. But the new faces in Martin Ling's side will have to get used to playing in a two-sided ground this year. Chairman Barry Hearn has decided to fund the building of new stands by building a block of flats in each of the four corners of the perennial underachievers' ground.

Free Press predicts: Mid-table mediocrity

LINCOLN 14/1: Hoping to make it third time lucky after missing out in the play-offs for the last two years. Last year's achievement was even more remarkable because they lost boss Keith Alexander for three months for emergency brain surgery. He's back now and spent his summer signing six players and releasing ten.

Free Press predicts: Play off pushers

MACCLESFIELD 33/1: Manager Brian Horton performed a miracle to keep the Silkmen up last season and will need to conjur up a repeat performance to keep them out of trouble again.

But if 18-year-old striker Tommy Rooney turns out to be half as good as his cousin Wayne, the Silkmen could have an ace up their sleeve.

Free Press predicts: Relegation candidates

The lowdown

MANSFIELD 12/1: Beaten on penalties in last season's play-off final against Huddersfield after having a perfectly good goal disallowed. The Stags after should go well again despite the departure of Liam Lawrence to Sunderland.

One of the most entertaining sides in the division, manager Keith Curle seems to have had some success tightening up Mansfield's defence to such an extent that keeper Kevin Pilkington asked to play for the youth team this week because he's had nothing to do so far in pre-season.

Another pointer towards their new defensive toughness is the fact that Wales international defender Darren Barnard, who has been training with them this summer, has not been offered a contract yet because he can't displace Adam Eaton.

Free Press predicts: Championship contenders

NORTHAMPTON 5/1: Bookies favourites after a storming run last season took them from relegation candidates to play-off semi-finalists. Manager Colin Calderwood has recruited several players from Premiership club's reserves sides as well as signing experienced strikers Scott McGleish and Eric Sabin.

Free Press Predicts: Championship contenders

NOTTS COUNTY 10/1: The last time the Magpies were relegated to the basement (1998) they bounced back in style with a record points margin at the time.

Just three of the team that went down with Wycombe last year have survived. With a new consortium having eased the club's financial worries, boss Gary Mills has been busy over the summer bringing in a whole new squad of players including the likes of Rob Ullathorne, Gavin Gordon, Mike Whitlow and Rob Edwards. But they have lost last year's 21-goal top scorer Paul Heffernan to Bristol City.

Free Press predicts: Championship contenders

OXFORD 14/1: Scoring goals won't be a problem for Oxford but keeping them out at the other end might be.

United will have one of the most prolific strike forces in the division after signed ex-Premiership striker Lee Bradbury, who has cost more than £5million in transfer fees and goal machine Tommy Mooney. But they have problems at the back and have lost ex-Wycombe man Paul McCarthy to Hornchurch.

It is a big year for manager Graham Rix who still has plenty to prove at the Kassam Stadium. His arrival last year coincided with United dropping out of the promotion race.

Free Press predicts: Championship contenders

ROCHDALE 66/1: Avoided relegation to the Conference by the skin of their teeth last year and although manager Steve Parkin has cleared out most of the deadwood, he cannot be expected to do what he did in his previous stint with the club and take them to within one place of the play-offs.

Free Press predicts: Relegation candidates

RUSHDEN 33/1: The Diamonds have been in free fall since losing owner Max Briggs, manager Brian Talbot and star players such as Onandi Lowe and Rodney Jack. Relegated alongside Wycombe last year, another season of struggle looks on the cards under new boss Ernie Tippet. But they did win the Isle of Man pre-season tournament after beating Bristol Rovers on penalties.

Free Press predicts: Relegation candidates

SCUNTHORPE 33/1: Brian Laws is back in charge having been sacked and then re-instated last season. But The Iron look set for another tough season. They have lost fans favourite Alex Calvo Garcia, who has retired and have also lost last season's top scorer in the third division Steve MacLean. The 25-goal hitman has returned to Glasgow Rangers after a one year loan.

Free Press predicts: Relegation candidates.

SHREWSBURY 28/1: Bounced back into the Football League at the first attempt last season and will view this one as a year of consolidation. Last year's play-off hero keeper Scott Howie who saved penalties in both the play-off-semi-final and final will be between the sticks again and they shouldn't struggle for goals either with Luke Rodgers and Duane Darby up front. Manager Jimmy Quinn has made three signings in the summer in raids on Conference clubs Telford and Hereford.

Free Press predicts: Mid table mediocrity

SOUTHEND 33/1: Have spent the last seasons in the lower reaches of the basement division but the club proved what they can be capable of by reaching the LDV Final last season under the tutelage of manager Steve Tilson.

Former Premiership defender Spencer Prior is among the new recruits and he has boldly predicted promotion for the Shrimpers as he returns to the club where he started his career. Tilson is also confident and is unusual in the division in that he can happily boast to have competition in every position.

Free Press predicts: Mid table obscurity.

SWANSEA 18/1: If they can keep striker Lee Trundle out of the treatment room the Swans could make their final season at the Vetch Field a memorable one. If they go on a good run, their hostile home crowd could be worth vital extra points.

Swansea have signed seven new players in the summer and released several other including former Wycombe winger Stuart Roberts.

Free Press predicts: Play-off pushers

YEOVIL 9/1: The Glovers are pinning their hopes on new signing Bartosz Tarachulski as they bid to make up for last year's disappointment of missing out on the play-offs on goal difference. Manager Gary Johnson, who used to manage Latvia, plucked the 29-year-old striker from Polish first division outfit Polonia Warsaw. They have also raided France to sign midfielder Nicolas Mirza from Paris St Germain. Wanderers boss Tony Adams is a big admirer of Yeovil after seeing them out-football Liverpool in the FA Cup last season and went on record at the end of last season saying he wants to play the Yeovil way.

Free Press predicts: Championship contenders