

Low FA Cup crowd won't discourage expansion plans

WANDERERS say last Saturday's low FA Cup crowd won't discourage them from pushing ahead with their plans for a bigger community stadium at Booker.

Just 1,960 Wanderers fans attended their second round clash at home to Chelmsford City and the club needed a contingent of 1,245 from their non-league visitors to swell the attendance to 3,205.

But the club insist that the low number hasn't bred any nervousness when it comes to their controversial new stadium plans.

A club spokesman said: "The attendance was normal for an FA Cup second round tie and cannot be compared to gates for league

Wanderers by Dave Peters

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games or attendances that might be generated in the future, especially if we gain promotion to Championship level.

"It was the second home game in the space of five days, against non-league opposition on a bitterly cold day and was not included in the package for season ticket holders."

Council officials are currently assimilating the results of a public consultation on the new stadium issue, with the results expected in January.

The spokesman added: "We

have stated the case for a new stadium quite clearly and we are asking fans to retain an open mind while this is explored further.

"The limitations at Adams Park are clear for all to see and directly limit our ability to generate income and provide an improved spectator experience.

"The need for a new stadium is about planning for a brighter future, to support our Championship aspirations and to allow the club to be on a secure financial footing.

"It would also provide superb facilities for our fans with much-improved catering, toilets, bars, parking, access and an all-round better environment to enjoy watching their team play."

Wycombe weren't the only club to be hit by FA Cup deserters last weekend.

Higher league Colchester United attracted fewer fans than Wycombe did for their tie with Swindon Supermarine, while the Chairboys' third round opponents, Hereford United or Lincoln City, pulled in fewer than 2,000 for their meeting at Edgar Street.

Wanderers' attendance on Saturday was however better than in their two previous Adams Park cup clashes this season, when less than 2,000 saw their Carling Cup defeats to Championship outfit Millwall or their Johnstone's Paint Trophy exit at the hands of League One Bristol Rovers.

Fan-tastic supporters

BLUES fans were among the best behaved in League One last season.

They were one of only three clubs - with Hartlepool and Yeovil - who went through the season with just one supporter arrested according to figures released by the Home Office.

They were the only club in the section not to cause police any bother away from home. Their sole arrest was for violent and public disorder at a home game.

Of the 477 arrests in League One last season only one was connected to them.

Wanderers' figures compared favourably to those for other clubs in League One over the period, including Leeds United and Millwall, who saw 85 and 65 arrests respectively and smaller clubs like Tranmere, 42 and Swindon 35.

Stadium manager Richard Stanford said: "The club are really proud of the figures. Our supporters deserve a lot of credit for the way they conduct themselves on match days.

"We can't promise a win every Saturday, but we always try and create an off-the-field experience fans will remember.

"We are always striving to create the safest stadium possible and the right environment for both home and away fans to enjoy themselves.

"I'm disappointed we had one arrest because I had set myself some targets. But it proves that despite going up a league, which attracted big numbers of away fans, the way they were treated overrode any severe trouble."

He also praised the club's Adams Park Security and Events team for their part in handling crowds.

Daggers outcast wants a stab with Wycombe

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WANDERERS loanee Stuart Lewis is angling for a longer deal at Adams Park after impressing on his first start since his move.

The Dagenham and Redbridge outcast has been slapped on the transfer list by the League One club following a breach of club discipline.

Daggers boss John Still says he does not see a way back for the midfielder and Lewis is hoping Wycombe will now pounce to make his month loan permanent.

The midfield tackler says he would have no hesitation dropping down from League One to make his move permanent - because he believes Wanderers will be in that division next season.

The 23-year-old followed up his Chairboys bow as a substitute against Torquay by shining from the start as Wycombe overcame non league Chelmsford last Saturday.

His gritty tackling and ability ensured that the non-leaguers were denied a platform from which to launch a cup upset.

Lewis said: "I am really enjoying it here.

"This is a Championship or League One set-up but obviously you have got to earn that right to be in those leagues but with the manager that is here it is all set up to do that.

"And if we can kick on in the next few months then I think this



JOB SEEKER: Stuart Lewis in action for Wanderers

club should be in League One at least.

"The situation arose and when I was given this chance I just wanted to grab it with both hands.

"I want to show what I can do and hopefully earn myself something here."

Lewis made 11 appearances for the Daggers following his summer switch from Gillingham before his fallout with his employers, which seems beyond repair despite him having more than a year left on his contract.

Still said: "There was a breach

of club rules. Nothing that is absolutely ridiculous, but a breach of club rules which meant Stuart was out of favour.

"We placed him on the transfer list and made him available for loan and that's what it is. Wycombe were interested so he's gone there."

And Still says there will be no reconciliation.

He said: "That won't happen."

But Wanderers chief Gary Waddock is not ready to swoop and offer him a new contract just yet despite being impressed with the start he has made.

He said: "He has worked his way up from the Conference into League football. I spoke to him during the summer when he was at Gillingham but Dagenham came in for him and it didn't work out.

"I have been aware of him for a while, we have got him for a month and we will see how it works out.

"He's here for a month and we will review it after that, but from what I have seen in training and in the games he has done extremely well.

"He's a good lad as well, a good age for our group. He's different to what we've got. He covers a lot of ground and makes a lot of tackles and protects the back four.

"He gives us something different."

Waddock is happy with the squad he has got but he does still have some resources left over to strengthen his squad when the transfer window reopens in January.

Midweek Blues

STRIKER Scott Rendell promised his team-mates he'd score the winner against FA Cup opponents Chelmsford last Saturday, but he couldn't deliver them a plum third round tie as well.

Rendell scored twice as Blues beat the non-leaguers 3-1 to set up a home January 8 tie against League Two rivals Hereford United or Lincoln.

He delivered on his promise to fire Blues into the third round after his error, when he flinched at a free kick and broke from the defensive wall, had allowed the Essex side to equalise and cancel out his side's first half opener.

Rendell said: "It was my fault for their goal. I was in the wall and broke. I felt really lousy that I had let the team down.

"Our goalkeeper was on my case and I said to him that I would go up there and score the winner."

■ Boss Gary Waddock says last week's cup clash against Chelmsford City was his team's cup final as well as the non-leaguers'.

He said: "It was our cup final as well because we had lost two games."

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