

BAKER'S BLUES

WITH IAN BAKER

Last call for a superhuman team effort

It's not the despair, Laura," cried John Cleese in the 1986 film *Clockwise*. "I can take the despair. It's the hope that I can't stand."

As Wycombe enter the play offs, more in hope than expectation, no other quote is apt in summing up how I feel. Make no bones about it, Wycombe are the underdogs for the play offs.

We all know that we had the best team in the league for large parts of this season, but we have failed when it mattered, in the last two months. Only a superhuman performance from the players can turn things around.

We face a Cheltenham side on the crest of a wave. The Robins have always been a bogey side for us and we have yet to beat them in the league. They have just won 5-0 at Mansfield and we could not have a worse opponent.

Added to that, Wycombe must travel to Cheltenham's fortress, Whaddon Road, in next Thursday's crucial second leg. This is a small ground, meaning tickets are in short supply for Wycombe fans, and one where the home side have not tasted defeat since January.

Wycombe's own play off warm up at Peterborough United, although not spectacular, was certainly a confidence boosting performance. Jermaine Easter seems to have found his touch again and he will be knocking on Steve Brown's door for a starting berth (providing he shakes off an ankle injury).

If the Blues are to have any chance whatsoever, Steve Williams must start in goal. Williams may have only been given a run out at London Road but he made three magnificent saves. Not only this, but he also brought a boost of morale to Wycombe's defence. For the first time since earlier this season, the Blues looked assured at the back and more importantly did not look like conceding a goal. I'm afraid Frank Talia does little to inspire his back four and fans alike, and while Williams is by no means Peter Schmeichel, he is the best we have.

I hope Wycombe can go out and prove me wrong. I hope the defence can play out of their skins. I hope Betsy and Senda can turn on the style down the right. I hope we can do the business down the left hand side. I hope the midfield can put in performances like the one away at Grimsby. I hope Mooney, Easter and Stonebridge can bury the chances when they matter.

But one thing's for sure. John Cleese was right.

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

