

Pre-season optimism – don't you just love it and hate it

A FRIEND asked me the other day: "How do you think Wycombe will do this season?"

I replied: "I would be extremely disappointed if we weren't promoted. I genuinely think we can win this league."

"But you said that last season" he came back.

Pre-season optimism. I hate it. Months of no football make you forget about the negatives from the previous year. And I'm naturally optimistic anyway.

There are enough reasons to really believe this year will be our year. John Gorman has made five excellent signings in Tommy Mooney, Kevin Betsy, Stefan Oakes, Will Antwi and Charlie Griffin, bringing a solid depth to our squad. Gorman is respected by his team and has us playing a style of football loved by players and fans alike.

Our pre-season form has been impressive and the new players have gelled. We have



BAKER'S BLUES

WITH
IAN BAKER

more outlets than Nathan Tyson. Last year we relied heavily on Tyson. But if, heaven forbid, he got injured there are other players who could fill his boots.

This league is now extremely poor. Gone are Yeovil and Swansea and there are few teams who have made extensive summer signings.

I am tipping Matt Bloomfield to be our star of the season. Bloomy started well for Wycombe under Tony Adams and came through a difficult period during last season. I rate him highly and think he can be the key man in midfield for the Chairboys.

It will not be the easiest of starts. Carlisle will be making their first appearance back in the Football League and will want to make a good impression.

It will also be a tough first away trip to Rochdale on Tuesday. I am staggered that the Football League have once again scheduled a match so far away in midweek. Do they have any consideration for the supporters who have to make such trips? Fans would much rather travel to Oxford on a Tuesday night and then Rochdale on a Saturday. And I am sure the players would rather get home earlier than 3am!

Come 3pm tomorrow and season 2005-06 will begin in earnest. Will we live up to our promise? Or will I be exposed as a fool living in a fantasy world again? I cannot wait to find out.

Ian Baker is on the board of Wanderers Supporters Trust. For details about the Trust and how to join see www.wwst.org.