

RULE ON THE BIG TITLE RACE



MANAGER OF THE YEAR?
Solihull Moors' Tim Flowers



PROGRESSION:
AFC Fylde chief Dave Challinor



MORE TIME:
Wrexham boss Bryan Hughes

NOT PANACHE IT FROM HERE

Of course managers will want to play nice football, but it's a results business and they want to get out of this league.

I won League Two and League One with Brighton by keeping clean sheets and giving the ball to Bobby Zamora. No one moans about that! People remember the victories. It's all about finding a way to win. Just look at Solihull.

Flowers could well be Manager of the Year. He was assistant when I was at Coventry, he's a nice guy, down to earth and he 'gets' the league.

To come from a relegation battle last year to be in this position is incredible. My only concern for Solihull is that teams who do well and don't get promoted will often have their players cherry-picked.

If I was a National League manager looking for a centre-half next season I'd go for Alex Gudger or Liam Daly straight-away – same with the majority of the squad. Chesterfield, for instance – anyone in that Solihull team would improve them by a million miles.

If you don't match them physically, you're going to find it very difficult. Do they have a Plan B? Maybe not, but you can't argue how far Plan A has taken them. It's hard to criticise anything Tim's

done there. I'd hate to play them in the play-offs.

AFC Fylde will be in there, as will Wrexham, but I don't think they will finish in the top three now. We seem to say it every year but if they had a genuine goalscorer in their ranks they'd be pushing for top spot.

Achievement

Yesterday's victory over Braintree brought an end to a horror run. But you never know in the play-offs. They've got good, honest players but it's kind of wait and see. Perhaps a full year with Bryan Hughes as manager and the opportunity to bring in a proven striker will make the difference.

Harrogate are having a wonderful debut season at this level. Credit to Simon Weaver, he's also in the manager of the season conversation. He's leaning on the players who got them here. To be in the play-offs, he'd have taken that 100 per cent. I think they'll be like Fylde last year. They won't reach the final, but they'll learn from it and we'll see the best of them next season.

Eastleigh are another you'd never have put down for the play-offs at the start of

this campaign. But it seems they've lost this tag of players going there for a nice pay day – with contracts up this summer they can almost start again – and they've got a good run going under Ben Strevens. They work hard, have experience and if they get the ball out wide and crosses into the box, Paul McCallum is a real threat.

Ebbsfleet United and Gateshead are still knocking on the door, but they've both got well-documented problems off the pitch.

I saw on *Sky Sports News* about Bolton players not being paid – well, National League is the level where they really need it. Even though the league has come on in terms of the fact you can earn a good living, mortgages still have to be paid.

Garry Hill's doing a good job at Fleet, they're on an excellent run and have plenty of experience to call upon.

Gateshead is a sad situation too, and I can't see players staying there long term when they're not getting their wages. When you also see the staff are being turfed out of the office, it's really not nice.

If they can finish in that top seven it will be a remarkable achievement. I can't wait to see how it all plays out for them as they deserve so much better.

TOP 5'S REMAINING FIXTURES



LEYTON ORIENT

- Tuesday April 09, 7.45pm
Eastleigh (H)
- Saturday April 13, 3pm
Sutton Utd (a)
- Friday April 19, 3pm
Harrogate Tn (H)
- Monday April 22, 3pm
Solihull Moors (a)
- Saturday April 27, 12.30pm
Braintree Tn (H)



SALFORD CITY

- Saturday April 13, 12.35pm
Maidenhead (H)
- Friday April 19, 3pm
Boreham Wood (a)
- Monday April 22, 3pm
AFC Fylde (H)
- Saturday April 27, 12.30pm
Hartlepool Utd (a)



SOLIHULL MOORS

- Saturday April 13, 3pm
Havant & W (H)
- Friday April 19, 3pm
Bromley (a)
- Monday April 22, 3pm
Leyton Orient (H)
- Saturday April 27, 12.30pm
Dagenham & R (a)



WREXHAM

- Saturday April 13, 3pm
Barnet (a)
- Friday April 19, 3pm
Sutton United (H)
- Monday April 22, 3pm
FC Halifax Town (a)
- Saturday April 27, 12.30pm
Harrogate Town (H)



AFC FYLDE

- Tuesday April 09, 7.45pm
Gateshead (a)
- Saturday April 13, 3pm
Braintree Town (a)
- Friday April 19, 3pm
Barnet (H)
- Monday April 22, 3pm
Salford City (a)
- Saturday April 27, 12.30pm
FC Halifax Town (H)

