

BARNES BLOW!

MICHAEL BARNES' hopes of a new career in the GM Vauxhall Conference were shattered this week when Wycombe Wanderers were advised not to sign him on medical grounds.

The 24-year-old former Northampton and Reading defender, who was forced out of league football by injury, was found to still have some play in his right knee, and Blues were advised that Maidenhead's £5,000 price tag would not be a good investment.

Blues' boss Jim Kelman said: "I had been impressed with him and would have liked to keep him. He had been with us on a loan basis, subject to the medical, but Dr John Williams, who is one of the best around, told me that the knee could last two or three years, or it could go tomorrow.

"Maidenhead were being greedy asking a flat £5,000 for him. I wanted to pay a starter fee and then pay the rest over a period of years. They would have still got their money, and we would have got our games out of him."

Another man to have made the move away from Loakes Park is young full-back Phil Lovell, who has been released to join Vauxhall-Opel Premier side Leyton-Wingate in East London.

Lovell had been unable to command a regular place in the Wanderers' line-up and had started only five games this season, three of those being Capital League fixtures.

Also on the way out is big centre-back Nigel Gray, who has been on the transfer list at his own request for some time, and who has been having talks with another Premier Division side, Tooting and Mitcham.

Some hideous memories of last season will be stirred for Windsor and Eton fans when Wanderers travel to Stag Meadow for Tuesday's Berks and Bucks Cup quarter final.

Ardent Royalists still bear the scars of the terrible three-game mauling meted out by Blues during which they rattled in 20 goals on their way to a glorious league and cup double.

Chief nightmare was the 11-1 humiliation served up at Loakes Park in January, when four goals from Andy Graham helped to bury a Windsor side which was struggling near the foot of the Vauxhall-Opel Premier League, and put Wycombe through to the county cup quarter finals.

That massacre was sandwiched between two league encounters, neither of which could be described as close.

By Pete Thomas

Saturday's goal hero Mark West hit a double in the 4-1 success at Loakes Park, with the much-missed Graham Bressington bagging a brace of his own when Blues ran riot again in the return, this time to the tune of 5-1.

The week after the cup drubbing, Wanderers went 17 points clear at the top of the table, with Windsor recovering to finish in mid-division. Times are happier now at Stag Meadow, with The Royalists currently third in the table behind Yeovil and Bromley, and they will obviously be out for revenge against a Wycombe side which has struggled to hold its form.

Gray talks to Tooting

Blues boss Jim Kelman, however, goes into Tuesday's match full of confidence after watching Saturday's moral victory over Sutton, which had him bubbling with enthusiasm.

"I'm not really disappointed with the result. If we could have settled for a point before the game, everyone at Wycombe would have been highly delighted. The best we were supposed to manage was to only lose by a couple of goals.

"Brian Greenaway battled like he never has before in defence as well as causing them a lot of problems on the wing. Kevin Durham is looking so dangerous at the moment.

"I would have loved to have seen Nigel Taylor's shot go straight in for the second goal, because it was so well struck, but Mark West improvised superbly to put it away.

"John Granville has been a god-send in goal. He has given everyone so much confidence and it showed in the way we played today.

"I doubted whether they had it in them after the Dagenham game, and I told them so. I thought they didn't have the heart for it. But I was able to tell them today how pleased I was with them and how proud I was.

"No-one was very happy about the decisions which let them back in the game, but the referee gave what he saw and I'm not going to complain.

"The way their keeper behaved was disgraceful though - punching West in the face, and then feigning injury to get him booked. Mark will probably be rested for the Windsor game, along with Kirk Corbin."

Kelman is hopeful that Australia-bound Martin Woodall will be around for another week before his departure, making him available for Tuesday's game and Saturday's home fixture with Macclesfield.