

BLUES IN RACE FOR CLARIDGE!

Three-way chase for Weymouth's star marksman

WYCOMBE WANDERERS are involved in a three-way race for the signature of Weymouth's exciting striker Steve Claridge we can reveal this week.

Blues manager Jim Kelman has already talked to the 23-year-old and is keeping his fingers crossed he can introduce him into the Loakes Park fold.

Kelman is desperate to sign a proven GM Vauxhall Conference sharpshooter but he faces fierce competition from Barnet and Yeovil.

Barnet boss Barry Fry has already announced that he has signed Claridge in an apparent attempt to put other clubs off the scent of the former Bournemouth and Portsmouth player who is not on contract.

Yeovil, having clinched promotion back to the Conference at the third attempt, are anxious to strengthen their squad. They entertain Wycombe at Huish on the opening day of the new season.

"I have made Steve what I consider a very fair offer and I am now waiting for him to make up his mind," commented Kelman on Sunday. "He is on a free transfer and was unhappy about the way Weymouth played. He wants to play football and liked what he saw from Wycombe last season.

"He is very quick and both creates and scores goals. He would be a useful addition to the squad."

Claridge is expected to make his mind up this week.

"One way or other I would expect there to be some movement at Wycombe in the next fortnight," added the Wanderers chief, suggesting he may make more signings or begin to separate the wheat from the chaff in his present squad.

"It is all quiet right at the moment and though I am still looking hard for players I am looking to get down to the business of pre-season training. Players

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will start to become available as managers begin to sort out their squads."

Kelman's squad report for fitness and weight testing tonight (Tuesday) before beginning training proper on Thursday.