

Two-goal hero Adrian faces up to old club

By Pete Thomas

LAST Saturday's hero Adrian Mann looks set to lead Wycombe into the fray against his old club Bath City in this weekend's relegation battle.

The 20-year-old, who signed from Newport County last Thursday, hit two goals on his debut for Wanderers against Welling, and it would take a brave man to drop him after such a sparkling display.

Earlier in the season he spent a spell on loan to the Avon side and won rave reviews there before returning to South Wales. He was actually substituted in the 77th minute of Bath's first clash of the season with Wycombe at Loakes Park in September, after being booked for kicking the ball away.

The game ended in a 2-2 draw, with Wycombe's goals coming from Rowan Dodds and Graham Westley, both of whom have now left the club.

Likely to join Mann in the Wycombe attack is Mark West, who failed to find his scoring touch against Welling but came good with a hat trick in Tuesday's 4-1 Capital League success at Dagenham. Midfielder Andy Graham hit the other goal as Blues moved to the top of the table.

Manager Jim Kelman looks to have a choice between ex-Colchester winger Scott Young and Brian Greenaway on the right wing, with Mark Boyland filling the other front spot.

Kelman said: "Saturday's game is of the utmost importance and a win would take us to the 40 points which I think would be enough to keep us up. Even then we wouldn't be mathematically safe, and I would be looking for another six points as a bonus. Even a draw against Bath would be alright, as it would take points out of them. We can afford to draw against the bottom clubs and pick up our points elsewhere.

"I fancy our chances against the likes of Weymouth, who were beaten by Bath in midweek, and Altrincham, who have been going through a rough patch."

Nineteen-year-old centre back John Ray has recovered from his recent appendix trouble and played against Dagenham, while Mann's former Newport team-mate Laurence Osborne seems to be over the virus which has kept him out of the reckoning and trained last night.

Centre-back Matt Crossley, who joined Blues from Basingstoke, still has two weeks of his four week suspension to serve, but he has found the ideal way to pass the time. His company has invited him to spend 10 days in the Carolinas, a break which will take him up to Wanderers' Conference game at Barnet.

Vauxhall-Opel Premier side Kingstonian have expressed an interest in Wycombe fringe player Alan Myers and have approached manager Jim Kelman about him. Kelman said: "Kingstonian would like to take Alan on a loan basis until the end of the season. I think it would do him good to be playing regular high-quality football and, as we would have the power of recall, it wouldn't do us any harm either. He played against Dagenham and did well."

Wanderers will have to keep their cool in tomorrow's clash and be wary of City's hot-head midfielder Micky Tanner.

Tanner, signed from Bristol City for £15,000, was sent off at Telford on Saturday for scrapping with a Telford substitute over possession of the ball. He was then given his marching orders in Bath's 2-1 win over Weymouth on Tuesday for a crude tackle on Paul Crompton.

Tanner was also sent off twice in the past 12 months while with Bristol City.

Another man to watch is big striker John Freigard who is attracting the attention of several league clubs.

Harry Rednap of Bournemouth and Southampton boss Chris Nicholl have both watched Freigard in action. Freigard, signed from Trowbridge for £3,000 a month ago, scored at Telford and then again against Weymouth.

Goalkeeper Len Bond has kept his place with some excellent displays between the sticks. Ex-Bristol City and Exeter City man Bond was originally signed for £3,000 as cover for the injured David Moggs. But his good form kept out Moggs who eventually went to Weymouth and then Cheltenham for £6,000.

Another to depart from Bath was versatile Paul Bodin who was sold to Newport County for £15,000. But City countered that by enticing defender/midfielder Gary Fulbrook back to the club in a £4,000 move from Carlisle.

Probable line-up: Bond, Stevens, Fulbrook, Halliday, Craig, Chandler, Lillygreen, Tanner, Freigard, Aitken, Payne, Pratt.



■ The main Mann! Adrian Mann is all set to face his old club Bath tomorrow.