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Friday, August 31, 2012

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Starting on Pg 25

Blues are hit by another thunderbolt

■ Angry Bristol Rovers lodge complaint with Football League after Adams Park safety officer abandons match due to lightning, with Rovers beating Wycombe 3-1

Full report: SEE PAGE 109

TERRIBLE CONDITIONS: Saturday's match was called off after 65 minutes after players, seen right, were faced with pouring rain and a waterlogged pitch.

Wycombe said lightning hit the away stand, and that flooding and the proximity of electric pylons played a part in the decision. But yesterday it was confirmed Rovers had made an official protest to league bosses





STRIKE ONE: This image is tongue in cheek, but it's the best we can do after our request to take pictures of the stand after it was hit by lightning was declined

Bolt strikes roof of Adams Park

- Wanderers abandon League Two match on safety grounds after downpour early in the second half
- Bristol Rovers lodge complaint with Football League

BRISTOL Rovers have lodged a complaint with the Football League as the fall out continues from their abandoned match with Wycombe Wanderers on Saturday.

The Pirates confirmed yesterday that they sent a letter to Football League bosses asking them to investigate the circumstances around the call-off.

Rovers were 3-1 up with 65 minutes on the clock when the

By Simon Farr

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players were hauled off the Adams Park pitch by Wanderers safety officials on health and safety grounds following a torrential downpour and thunderstorm.

The Blues said the Dreams Stand housing the travelling fans had been struck by lightning, with the proximity of electricity pylons to the stadium and flooding in the area also playing a part in the decision.

Rovers chairman Nick Higgs said after the match the decision to abandon the game over fears players and fans could be struck by lightning "didn't sit comfortably with him".

He said it was "strange" players were allowed to continue to warm-up on the sodden pitch between the postponement and subsequent call off – and asked why fans were kept inside the stand for 30 minutes after the match.

Confirming the complaint on The Pirate's website yesterday, Higgs said: "We were all very disappointed not to record our first win of the season at Wycombe on Saturday.

"It was very upsetting to have the game abandoned, especially after

we had put in such a strong performance.

"Although we have questions regarding the decision, I think the important thing now is to move on and use the situation to spur us on.

"As a club we have sent a letter of complaint regarding the situation to the Football League, and we await a response."

Trouble flared in the away end of the ground as news of the game's abandonment filtered through the stadium's PA system.

Rovers fans took their frustrations out on the Adams Park advertising hoardings and ticketing staff as they demanded refunds.

And dozens of fans flocked to social networking sites to question the merits of cutting the match short.

But Wanderers are standing by the ruling and said in a statement to the Bucks Free Press yesterday: "The club is aware that a complaint has been made by Bristol Rovers to the Football League.

"We are reviewing the content and will respond accordingly.

"We are confident the right decision was taken to abandon the game, with everyone's safety within Adams Park, as always, the highest priority."

The decision to call off the match was backed by Blues boss Gary



NICE WEATHER FOR DUCKS: There was a deluge over Adams Park early in the second half of their game with Bristol Rovers last weekend

Waddock and his Rovers counterpart Mark McGhee.

But Rovers, Wanderers and the Football League, which received the complaint on Wednesday, were all remaining tight-lipped about the full details and nature of the

grievance as the BFP went to press.

A date has not yet been set for the re-arranged fixture – but this may now hinge on the outcome of the Football League's probe, with Rovers seemingly pushing for all three points to be awarded to them.

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**WYCOMBE
WANDERERS**

Both bosses satisfied with call off immediately after game

NEITHER manager had an issue immediately after Saturday's game between Wanderers and Bristol Rovers was called off.

Rovers were 3-1 up at the time, but bad weather and lightning led to health and safety concerns.

Pirates boss Mark McGhee

looked furious as he led his players back down the tunnel, but he said after the game the decision was the correct one.

He said: "We have to accept the safety officer had the interest of both sets of supporters at heart. He had to make the decision.

"We're obviously disappointed as we were winning at the time but totally satisfied the decision was made in good faith."

Blues manager Gary Waddock said: "It was for health and safety reasons so you have to say of course it is [the correct decision].

As we came out for the second half with the grey skies we had and the rain, it was awful conditions.

"You can understand Bristol Rovers being disappointed, but health and safety is more important than any result."

AJ Accident Justice

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