



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Today, we welcome our good friends from FC Halifax Town to Meadow Park. May I wish their directors, manager, players and supporters a pleasant stay with us and a safe journey home.

Well, it's been another interesting week at the club and it has in my opinion for the first time since that heady Wembley week back in May - been a week where chairman, manager, staff, players and perhaps even our supporters are now all on the same page.

I say on the same page in respects of understanding that our present squad rebuild is now not going to be a two-minute process. And in truth, I've been pretty vocal recently about the importance of patience, about unity and about us sticking together. As it's clear that mental strength will already be needed by myself, the day to day staff, the gaffer, the remaining squad and by our supporters in the weeks to come.

Budgets are often used as excuses in boardrooms and dressing rooms up and down the country, and that might certainly be the case come the season's end. But I can tell you in the 20 seasons I've been here as Chairman, that when you're putting together a new squad in say June, July and August; dressing room unity, player camaraderie and hopefully a bit of chemistry is always

needed early doors.

It's especially needed when a club as small as ours has lost a bit of quality and has to embark on yet another dressing room and first team rebuild, as that is the life of the smaller club.

But I'm genuinely more optimistic than I was four weeks ago, as I'm seeing what I can only describe as the first green shoots of recovery after losing the calibre of Dean Wells (retired), Kane Smith (injured), Jamie Turley, Grant Smith, Bruno Andrade and Morgan Ferrier.

In the last week I can already sense that our new staff, our new players and our existing employees are just that little bit more comfortable and relaxed around each other and around this football club.

In fact, I think the new players and our new dressing room are perhaps appreciative of the positive messages emanating from Luke, myself and the staff in regards to their hopes, our hopes and everyone's short and long term ambitions in such a tough division.

As such, I believe that everyone in our dressing room now understands that I'm a pretty patient and realistic Chairman and this is a pretty patient and realistic club. We don't in truth have the pressure of say a Barnet, York City or a Cheltenham and thank goodness for that...

Here I draw on past experiences and I know that instant success is very rarely found, and if I'm right, I do sense that a little unbeaten run is just around the corner, as we ensure that the correct mindsets and competition

for places are quietly being put in place.

Expectations, perhaps even an over confidence, perhaps then followed by a realisation that a new squad could take time to gel, has possibly been my Chairman's observation over the last month.

However, as I've said many times "hope does spring eternal" and expectation is all very normal at the start of any season, but reality now dictates that we must work hard on our strengths and of course harder on our weaknesses.

Trust me when I say, that I genuinely have no lasting doubts on us being competitive, as we do have a decent squad here. But we might at present just lack a bit of experience and guile in the final third.

But again, we understand that, and we are working hard on all manner of things and I already believe that we'll have a top eight defence in the National League come this season's end.

As I've already stated in my recent Q and A with Grant Morris, I do hope by September's end, that we will be talking about our squad positively. Talking about its strengths, talking about our dressing room chemistry, talking about our improved game management, talking about our strong mindsets, talking about our collective and individual player quality and with a bit of tweaking, talking about our goals for column.

When you have the experience and quality that we have at this level, in Tom Champion, Dave Stephens, Keiran Murtagh, Mark Ricketts, Angelo Balanta, Shakesy and Danny Woodards. When you can then add in the likes of Manny Parry, Femi Ilesanmi, Connor Smith and Jamal Fyfield, then the nucleus of our squad is already in place.

However, we've got to be realistic in the short term, as we have gone and lost thirty-five to forty goals in Morgan Ferrier and Bruno Andrade this season and we've also lost the England C goalkeeper in Grant Smith, who for me was the best keeper in this league. So perhaps therein lies our initial problem, and as such, that's why patience is now needed.

Patience will perhaps be a requirement because of youth, as we have brought in ex Arsenal Development squad goalkeeper Ryan Huddart, brought in the England under 20 goalkeeper in Ellery Balcombe on loan from Brentford, and we've brought in four talented young strikers in Bradley Ash from Barnsley, plus Sorba Thomas who's been promoted up from our Academy. Then signed two young loanee strikers in Justin Shaibu from Brentford and Josh Umerah from Charlton.

Some of these young players, were in truth meeting up with their teammates literally on the pitch at Dagenham, at Havant and at Wrexham and that in truth is never ideal. But as I said earlier, patience on our part and the right attitude on the players part, will be a key factor in our younger

players and loanee's settling in - as there is a thin dividing line between success and failure at this level.

Why? Because they are all talented players who will need to be allowed to make their mistakes, but they must grow quickly as people and they must also learn quickly how to perform consistently at this level. As such, this next month is very important for them to settle in here and enjoy this competitive environment, that's a mile away from under 23s football, as they grow into senior football where results matter.

As such, this next month is vitally important for them and ourselves - all players who come here though, must settle in fast, must understand the club's work ethic and work to be accepted by the senior players.

If they do that they will enjoy their environment and for the younger ones especially, they will grow into senior football and get away from the sterile world of Academy or Development football...

On a side note, today's opponents FC Halifax are one of my favourite clubs and have a long and rich history. They are also in truth inextricably linked with my tenure here and the progress our humble little football club has made.

Why? Because when our friends from Yorkshire (unfortunately for them) went bankrupt at the end of the 2007/08 season - we had just been relegated. But because of their demise, we were suddenly informed we had been reprieved through Halifax's financial problems - as we had the best points total of all the relegated teams down at step three that season.

It's of course not the way you would want to stay up, but trust me we didn't complain one iota and we took the opportunity offered with open arms and in truth we've not looked back since.

Our links with Halifax then continued into our first ever season in the National League, as they were our first ever opponents. However, it was a tough campaign that resulted in ourselves, Halifax and a few of the other big clubs becoming embroiled in a long drawn out relegation battle that went to the very last day...

We somehow managed to stay up that season by winning our final three games. But Halifax fell through the trap door, and in what must have been a bitter sweet moment - they then went on to win the FA Trophy, but ended up in the Conference North.

Since their relegation though, Halifax have regrouped magnificently and gone on to win promotion through the Play-offs back into the National league. They then more than consolidated their league position last season after again changing their manager and they have started this season very well.

Our gaffer Luke Garrard is full of respect for Halifax's new manager Jamie Fullarton. But, I think it's safe to say that nobody can ever accuse this current board up at Halifax of presiding over a boring old football club haha.

Back to ourselves, and having conceded a frustrating last-minute equaliser at home to Gateshead just 11 days ago, we went to Leyton Orient full of hope last Saturday and up until a very poor penalty was given, that was subsequently shown to be clearly outside the box, we never looked like losing the game.

But the upshot is after only getting one point from our last two games, that we must look to get back to winning ways and quickly. We fully realise the strength of this division, and we fully understand the test that Halifax will pose to us today as there are no easy games at our level.

In fact, both the league games last season against the Shaymen were hard fought encounters, and Halifax were perhaps unfortunate not to take all three points here in an entertaining 1-1 draw, before deservedly beating us up at The Shay later in the season.

CLUB NEWS

Football as we all know cannot ever live in the past, as it only ever lives for today, tomorrow and the future. As such I must look to the future also and that means further personal investment.

I must also recreate an environment for optimism and get rid of any negativity and it must start with me. But before looking too far ahead, I must also announce that after today's game, we will lose a very valued member of my trusted day to day staff in Kate Simmons after more than eight years.

Kate has in her wisdom decided to move on after many years of service to our medical department, that involved an awful lot of self-sacrifice and more than just a bit of hard work at this football club. As such, on behalf of myself, the football club, our staff and our supporters we sincerely thank her and wish her huge good luck in the future.

However, like all progressive chairman, football clubs or businesses, as one door closes on us we must look forward with enthusiasm to opening up another. As such, I must re-invigorate the whole medical department so ably headed up by my clinical lead Megan Reid.

I'm very confident that our club's medical team will continue to move ahead, I'm confident our Academy will continue to grow ever larger and as such I'm really confident that my decision to add to our medical staffing levels this season will be the right one.

With that in mind, can I welcome three new members to the club's and Megan's medical staff. In new Academy lead Angelika Brown, in new First team and Academy physio Sam Coleman

and in our match day assistant physio Doris Likciani. These people will I'm sure be huge assets in what we're trying to achieve here, so welcome one and all to Boreham Wood Football Club.

As an aside... The club is still growing steadily in every department, as it has over the last decade both on and off the park. But I'm now being held up by the current lease extension hold ups, so I'm obviously not content with the way the North Stand build is being held up by red tape at the council offices and these delays are at present driving me crazy.

As such, I need to practice what I preach, be patient with this nonsense and concentrate on something positive. As such, I will quickly move on to something more interesting and must mention yet another of our growing and very talented departments...

A department that takes care of our award-winning pitch, which as you can see is quite simply magnificent... That said, other parts of our stadium and facility must still be seen as a work in progress, and that's where you will see more investment and improvement over the next 18 months.

But as the workload across the board increases across the whole site year on year. And in regards to the pitch demands, re our home league and cup games, pre-season matches, plus the Arsenal Development and the Arsenal women's match commitments.

The pressure will build on our grounds, pitch and maintenance department and on the two HOD's in Daniel Hunter and Declan Robinson who head up that department.

As such, I have decided to add Mr Jan Jankowiak to our full-time grounds and maintenance staff, alongside the two apprentices who I took on last season and I'm glad to report that things have started really well.

However enough of my waffle, match days are not about my club notes or about my employment news for most of you haha... It's only ever about us all getting our football fix, it's only ever about two dressing rooms competing, it's only ever about two first team squads and managers going at it, it's only ever about two sets of supporters enjoying themselves and having a great day and in truth, it's only ever about which team gets the three points, regardless of their performance.

So whoever you support today, let's hope for an open, attacking game and may the best team win.

It's over to you,

Danny