

Spittle retires from football

PETER Spittle, Wycombe's reserve goalkeeper this season, is to retire from football almost immediately to concentrate on business commitments, writes **MICHAEL KNOX**.

Spittle, who is 28, announced his intention to retire to the club earlier in the season and now that Wycombe are out of the Trophy, he will leave very soon. Manager Andy Williams said this week that it was unlikely that Spittle would play for the club again.

He first joined the club from Maidenhead as deputy to the long-serving John Maskell, in January 1973, but after staying with the club until the end of the season he joined Isthmian League rivals Slough Town.

After two years with the Wexham Park club he returned to Wycombe Wanderers in November 1975 and has been there ever since. He has largely been regarded as understudy to Maskell all that time, although last season under John Reardon he was given the number one spot and justified that selection with some fine performances.

SIDELINES

But when Mr Williams, a former England goalkeeper himself, took over as manager at the start of the season, he reinstated Maskell as his first choice. This has left Spittle largely on the sidelines, although with Maskell being susceptible to injury, he has played a number of key games.

Spittle's strength has always

been his quick reactions. He has often been found out on the high ball into the goalmouth. Unfortunately this fault has occurred more frequently in the past couple of months and led to a number of goals.

But it would be unfortunate if he were to be remembered for this particular failing. He is a much better goalkeeper than he has appeared this season and during his length of time with the club he produced many spectacular saves, including one against Hayes on Monday night.

His poor form has nothing to do with his departure, however. A worker in the film industry, Spittle now intends to set up on his own and will not have enough time to keep playing football on a regular basis.

REPLACEMENT

Wycombe have found an immediate replacement in teenager Chris Way, who has played regularly for the club's youth team this season and also with Harefield United in the Athenian League.

He could come straight into the side for tomorrow's league visit to Leytonstone as John Maskell is still worried by a trapped nerve in his back.

There are doubts about the future of another Wycombe player, Mark Judd, who made an immediate impact after signing two months ago. During his recent suspension he spent some time training with Third Division side Walsall and will not play for Blues again until his immediate future is settled.



PETER SPITTLE
... business