

REF WAS CONNED

Blues skipper protests his innocence after being sent off

WYCOMBE skipper Keith Barrett has angrily denied striking Kidderminster's Paul Davies on Saturday, claiming instead that he was the victim of a "football con".

The Blues captain was sent off for violent conduct just before half-time in Saturday's 2-0 defeat at Aggborough.

Few people actually saw the penalty incident in which Barrett was alleged to have struck out at the Harriers forward following a corner.

The former England non-league defender continued to protest his innocence this week.

"It is pretty bad for a player of his quality to resort to such tactics," the Wanderers captain told Midweek on Monday. "I did not hit him at all - he simply ran into my back. I felt the challenge and then followed the ball out of the area. The next thing I know is that Davies is lying on the ground holding his face with the linesman flagging. To our amazement the referee awarded a penalty.

"I think if we hadn't protested I might not have been sent off. But obviously we were very upset at the decision and wanted to know the reasons. I think the referee possibly felt he had to justify the penalty and told me he was sending me off for violent conduct. Basically he was conned into giving the penalty.

Treatment

"I wanted to find out why the linesman had flagged but I was not allowed to talk to him."

Davies had gone down injured only minutes before the controversial penalty incident and required several minutes treatment after colliding with big Blues defender Glyn Creaser.

"It is pointless trying to appeal to the FA these days but I will talk to the manager about it this week when everything has calmed down and see if anything can be done.

"Kidderminster do not need to use those tactics because they are such a good side," added Barrett. "I think they were getting a little desperate because they were not playing particularly well and we were coping with them.

"If I had hit someone I would have held up my hand and accepted the punishment but I was innocent."

This was Barrett's first sending off in three seasons with Wanderers although the 31-year-old has been ordered off during spells with Enfield and Barking.