

Football has united to pay its respects



BAKER'S BLUES

WITH IAN BAKER

“As a Huddersfield Town fan may I offer my sincere condolences to the family, friends and supporters of Mark Philo. It is just so tragic that someone has died and even more because he had a passion for what we all love, football. It puts all life into perspective and shows how much we should appreciate it. Rest in peace Mark, my thoughts are with you all.”

This is just one of hundreds of tributes found on internet message boards in the days following the tragic death of Mark Philo.

The outpouring of emotion from supporters of all clubs has been very moving. Fans usually screaming at one another have been exchanging pleasant and touching comments.

It just goes to show Philo's standing within the game and how great people can be at most upsetting times such as these.

It is so very sad and emotional and I must say this is the most difficult article I have ever had to write.

Philo was a young man of 21, tipped for great things but he will never fulfil this potential. He was an excellent footballer, but beset with injuries.

A pacy attacker, Philo would scare opposition defences to pieces, as his performances two years ago at Bournemouth and Brentford testified.

I never had the privilege of speaking to Mark but those who knew him say he was a special person who would always make time for a chat. He never had a bad word to say about anyone and always had a smile on his face.

I have nothing but admiration for the way the club have conducted themselves following the news, particularly John Gorman.

On Saturday he managed the situation with true professionalism, at a time where he must have been in bits. Saturday's win meant very little.

Football simply does not matter at such a time.

The club's remarkable work this week continued when Barnet were persuaded to open an allocation of 2000 for Saturday's trip to Underhill. If you can possibly attend this game, please do so. It promises to be another emotional afternoon, where we can all pay a fitting tribute to Mark.

This has been a week full of sadness and pride but also dignity. The many written tributes, the flowers, scarves and shirts left at Adams Park send their own messages of how loved Mark was and how great a loss he will be.

My deepest condolences to those that knew him well. Mark Philo, October 5, 1984 – January 14, 2006, Rest in Peace.

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.

Tragedy strikes the clubs again

WANDERERS and tomorrow's League Two opponents opponents Barnet have shared tragedy before.

Kevin Durham, who died of a heart attack in 1991, played for both clubs.

He joined Barnet from Wycombe and collapsed with a heart attack while on holiday just a few weeks before Barnet's inaugural season in the Football League.

The club's social club is now named in his honour.

Both teams will observe a minute's silence before the game at Underhill.