

VIEW FROM THE STAND

WITH RON BARNETT

It's Stockport or Rochdale

Wanderers' final league match against Bradford will decide whether we finish in sixth or seventh spot.

Whatever the result, Wanderers are destined to meet either Stockport or Rochdale in the play-off semi-finals.

With memories of the 6-0 mauling at Edgeley Park still very raw, and the subsequent goalless draw at home, Stockport don't appear to be the easiest option. However, it is a great opportunity to avenge our heaviest league defeat.

This season's battles with Rochdale have finished honours even with two narrow away wins, Wanderers losing 1-0 at Adams Park and winning by the same score at Spotland.

However, league form is never any guide when the pressure of the play-offs kick-in. This is when the experience of cup football counts and we certainly have an excellent pedigree in cup competitions. Hopefully this, and our recent impressive form, will help us on our way to Wembley.

All this talk of the play-offs stirs memories of 14 years when we last appeared in the end of season lottery and came away with the winning ticket.

Many fans will remember that long Sunday drive up to Carlisle and back, a round trip of over 500 miles. But we enjoyed every mile of the journey home as goals from Steve Thompson and Simon Garner gave us a 2-0 victory.

The following Wednesday goals from Dave Carroll and Garner ensured a 2-1 win and a trip to Wembley. Wanderers, of course, went on to beat Preston 4-2 in the final and clinch promotion at the first time of asking.

Help, I'm getting carried away with nostalgia, let's get back to beating Bradford so we can go into the play-offs in top form and brimming with confidence.

The recommendation by a Government inspector that Adams Park should be taken out of the green belt was a timely boost for Wanderers. Not only will this help with plans to increase the capacity

of Adams Park, it will also dramatically increase the value of the site if and when we move to a new stadium.

No wonder Ivor Beeks chose his words carefully when discussing progress on the new stadium at the recent fans forum.

