

Discipline no issue

THERE is nothing wrong with Wycombe Wanderers' discipline.

That is the view of manager Gareth Ainsworth, who says their seven red cards and 49 yellows shouldn't put a black mark against their name.

He said: "I think we've been unlucky with a couple [of red cards] and if you take a couple out we'll be in line with a few other teams.

"We're at the top end of the red card count, but two and maybe three have been very unjust.

"We're not going to win the fair play award, but I'm not worried at all. Nobody has gone out punching anybody or getting sent off for stupid verbal to the referee or kicking ball boys.

"They're one offs and you have to deal with them, but my stuff, it's all tackles and aggression.

"I don't think we're getting a reputation at all. I don't think we have a Robbie Savage or Roy Keane sort of reputation in our team and as a whole I don't think we have a reputation.

"Referees know we're very enthusiastic and up and at them, but I don't think there are any preconceived ideas that we're a dirty side."

Three-game ban

WANDERERS striker Steven Craig will miss Blues' next three matches, against Mansfield, Portsmouth and Bury after getting sent off against Oxford.

Blues are short up front, with Dean Morgan, Paris Cowan-Hall and Jon-Paul Pittman missing through injury recently.

Trouble at home

WANDERERS won't get a better chance to turn their form around than tomorrow at Mansfield.

The Stags are the only side in League Two with a worse home record than Wycombe Wanderers.

They've not won at Field Mill since beating bottom side Northampton Town on September 21, picking up just ten points from their 12 home games.

By contrast, Wanderers have won four and drawn four of their 12 away fixtures.

Manager Gareth Ainsworth said: "With the players we have, without a doubt we can go and win that game and hopefully that will springboard us for the next three."

Tomorrow's game is all-ticket for travelling fans. Tickets must be bought by 2pm today.

Another red card sends Blues crashing to derby defeat

WANDERERS' dismal home form continued last Saturday as Oxford United's Nicky Wroe fired a late winner to seal victory in a hard-fought derby clash.

Steven Craig also picked up Blues' seventh red card of the season for a raised elbow challenge in a defeat that left his team just two points off the relegation zone.

But, despite those headline facts, manager Gareth Ainsworth says the afternoon was a story of encouragement.

He said: "The result was sickening for a few seconds but then I

Wanderers 0 Oxford United 1
PETE GRANT reports

thought what a great performance, what spirit the players showed and I'm proud to put my name to that performance.

"For every Wycombe Wanderers fan, although we got beat and it's the local derby and that hurts, they can go home knowing that with this club, the spirit's alive and the passion's alive and every player on that pitch was superb.

"With ten men it was always going to be difficult, and it's taken

a wonder goal to beat us, but the passion's back and if we play like that for the rest of the season then there's plenty more wins in it for us. It's a results business, and they come and go, but performances are what I look at and to play like that is fantastic.

"It's not time to start worrying about anything. If we keep playing like that we'll get results and there will be no problems.

"There's a group of lads here that will run through a brick wall for me. They've got my back, I've got theirs."



Sinking Blues spot a fleet of lifeboats

Four games that could still save their season

IT's not quite now or never for Wycombe, but it is getting close to pretty soon or never.

Every year a seemingly safe team drops like a stone down the table and this season it's Wanderers who are plummeting.

After a promising autumn, the last three months make grim reading for everyone associated with the club and had results elsewhere gone against them last weekend they'd be in the bottom two now.

However, there could be light at the end of the tunnel and a run of games against Mansfield, Portsmouth, Bury and Accrington Stanley is when that light will burn brightest.

"All four teams are within two points of Blues and, for Gareth Ainsworth's team, this is their chance.

The manager said: "Pivotal is a strong word because if it doesn't go right then people will say that was it, we're out of it now.

"But I believe we can win all four games, I really do.

"Within three weeks we've got four games. There are 12 points there, 12 strong points that there is every chance we could achieve.

"If we don't get 12 points it's not all doom and gloom, but I believe we can.

"This could be a big three weeks in the season coming up."

Looking at recent results though, Blues' opponents will equally be singling them out as the turnaround game.

Wanderers' are the team out of form and one win in their last 13

by **ALAN FELDBERG**
a.feldberg@london.newsquest.co.uk

League Two games followed by a cup defeat to non-league opponents doesn't suggest an imminent turnaround.

Ainsworth sees it differently. He thinks the 3-0 home loss to AFC Wimbledon was the nadir and performances if not results have been on a sharp upwards curve since then.

He said: "The last two games have really given me the confidence to believe we can go and win the next four.

"I think Morecambe was a fabulous performance and Oxford – if anyone who was there can't take positives from that performance then they're not true Wycombe Wanderers fans.

"Prior to those two, maybe we stepped too far forward and were trying different things. I'll take responsibility for that as much as anyone.

"But the meeting after the AFC Wimbledon game, we all had a clear road forward and a clear direction that we were going to pull in together.

"That's been evident in the last two games and fills me with confidence for the next four games – and not just the next four, the next 21.

"There will be no worrying about anything. It's up and at them Gareth Ainsworth style and that's the way it's going to be between now and the end of the season."

LEAGUE TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Scunthorpe United	26	13	9	4	38	24	14	48
Rochdale	27	14	5	8	43	33	10	47
Burton Albion	26	13	7	6	29	23	6	46
Chesterfield	26	12	9	5	39	24	15	45
Southend United	26	13	6	7	34	22	12	45
Fleetwood Town	25	14	2	9	40	29	11	44
Oxford United	25	11	9	5	35	21	14	42
Newport County AFC	24	10	8	6	34	27	7	38
Morecambe	27	10	7	10	31	35	-4	37
Dagenham & Redbridge	26	9	7	10	32	32	0	34
Plymouth Argyle	26	9	7	10	23	29	-6	34
Cheltenham Town	26	8	9	9	33	37	-4	33
York City	27	7	11	9	32	32	0	32
AFC Wimbledon	26	8	8	10	27	29	-2	32
Exeter City	25	9	5	11	31	34	-3	32
Hartlepool United	26	8	7	11	27	33	-6	31
Mansfield Town	27	7	9	11	27	36	-9	30
Accrington Stanley	26	7	8	11	31	38	-7	29
Bury	26	6	10	10	30	34	-4	28
Wycombe Wanderers	25	7	7	11	30	34	-4	28
Portsmouth	26	6	10	10	30	39	-9	28
Bristol Rovers	25	6	9	10	22	26	-4	27
Torquay United	26	6	8	12	27	40	-13	26
Northampton Town	25	5	7	13	19	33	-14	22

NEXT FOUR FIXTURES:

Tomorrow: Mansfield (a)
Jan 28: Portsmouth (h)
Feb 1: Bury (a)
Feb 8: Accrington Stanley (h)