

MAYES IS SIGNED

WYCOMBE Wanderers made their first and only major pre-season capture on Wednesday when they signed ex-Chelsea and Swindon star Alan Mayes.

The 32-year-old striker made a surprise appearance for Blues in Tuesday's 5-0 mauling of old rivals Slough.

Mayes, who showed some superb touches in that game, was under contract at Blackpool last season but has now been released by the west coast club.

Swindon paid out £175,000 to buy him from Stamford Bridge in December 1980 — then a record transfer for the club.

The former professional has a house in the Wycombe area and is hoping to take up a job once he returns.

Mayes is another top drawer player lined up by recently departed manager Alan Gane and despite recent events he is still keen to be part of Blues' GM Vauxhall Conference campaign.

The campaign starts tomorrow with the visit of Stafford Rangers and continues on Wednesday at Maidstone.

There is little doubt that Keith Barrett will have to call upon all his experience as a captain to pull Wycombe through what could be a rocky opening few weeks.

Gane's resignation, and the club's failure to buy class players have upset many members of the squad and morale has plummeted alarmingly since the end of last season.

The players, to their credit, knuckled down on Tuesday and produced some excellent football against Slough which will have done their confidence a power of good.

But life won't be so easy in the Conference and Stafford Rangers are unlikely to allow Wycombe anything like the space they exploited against Slough.

"We are optimistic," said caretaker boss John Reardon this week. "Tuesday's win will not set the world alight but it did a lot for our confidence. Whatever happens on Saturday we will not be short on effort."

Reardon is expected to name the side which started against Slough on Tuesday and fans will look forward to the skills of Mayes.

Some will harbour doubts about the ex-professional after the Barry Silkman affair when Silkman was virtually hailed as the Messiah and then off-loaded weeks later for not pulling his weight.

"I don't think Mayes is another Silkman because he can play in all conditions," pointed out Reardon.

Reardon has an interesting dilemma at central defence with Barrett, Nigel Gray, Dave Burgess and Kevin Day all available to play.

"I have not formulated the side for Saturday yet but everyone is fit and looking forward to the season," said Reardon.

Graham Bressington has returned from his summer in New Zealand but it may be a few weeks before he is pulling on a Blues shirt again.

Wycombe have had to apply for international clearance for the stocky midfielder and that can take time.

Crowd-pleaser Declan Link will be at the game tomorrow — but only as a spectator before flying back to his studies in the States.

His younger brother George, who is likely to play in midfield, returns to University in September and will not be available for selection.