

Blues: 'Fans who missed start should have booked tickets in advance'



SEATED: Boss Peter Taylor was one of the lucky ones to be in his seat in time for kick off while others were still trying to get in

WANDERERS say fans who missed the first two goals of Wednesday's friendly with QPR could have avoided the problem if they had booked their tickets in advance.

Hundreds of supporters missed the kick off as Blues were taken by surprise at the numbers who wanted to see the game – even though the crowd of 3,288 was well short of the stadium's 10,000 capacity.

Wanderers did not open one stand and people were still queueing to get when the match got underway.

When they did get in some could not get to their seats as they were already occupied.

The club's refreshment bars also ran out of food.

Wanderers say they sympathise with fans who missed the start of their only home pre-season friendly and missed their team being presented on the pitch with their promotion medals from last season.

A Wanderers statement said: "The club was delighted with the attendance for the game against Queens Park Rangers which was

considerably higher than predicted.

"Intelligence provided directly from QPR indicated that around 200-300 of their fans would attend whereas the actual number of Rangers fans at Adams Park was 1,128."

However, a much bigger crowd could have been expected.

Just a few days earlier, 893 Rangers fans made the longer journey to the Kassam Stadium for a friendly against Oxford United.

The Blues statement then continued: "Wanderers have always encouraged fans to purchase tickets in advance to avoid unnecessary queueing, but only 300 tickets were pre-booked for this game with many supporters choosing to turn up on the night, resulting in minor delays at the turnstiles. All turnstiles were open to alleviate congestion.

"Intelligence suggested that the club would need to open only three stands to cope with the anticipated attendance although contingency plans were in place in case the crowd exceeded expectations.

"These plans were implemented when it became clear that numbers inside the stadium were rising. The Nexus Community Stand (lower half of the Woodlands) was opened for public use.

"The club sympathises with any fans who experienced delays on the night, but we respectfully suggest that these could have been avoided by pre-booking tickets ahead of the game.

"We are fully prepared for the new season and look forward to hosting a number of high profile games, beginning with Leeds United on August 15.

"Adams Park has a proven ability to host big games with the sell-out crowd for the promotion decider against Notts County last season being a prime example. We anticipate no problems with crowd control ahead of the League One campaign."

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It'll kill me to miss the start

IAN Westlake says it will 'kill him' to miss the first game of the season after pulling his hamstring.

Boss Peter Taylor reckons his summer signing will be out for a month but the former Leeds and Ipswich midfielder is planning a much quicker recovery.

On the night of his injury, he said he hadn't given up hope of making the League One curtain-raiser on August 8 although the club have poured cold water on that.

He initially thought he had cramp when he pulled up late on – but Wanderers' staff whisked him off straight away and after-match tests revealed a hamstring strain for the one-time England U21 international.

It was a bitter blow for the industrious midfielder who had just been announced Blues' Man of the Match.

He said: "It's feeling really sore. It is terrible timing – I've never had a muscle strain in my life.

"I will be doing everything I can to get fit. It would kill me if I'm not there for the start of the season."

Westlake is determined to kick start his career again and doesn't want any delays as he looks to get back to the form that made him a regular at Ipswich and earned him a £400,000 move to Leeds United three ago.

His Elland Road career was booming until a change of management saw Gary McAllister come in.

He said: "I had two managers there and it was fine but it was horrible under the third one. He just said you're not going to play, you've got to leave. They made me train with the kids because they wanted me out and it was the most depressing thing ever."

He went to Cheltenham, played every week and felt wanted again and as soon as Taylor, his former England U21 boss came in for him in the summer, he didn't hesitate.

He said: "I feel my career can take off again and before this stupid injury I hadn't missed a day's training.

"I can't wait to be playing games again. I want to get back in the Championship with Wycombe because I have played in that division and I know I can do it but my challenge at the moment is to score some goals and be a good League One player."

Taylor hails QPR fan after midweek defeat



BOSS Peter Taylor has hailed Luke Oliver as his star of the pre-season.

The 6ft 7ins defender volleyed Wanderers' goal in their 2-1 defeat against his boyhood heroes QPR to cap an impressive month.

He has been barely recognisable from the player who came in last season to a Wanderers side which was losing confidence as they threatened to let a nailed-on automatic promotion place slip through their fingers, and Taylor has noticed the change.

He said: "Luke has come back really well and I'm very pleased with him.

"He knew at the end of last season that it wasn't going to be easy for him but he's done some work in the summer, he's looked fit and I would have to say that he's been the pick of our players in pre-season. He's done extremely well.

"I didn't sign him because he's a big 6ft 7ins nice bloke, I signed him because he deserves to be here and I don't think he believed that.

"I pushed him to come back in July really believing that this is where he belongs and he seems to have done that.

"He's grown in confidence and had a good pre-season."

But Oliver is refusing to get carried away.

He said: "At this stage of pre-season it is more about

Wanderers by Dave Peters

dpeters@london.newsquest.co.uk

fitness than anything else.

"I'm happy with the way it's going and hopefully I can progress nicely. I want to give it everything I've got and know that I can have no regrets afterwards.

"There was a bit of pressure when I came in last season joining a team who were at the top of the league pushing for promotion. It puts you under pressure straight away. I think it was a bit of a confidence thing and when you get a bit of confidence on your side you come out of yourself a bit more."

And his confidence will have received an extra shot in the arm from his midweek striker-like finish against the team he grew up supporting.

He shot home on the volley after Matt Harrold had headed the ball back across the box.

He said: "I'm a QPR fan so it was pretty special for me. I come from there so it was nice to score against them in front of my family and friends who are Rangers fans. I will get a bit of stick for scoring against them."

What did QPR make of the game?
qpr.co.uk