

VIEW FROM THE STAND

WITH RON BARNETT

Our hopes are crashing before us

BEING an optimistic Wanderers fan, I've been looking for the light at the end of the tunnel for the last month.

I now realise that faint flickering light I saw before Easter was a runaway train racing down the tracks towards me. Just like Wanderers, it finally crashed and fell to pieces in the second half on Easter Monday.

They say the league tables never lie. If that's true how come we are currently shown as the sixth best side in Division Two? After six consecutive defeats, the very least you can say is that the league table is being very economical with the truth.

The reality of our recent performances is actually shown in the Form Guide Table, based on the last six matches. No wins, no points and rock bottom. In over nine hours of play we've scored just two goals and conceded eleven. Not exactly the best form to take into the play-offs, providing we make them!

The football pundits are always telling us that class is permanent whilst form is only temporary. Let's hope Wanderers' current form is very temporary because we need to start winning again right away.

Thanks to our superb record up until the end of December we have had enough points in the bag to maintain our place as one of the top seven clubs, despite our disastrous run since the start on the new year. In our last 18 games we have won only four times and lost nine with the other five matches drawn. This means we have only picked up 17 points, less than one point a game. If we had performed at this level for the whole season Wanderers would now be in facing life in the Conference, let alone battling for a play-off place.

Obviously the emotional traumas that have hit the club over the last few months have taken their toll on the players and management team, as well as everyone else at the club. The shock of these two tragic deaths, in such a short space of time, was bound to hit such a close-knit family club very hard.

Having had such a great first half of the season I can't help feeling that a little bit of complacency also crept in with some of the players. However, the main problem now is confidence which is at a very low ebb. This was plainly evident when Lincoln scored their first goal on Monday. Heads went down all over the park and the ball became a hot potato which led to more mistakes and misplaced passes.

Clearly John Gorman, Brownie and Rhino have a massive job in restoring confidence before we face struggling Rushden & Diamonds. Wanderers still need four points to be absolutely sure of a play-off place and getting three points from this match would

definitely steady a few nerves.

I certainly don't fancy having to get four points from our last two games against Darlington and Peterborough. Both of these are also chasing a play-off spot and are bound to be up for it.

