



■ Wanderers' manager Jim Kelman believes his side are on the way up this season.

THE UNCERTAINTY over Gary Lester's future with Wycombe Wanderers deepened this weekend when Wokingham Town made a surprise approach for the sought after stalwart.

There have been numerous enquiries about Lester but the Vauxhall-Opel premier outfit are the first to make an official bid and have invited him to tonight's (Tuesday) training session at Finchamstead Road.

The Town boss Roy Merryweather took Lester aside for brief talks at Saturday's closed doors friendly at Bisham Abbey. And 33-year-old Lester, who has made over 450 appearances for Blues over the past nine years, is expected to make up his mind this week.

"Wokingham have made an approach for Gary and I understand are quite keen," confirmed Kelman. "He will talk to them this week. It is in Gary's hands."

Lester however made it clear that no deal has been yet been struck.

"I am going training with them on Tuesday to see what sort of a set-up they have over there," he told Midweek. "Travelling is the main factor with me because I do not drive. Nothing has been settled yet and I am going with an open mind."

Kelman added that no fee has been discussed but we under-

Rolf Niven reports

stand that Wokingham are prepared to shell out the full £4-5,000 asking price.

Pursuit

Town manager Merryweather is chasing Reading's Gary Westwood who wants to go part-time. There are problems concerning the deal and if it should fall through then Lester would appear to be number one contender to established keepers Colin Caulfield and John Ford.

Steve Claridge, the top notch Weymouth striker sought by Kelman, has decided to turn full-time. He seems set to snap up an attractive offer from Second Division Bournemouth but has several other professional clubs in pursuit.

Kelman is currently talking to a proven Northern goalscorer but that particular deal is unlikely to get off the ground as the player has just bought a house.

"Class forwards are almost impossible to find but we will

Lester to train with VOL outfit

not give up our search," added Kelman.

Wanderers launched their pre-season warm-up with two friendlies on Saturday.

Kelman watched one side defeat Staines 2-1 behind closed doors at Bisham Abbey and then made the short trip up to Northamptonshire to watch the other drew 0-0 with Brackley.

"At this stage the results are not important," explained the Wanderers manager. "All I am doing is making sure everyone gets a game. It is vital that all squad members get some football in."

At Bisham fielded a mixture of youth and senior players but it was Staines, managed by former Loakes Park boss Alan Gane, who started brightly.

It was against the run of play that Nigel Taylor burst through on his own and put Wanderers in front. Staines equalised before half-time but after the break Mark West got to the bye-line and pulled the ball back for Scott Young to stab home.

Both sides squandered further chances with West missing three good opportunities.

Neil Hoing, a left-sided midfielder, was the only youth player to start the game with Darren Kipping and Paul Steiger coming on as substitutes.

Brian Vasey, on the Oxford goalkeeping books, took part along with Reading's Steve Head.

The side (at Bisham): Brian Vasey, Gary Lester, Nigel Taylor, Kevin O'Shea, John Ray, Keith Barrett, Laurence Osborne, Brian Greenaway, Steve Head, Mark West, Scott Young, Neil Hoing, Darren Kipping, Paul Steiger.

Kelman then watched his other strikers pass up more chances at Brackley in a goalless draw. "The game was spoilt by a gale force wind but it was still a useful exercise," he said. "We had about 30 players working on Saturday. Those that didn't play were working out at the club."

Kelman blooded four youth players - defenders Matt Wilson and Norman Sibley, midfielder David Mell and forward Nick Dean.

The side (at Brackley): Steve Crompton, Brian Vasey, Matt Wilson, Norman Sibley, Kevin Day, Martin Blackler, Steve Abbley, David Meli, Martin Roderick, Mark Boyland, Jeff Lissaman, Nick Dean.

"I wanted to introduce some of the better youth players into the senior squad so they have a bit of experience playing with the senior lads. I don't want any of this 'us and them' business."

Crocked

"I was pleased with Steve Abbley and Sean Norman at Brackley and Mark West and Scott Young at Bisham. Mark Boyland missed some training sessions so he has a bit of catching up to do on fitness."

"I will be happier after a few more games."

Kevin Durham, whose time at Wycombe has been dogged by injury, is crocked again. He has a knee problem and joins Dave Carroll, Matt Crossley and John Granville on the crocked list. Carroll has hamstring trouble, Crossley is still returning to fitness following an operation while Granville's ankle has almost healed.

Striker John Regan is on holiday.



■ Pushing for a first team place - Mark West stakes his claim at Bisham Abbey.