

JOHN Delaney, captain of the Wycombe Wanderers side during the successful early 1970s, has turned down the chance of returning to Loakes Park as Reserve team manager.

Delaney was approached by club manager Mike Keen to take over the Reserves, which have been re-formed after a 12-year break and which will play in the Suburban League next season.

But 'Big John', now 37, declined, saying he wanted to continue playing in as high a grade of football as possible. So he will stay at another Isthmian League side Hampton, whom he joined recently.

Delaney, a tall powerful centre half and a strong per-

sonality explained his decision at the weekend.

"I've done everything at Wycombe but nothing at Hampton and I would like them to achieve something. I've been offered a coaching position there but my main aim is to keep playing.

"I don't care if I don't coach but I do care if I don't play. Nothing beats playing," he added.

Delaney, who played on Wycombe's recent tour of Italy, joined Hampton towards the end of last season after losing his job as manager of Tring Town.

Coincidence

It was the latest move in a distinguished and unusual career for a whole-hearted player. He did not start playing in the Football League until after his 30th birthday.

Report by MICHAEL KNOX

He signed for Bournemouth, then in the Third Division after impressing them in a friendly which Wycombe won. Then in 1974/75 came an amazing coincidence when Wycombe were drawn to meet Bournemouth in the second round of the FA Cup — a match which the Blues won after a replay to earn their historic match with Middlesbrough.

Delaney, a good friend of the then Wycombe manager Brian Lee returned to Loakes Park for a second spell but was soon on his travels again.

Mike Keen was disappointed that Delaney had not accepted the offer to manage the Reserves.

He said: "John would have helped me all round. It would have worked out quite

well especially with his setting an example on the field. He's not afraid to give people a kick up the backside."

Mr Keen, who confirmed that Delaney had been the first choice for the job, partly because he lived locally in High Wycombe, said that he would have no difficulty filling the position.

There are several people interested in doing the job. One of these undoubtedly is long serving goalkeeper John Maskell, a qualified coach. The only snag could be the fact that he lives in Oxford.

One position Mr Keen has filled is that of Reserve team physiotherapist. The job goes to Dave Springell, formerly of Naphill and Flackwell Heath, who performed the role for Irish Club in the Wycombe Sunday Combination last season.