

YEOVIL'S BIG DAY DAWNS, AND THEY ARE...

Hopeful, but not confident'

ELECT YEOVIL TO THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

YEOVIL TOWN'S Board of Directors travelled in force to London yesterday for last-minute vote-cadging on the eve of the Football League's annual meeting. They were booking into the same hotels as officials of First and Second Division clubs and hoped to spend the time remaining persuading the uncommitted to 'Elect Yeovil' to the Fourth Division.

But my forecast is that by tonight, Yeovil will know that they must spend at least one more season in the Southern League.

Before he left for London, club spokesman Bryan Moore said he was 'hopeful', but not confident' that Yeovil would succeed.

He promised: 'Even if we are not elected we shall step up our bid next season and I am sure that would be our last as a non-League club. We are not interested in the National League, which may be started in 1974-75 by merging top sides in the Southern and Northern Premier Leagues. By the time that competition starts we shall be a Football League club.'

Unless the last-minute lobbying produces a lot more fruit than expected, it seems to me extremely unlikely that Yeovil will get the 25 or so votes they need to clinch election.

Hereford's Chairman, Frank Miles, has warned Yeovil that in his club's first 'big push' several promised votes did not materialize. At the last count Yeovil reckoned they had been assured of 18-20 votes. If only a few fall by the wayside, the target figure will surely be beyond reach.

I believe Yeovil's directors have done everything they could to bring League football to the town. They have my wholehearted admiration, and deserve the thanks of every fan.

But I find it impossible to be wildly enthusiastic about their chances. Remember Hereford only got in last year after a second vote — and they had beaten First Division Newcastle in the F.A. Cup, and had put up a terrific show against West Ham in the next round.

If Yeovil should be elected,

by
John Lukins

In addition to the four clubs seeking re-election — Colchester United, Crewe Alexandra, Darlington and Northampton Town — there are 12 non-league clubs bidding for a place.

The non-League names facing the Chairmen of First and Second Division clubs when they reach item seven on the agenda are: Barrow, Bedford-Boston, Bradford Park Avenue, Cambridge City, Chelmsford, Kettering, Nuneaton, Telford Utd., Wigan, Wimbledon and Yeovil.

Only three of these pose any real threat to Yeovil — Wigan, Kettering and Chelmsford.

WIGAN believe the Northern Premier League is stronger than the Southern League, and they point out that they take more supporters to away matches than Darlington get at home.

Their average attendance dropped slightly in the past season, but still averages just over 4,000 over the past three years.

Wigan have a metropolitan area populated by 307,000. They own their ground, which has a capacity of 38,000, and will provide cover for 12,000 and seats for 2,600 when their new stand is completed.

They have campaigned reasonably thoroughly and in many ways have the outstanding claim.

Their main drawback is their proximity to other established clubs. Bolton, Bury and Preston are all near at hand.

are at present building a £100,000 grandstand which they will pay for in cash. They have an £80,000 indoor bowls centre, and although Leicester, Northampton and Peterborough provide competition, their average gate topped 3,000 last season.

They have made enough money in recent years to buy success, but even over the past decade they have had a chequered history. If I were a top League club chairman I would want to see their success confirmed and consolidated before giving them my vote.

CHELMSFORD, financially stable since their merger with Brentwood, left it late before they started canvassing League clubs and I rate them the outsiders of the top non-League quartet.

They have a catchment area of 200,000, and can house 20,000 fans, 15,000 of them under cover.

Yeovil, by comparison, are boasting a catchment area of 170,000. Huish holds 14,500 but can probably be extended.

Their main claims are that they own a ground worth £½; have property valued at £80,000 and are financially in the black.

Unsurpassed

They have an unsurpassed playing record in 50 years of Southern League football, and — perhaps their greatest asset at the moment — they have fought their campaign more professionally and more thoroughly than their rivals.

My prediction is that Yeovil will be fifth in the poll, behind the four clubs seeking re-election, but in front of Wigan



MOORE—'hopeful'