

BARRETT BACKED!

But there is no appeal against sending off

WYCOMBE Wanderers will not appeal against Keith Barrett's sending off on Saturday - despite backing the skipper's claim that he was innocent.

Blues boss Jim Kelman confirmed this week that the club will not pursue the matter with the Football Association.

"Keith Barrett is an honest man and I accept his version of events but it would not do the player or the club any good to lodge an appeal," he commented. "We just have to accept that these things happen and get on with it."

Barrett was given his marching orders for violent conduct just before half-time in the 2-0 defeat at Kidderminster.

He was alleged to have struck out at Harriers striker Paul Davies following a corner, although few people actually saw the incident.

Barrett was ordered off as he protested his innocence to the referee but he maintained this week he was the victim of a "football con".

"It is pretty bad for a player of his quality to resort to such tactics," the former England non-league defender said. "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 so loudly I might not have got sent off. But obviously we

were very upset at the decision. Basically we felt he was conned into giving the penalty."

Restraint

Kelman added: "It was the turning point of the game. It cost us dearly because we lost a key player and they got a goal out of it. It was a real sickener."

"I think we showed excellent restraint afterwards. The linesman is not going to change his mind and obviously the referee will back him so there is no point in taking it any further."

"At least we will not be frightened to play them a third time this season," he added. "We continued to fight even after going behind. I felt we had enough in us to get back level until we gave away a sloppy second goal."

"I thought John Kerr was superb in a lone role up front."

The defeat ended Wanderers' run of 10 Conference matches without defeat. The sequence, which included six victories, is the longest recorded in the Conference this season.

Eager

It is also the first time Kelman's men have failed to score in the league this term.

They will hope to rectify that tomorrow when they travel to Moss Lane to tackle Altrincham.

The Cheshire club are still savouring a fine FA Cup suc-

cess over Fourth Division Lincoln City at the weekend. The 3-2 win equalled Yeovil's record of 13 wins over League opposition and gives them a second round berth for the 10th time in 11 seasons.

"They are going to be very difficult to break down at the back," predicted Kelman. "They play five in defence and don't like pushing players up front."

"But the lads are all eager to get up there and play - especially after the Kidderminster result."

Lawrence Osborne should be in the squad despite suffering from flu this week. Defender Matt Crossley will be referred to a specialist again as his knee is still causing his pain during full training. Dave Carroll is making speedy recovery and should be back in action within a matter of matches.

Although having already gone over budget, Kelman has put in a bid for Gloucester City striker Lance Morrison. The City board were due to give their reply before the weekend after a board meeting on Thursday.