

GOOD EVANS!

BLUES have spent a club record £28,000 on goal-scoring machine and England semi-professional Nicky Evans.

Boss Jim Kelman revealed the good news just after Wanderers' exit from the FA Trophy at Hyde United.

"The fans deserve it," Kelman said this week. "They've been marvellous this season and we were just very sorry for them that we went out of the Trophy at Hyde.

"Nicky is a great player and he'll be exciting to watch. He's scored goals wherever he's been."

The 30-year-old former QPR centre forward is moving from Barnet and is widely regarded as one of the best strikers in the Conference.

He joins former club mate Glyn Creaser whose £16,000 transfer was the previous club record.

Plastic

Blues could have benefitted from Evans' speed on Saturday when they slipped from their Wembley dream by the only goal they had conceded in the competition.

Kevin Durham's injury time shot flashed wide to the groans of more than 1,000 travelling supporters and Blues were finished.

Kelman said: "It was a tough, bruising game and in the end they wanted it more than us.

"We're not blaming the plastic pitch but it was very difficult. There was a three foot concrete wall just 30 inches from the edge of the pitch so you couldn't afford to slide off."

Soccer Special by PAUL HUDSON

Despite a generally disappointing performance, John Granville and John Kerr caused Hyde problems at opposite ends of the pitch.

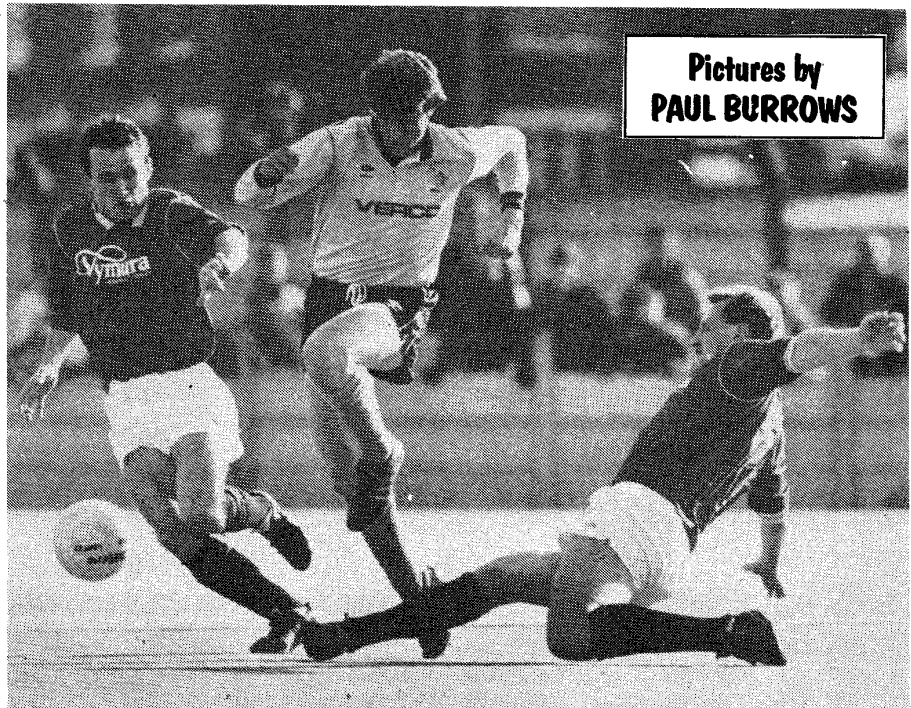
Goalkeeper Granville's big hands thwarted Hyde on numerous occasions and Kerr revelled on the fast pitch turning players inside out.

But sheer aggression won the day as Hyde put in the crunching tackles. Steve Abbley was helped off clutching a burst blood vessel in his calf and he will be out for weeks.

Strength

Within 60 seconds of the restart Hyde caught Blues cold and floated in a free kick which Harris guided into the net.

There was more luck for Wycombe's Capital League side on Wednesday when they met Welling and hammered four goals past them without reply.



**Pictures by
PAUL BURROWS**

New signings Andy Russell and Mark Butler collected one apiece and Matt Crossley celebrated a return from injury with two.

Tomorrow Blues have another crunch match. They face Boston United at home. Boston currently share Blues' record-breaking 11-match unbeaten run.

"Boston have been going from strength to strength and they were tipped for promotion at the beginning of the season," Kelman said.

"It will be fun."

But there's a cloud on the Blues' horizon with Newport County's inevitable expulsion from the Conference.

Tackle

County's results this season will be wiped from the slate so Wanderers, who have beaten the Welshmen twice, will lose six points and 10 goals which could damage their promotion hopes.

● Please remember

UP AND OVER: Kevin Durham dodges legs to get to the ball. **Below:** A giant leap by Glyn Creaser

