

CLUB VINDICATED BY BUMPER CUP CROWD

■ Wasps went to Coventry on Saturday with **five times** as many fans as Wanderers got at Adams Park for their FA Cup match



The numbers game: Wasps fans turned up in numbers to support their team against Gloucester, above, and Munster

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WASPS' controversial decision to move their Heineken Cup opener against Munster away from Adams Park was vindicated by a record crowd of 21,560 on Saturday.

About two thirds of those at Coventry's Ricoh Arena were there to back the men in black, who won a thriller 24-23.

On the same day, just under 2,500 home supporters went to Adams Park to support Wycombe Wanderers for their FA Cup first

round match against Swindon.

Wasps organised 22 supporters' coaches for the 166-mile round-trip from Adams Park to Coventry.

Season-ticket holders were offered free travel and were also allocated free seats in the Ricoh Arena to match their designated positions at Adams Park.

And Wasps' chief executive Tony Copsey says the bumper crowd, which more than doubled Wasps' previous Heineken Cup record for a home game, proves

the club made the right decision.

He said: "We had some opposition but you have to consider all options. The reality is it's a commercial upside for us, you can't ignore that in modern business."

The numbers back Wasps' need for a larger stadium, but the same can not be said for Wanderers, who were also playing in the biggest cup competition of their season on Saturday.

Although their average home crowd of over 4,000 is good for

League Two, the 2,491 Blues fans in a crowd of 3,332 who turned up to see their side lose 2-1 to Swindon does not suggest the club is outgrowing Adams Park.

But Blues can point to the fact that their season ticket holders had to pay and might argue it's the FA Cup that is failing.

The competition was rocked by low crowds at the weekend, highlighted at Valley Parade where Bradford City, averaging over 13,000 in the league, beat Chester

1-0 in front of just 4,091.

Also, Chelsea and Blackburn both failed to sell all their tickets for last season's FA Cup semi-final clash.

■ For more on the stadium debate, read our star letter on page 8



Can Wanderers really hope to match Wasps for support, or are they being forced out of their ground by their tenants' ambition? Tell us your views at www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/sport