

A doomed reign: From relegation to promotion and back again

IT was supposed to be a day of celebration as Wanderers marked their 125th anniversary against another supporter owned club.

Instead Blues fans were treated to a limp display that proved to be the final nail in Gary Waddock's managerial coffin, with the manager being dismissed in the wake of the 1-0 defeat to AFC Wimbledon.

Not for the first time this season his players showed no reaction to a dressing room dressing down at half time, and Waddock said in his final post match press conference they had let themselves, the club and him down.

He sounded a broken man who probably knew his fate after Wycombe's latest poor showing.

Just days after being given a vote of confidence from joint chairman Don Woodward, Waddock was shown the door after an alarming slide down the Football League that sees them outside the relegation zone on goal difference only.

Appointed in 2009, Waddock was unable to keep Wycombe in League One after taking over from Peter Taylor but bounced back from that setback to lead them to promotion the following season.

Since then it's been all downhill – the statistics don't lie and they paint an alarming picture. Five defeats already this season, one win since March, and 99 goals conceded in league matches since the start of last season – during which time they've kept just four clean sheets.

But what's been more alarming than that is the manner of some of those defeats.

There were several thrashings last season, the worst of which saw Jordan Rhodes plunder five of the six goals Huddersfield stuck past them at Adams Park in January.

Waddock said he felt lower after that thrashing than he did when Blues were relegated in his first season in charge.

At least on that occasion he can truthfully say his team were beaten by a far superior

side – in far too many other games they simply rolled over.

A 4-0 hammering at Chesterfield against a side who would have been relegated had they failed to win was the low point, but Wycombe failed to show up during a home defeat against fellow strugglers Yeovil Town, a 5-2 thrashing at Brentford and a limp loss at Bournemouth in the first game of 2012.

Those performances have carried on over into this season. Opposing goalkeepers were left untroubled against Southend and AFC Wimbledon, while Blues were outplayed in holding on for a draw against Cheltenham.

The rain came to their rescue against Bristol Rovers, with the match being called off with Blues 3-1 down. Had the match been completed without any alterations to the scoreline Wanderers would now be in the relegation zone.

Waddock said time and again his players needed to take greater responsibility, but far too many of the men brought in by him

weren't good enough.

John Halls, Ben Harding, James Tunnicliffe and Elliot Benyon failed to cut the mustard in League One last season and some of the loan signings made during Waddock's tenure were questionable to say the least.

But while supporters can forgive poor results in the face of adversity they cannot accept a poor attitude, and for whatever reason far too many players wouldn't perform for Waddock.

On Saturday there was an air of inevitability about the defeat as several players went through the motions as a side themselves without a win since the opening day of the season strolled to victory.

Injuries didn't help Waddock's cause and while he wouldn't use that as an excuse for failure, any manager would have struggled had they been shorn of more than half of their first choice XI.

Nikki Bull, Grant Basey, Matt Bloomfield, Sam Wood, Dennis Oli and Marvin McCoy are



all on the treatment table and the problems worsened after Stuart Lewis was taken to hospital on Saturday.

There's enough talent in that list of players to get Wanderers out of trouble. It's down to whoever comes in to do what Waddock failed to do and get the best out of them.

Waddock's blessing

GARETH Ainsworth took the caretaker manager's job at Wycombe Wanderers after being given the blessing of former boss Gary Waddock.

The pair worked together at QPR and Waddock brought Ainsworth to Adams Park as a player in 2009.

Ainsworth said: "He's a friend first and a manager second for me. He said if they offer you the caretaker job don't worry about me, grab it, take it with both hands – it's your turn."

"He said 'I know how football works'. It's the standing of the man."

"On Monday Don Woodward came to me and said we'd like you to take the team as caretaker for the next couple of games and see where we are from there. "The chat with Gary made it easier."



Beeks: Why Waddock's time in charge was up

By Andy Carswell

acarswell@london.newsquest.co.uk

WANDERERS' joint chairman Ivor Beeks said Gary Waddock was sacked because Blues made "no impact at all" after relegation.

Waddock was told immediately after Saturday's 1-0 loss to AFC Wimbledon – Blues' fifth defeat in six games – he was being given his marching orders as results hadn't been good enough.

Beeks said that while Waddock hadn't been given an ultimatum to beat the Dons, he had been warned his job was on the line if results didn't pick up.

Asked why Waddock was given the boot, Beeks said: "It's really simple: we've had a string of poor results at the start of the season."

"We've come down from League One to League Two and we've made no impact at all."

"In the game of football results and points are the important things. We're into the new season and we've only got four points."

"We went down to Exeter and played a bit better [than in previous games] but we still lost the match. We lost three on the trot and that was a major factor."

"He was told things have got to improve. I don't see that as an ultimatum, I see that as fact – things had to improve."

"The whole board decided it was time we needed to make a change. He's been with us three

and a half years and he's been a good manager but unfortunately his time had come to depart.

"It wasn't an acrimonious departure, he understood why he was going. The club certainly has no animosity towards him and we wish him well."

Waddock's sacking came days after Beeks' joint chairman Don Woodward told the Bucks Free Press the manager's job was safe and he was looking forward to seeing what he could do with the squad he had assembled.

But Beeks disagreed, saying the squad wasn't good enough to cope with the amount of injuries Wanderers have had.

He said: "We understand we've got a certain amount of injuries but we felt it was time to change things around."

"That's why you have a squad. You can always find an excuse for things – the squad wasn't as strong as it could have been. He should have been satisfied they could do a job."

Asked about Woodward's comments, Beeks said it was a matter for his colleague but added: "Twenty four hours is a long time in football."



'The squad wasn't as strong as it could have been. He should have been satisfied they could do a job.'

Runners and riders

KEITH SCOTT

Had two spells as a player at Adams Park and has legendary status amongst fans. Following coaching spells at Northwood and Chesham United he guided Leighton Town to safety from a seemingly hopeless position in his first managerial position. Then took over at Windsor and Eton, where he won promotion and the Berks and Bucks Cup before the plug was pulled due to mounting debts. Would be a popular choice with supporters but some are sceptical due to his lack of experience in the professional management ranks.

GARETH AINSWORTH

Has been made caretaker manager while the Blues board seek a replacement for Waddock. Was made player-coach by the former boss as he looks to make his first steps into the world of management. Has never hidden his desire to become a manager and has previous experience by being placed in temporary charge of QPR twice in difficult circumstances. Like Scott he would be given time to turn things round by fans, but others fear his approach would be too similar to Waddock's.

SEAN DYCHE

Has been linked with virtually every managerial vacancy since being controversially dismissed as Watford manager to make way for Gianfranco Zola in the summer. The Hornets – who, like Wanderers do now, were short on funds compared to other teams in the division and were relying on youngsters – had been tipped for relegation prior to his appointment but he led them to their highest finish in four seasons. Having tasted life in the Championship it remains to be seen if he'd be prepared to drop down to League Two.

JOHN WARD

The 61-year-old has previously applied to become Wycombe manager and may want to get straight back into management after himself being sacked by Colchester United this week. Had success early in his career, laying the foundations for York City's 1993 promotion before taking Bristol Rovers to the play-offs. Promotion with Cheltenham Town followed but he was given the boot by Colchester after a series of uninspiring and inconsistent displays, with U's fans critical of his negative tactics.

IVOR Beeks says the Wycombe Wanderers board will take their time to appoint a successor to Gary Waddock.

The board of directors unanimously agreed to fire Waddock after three years in charge following a run of form which has seen them pick up just one point from six matches.

The Wanderers joint chairman told the Bucks Free Press: "We'll

take our time to pick a new manager and to get the right man in place."

"We don't have a board meeting for another week or so. We'll hold a process of interviews after that."

"Gareth Ainsworth has been appointed for a month just to see if he can take it up and give us a bit extra enthusiasm on the pitch. He would see himself as a

contender [for the full time job] but we haven't played a game with him in charge."

Beeks said the club had received "at least 40 applications" for the job, with his co-chairman Don Woodward describing some of them as "high calibre".

Beeks said: "We are regarded as a club which has had very good managers and is a good

breeding ground for managers."

Former player Keith Scott has said he is interested in the job.

He has applied before but wasn't given an interview.

Beeks said: "I haven't seen his application come in but he's always been a contender for the job. He would be amongst the applicants we'd look at in the fullness of time and we could ask him in for interview."