

LETTER

Name change at Adams Park

RE: Naming rights to Adams Park
I READ Mr Blackledge's letter in last week's BFP regarding possible future naming rights of Wanderers' ground. While I understand his point, which is certainly praiseworthy if we were operating in an idealistic non-commercial environment, I think it is unrealistic in today's world.

I was a director when the decision was taken to accept sponsorship for the Causeway Stadium name change. A decision I still support today. However I accept the communication of the deal at that time was not done appropriately.

I believe lessons have been learnt and communication between the club, its fans, sponsors, and customers has improved dramatically since. However I also know the money brought in through this deal was critical to the club at that time.

I never had the pleasure of meeting Frank Adams, but if he was the astute businessman I'm told he was, then I believe he would've been supportive.

As a fan I want the club to be strong, perform well on the pitch and be a great place to visit. Sentiments that are in keeping, I hope, with what Frank Adams would have wanted when he generously gifted Loakes Park back in 1947.

I believe there are options that recognise the generosity and name of Frank Adams, while at the same time do not close the door on sponsorship opportunities, if they arise.

I feel it would be arrogant and short sighted in today's environment and possibly contrary to what Frank Adams may have wanted, to permanently close the door on stadium sponsorship options.

If we close off the club from even looking at a stadium sponsorship option then what's next. Where do we draw the line?

Do we turn down shirt sponsorship because we didn't have it in the past? Do we build a slope on our pitch like it used to be? Or does the club do what it is trying to do now, which is putting few restrictions on businesses and commercial proposals but soliciting input from key interest groups, such as fans when a sensitive area may be concerned. Just as the club is doing now regarding stadium sponsorship.

My preference is to be supporting a club that's pushing for a Championship place, balancing heritage and commercial needs with realism.

Brian L Kane
Club director

Lambert: Our squad is not big enough yet

WANDERERS boss Paul Lambert has rubbished the bookies who have bigged up Wycombe's title credentials and has played down his side's chances.

Ladbrokes and William Hill have made the Scotsman's team second favourites behind Dennis Wise and Gustavo Poyet's Swindon, but Lambert says his squad is too small to justify the top billing.

He said: "I don't want people getting carried away."

"Just because we played so well against Watford, people should not get over excited. People are saying we are favourites because the club did so well last year."

"As far as I'm concerned everybody is a favourite to go up. We don't have a divine right to go

up this year because we reached the play-offs last season."

"You've got to remember this club lost five players in the summer and six if you include Charlie Griffin going on loan to Forest Green."

"The players we have lost are all big players and are a massive loss and we have only been able to get three in."

"The squad is not big enough by any stretch of the imagination."

"We've got 15 or 16 good lads but we need a bit more in there in case anything happens to them."

But he insisted he is not worried by the lack of depth in his squad and says there is still time to strengthen the squad he has already got.

He said: "I'm not panicking because we've still got room for movement to get another few in."

"People should not expect the same as last year. It is a new season, players come and go but if we can show the effort we have in pre-season then we can give it a right go."

New skipper Tommy Mooney added: "You cannot replace people like Rob Lee and with Nathan Tyson going and Roger Johnson going we have lost £1million worth of players."

"We still haven't replaced Roger which is a massive thing and we still need a left back."

But he has backed the new signings Lambert has made and reckons Wanderers will be tougher

to beat under the new gaffer insisting there will be no repeat of the 'unprofessional' 5-4 defeat at home to Macclesfield as Lambert puts steel before style.

He said: "I think we will still be attractive but we'll be doing it from a more solid base."

And he reckons Lambert's style of management could be just what the club needs right now.

He said: "His approach is very different to John's. John was always one of the lads and was even happy to be the brunt of people's jokes but the new gaffer is very stand-offish and I think that's the right way. There's a boundary between him and the players and I don't think anyone will have any confusion."

Batista arrives to solve the goalkeeping crisis

WANDERERS have solved their goalkeeping crisis by signing Fulham's Portugal U21 keeper Ricardo Batista.

They raided Craven Cottage to snap him up on loan yesterday after missing out on first choice Michael Poke at the 11th hour.

Batista, 19, who played for Blues in their pre-season friendly at Aldershot, will go straight into the team for tomorrow's first league match at home to Wrexham.

Boss Paul Lambert is delighted to get him as he faced the prospect of starting his first season in England without a keeper after letting Steve Williams join Forest Green on loan and after Frank Talia suffered a knee injury which could sideline him for a month.

He thought he had got Southampton's Poke in the bag but Saints cancelled that loan deal when one of their keepers went down injured in a reserve match.

Lambert then snapped up Reading's England U20 keeper Jamie Young on a year-long deal despite seeing him concede five in two trial matches.

He said of Young: "He's assured, he's a good organiser, he kicks well and is enthusiastic to do well."

But although he says he would have been happy to play Young, he then moved for Batista yesterday and was delighted to get him until December 31 with a view to extending it to a year.

He said: "He's got the potential to



Between the sticks: Ricardo Batista (right) will start tomorrow

be a right top goalkeeper. He's only young but he's very highly regarded at Fulham and in Portugal."

Batista

cost Fulham £250,000 from Vitoria Setubal. He made one Carling Cup appearance last season and was on the bench for them ten times in the Premiership.

Meanwhile, Lambert has defended his decision to let Williams go on loan.

He said: "He needs games. He's got a bit about him but he needs games to get his confidence up."

Lambert is still hoping to bring in new players ahead of tomorrow's curtain raiser but says Wanderers

are ready for the first game with or without any extras.

He said: "We've got to hit the ground running. The first game is always tough. The players are good enough and I believe they can win matches but we need to prove it."

Lambert can't wait to get underway.

He said: "I love the pressure of it. I'm not frightened. I'm just looking forward to getting going."

The Scot won't name his team until just before kick off and won't tell his players who is playing until they arrive at the ground.

He said: "It's good to have people living on the edge and being a wee bit nervous."

The only one not in with a chance is the injured Ian Stonebridge.

Opponents Wrexham have much bigger worries. At the time of going to press there was still a slight doubt about whether the game would go ahead because of problems with them coming out of administration.

League rules state that clubs must be free from administration when the season starts and the

Football League called Blues on Wednesday warning them that the game could be in jeopardy.

On the field, Wrexham also have problems.

The Dragons are sweating over the fitness of striker Neil Roberts (illness), Shaun Pejic (achilles) and Matt Crowell (dead leg).

All three missed last weekend's 5-0 friendly defeat to Port Vale.

Striker Lee McEvilly looks certain to miss out after he broke a foot for a third time in pre-season training. He's been joined in the treatment room by defender Lee Roche, who will also miss out after breaking a toe.

Juan Ugarte, who returned to the Racecourse in the summer, is not fit either after injuring his knee playing for Crewe last season.

But they do possess Trinidad's World Cup star Dennis Lawrence who helped keep Wayne Rooney quiet.

● If fans like what they see tomorrow and are tempted to buy a season ticket they will get the price of the Wrexham match refunded providing they buy before before August 12.



World Cup star in Town: Wrexham's Dennis Lawrence

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