

Stand up and be counted



BAKER'S BLUES

WITH IAN BAKER

I was a young lad of nine when my dad took me to see my first Wycombe game at Adams Park.

I remember the freedom you had. You could stand where you wanted to, you could shout until your face matched the colour of your shirt or you could sit down and politely watch the game if you wanted to.

Many different supporters went to the game. There were the people that wanted to shout and cheer away their weekly frustrations. There were those that wanted to stand next to their mates and spend the game chatting to one another.

There were even individuals that went to games and made new friends. The flexibility of the terraces allowed them to do so.

Thursday, December 29 has been designated as a Safe Standing Day following support from Wycombe Wanderers Supporters and Founders Trusts.

It is of course the day we play Leyton Orient at home, in front of the Sky cameras.

All supporters should have a choice about how they would like to support their team.

Those who want to stand should be allowed to stand. Those who want to sit should be allowed to sit. We are aware of severe opposition to any move to remove the one remaining standing area, The Valley End.

Indeed myself and other members of the trusts are passionately in favour of terracing in football.

But this is an area that needs to be addressed nationally and we hope that maximum exposure can be gained later this month.

It is surely ridiculous to see fans of clubs like Coventry City and Darlington spend the whole game constantly standing in seating areas. These clubs have chosen to move to plush out of town grounds with no standing facilities.

Football is an exciting and passionate game and many people do not wish to spend whole games sitting down as if they were watching the Christmas display of Snow White & The Seven Dwarfs. Where has the fun gone?

Is terracing safe? Of course it is if it is controlled properly. I have never seen any major problems at Wycombe games involving the terraces. I firmly believe that the Taylor Report overlooked the fact they could be safe if adequate safety measures were in place.

Standing exists safely in Germany for instance. I urge the authorities to look closer at this issue with a view to amending the law over terracing in football. The club certainly seem in favour of the campaign, which is very encouraging to hear.

We are always keen to hear views from members and other fans on what is an important. But voting with your feet would work better and it would be great to see a full terrace against Orient.

It would certainly send out a clear message to those that matter: fans want a choice.

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

**For Wanderers
match reports,
buy the Midweek**