

Clubs lure top players for looming new season

WYCOMBE Wanderers and Chesham United have attracted top players as they prepare to battle for promotion in the new season.

Former Chelsea and Oxford United winger, Peter Rhoades-Brown, started training with Wycombe last week and is set to play in the prestige pre-season friendlies at Adams Park.

Meanwhile, Chesham have signed Stephen Emmanuel — a player described by chairman Tony Aplin as “one of the top three midfielders in the Premier Division” — from Hayes for an undisclosed fee.

Martin O'Neill also has Carl Airey, who has played in Belgium and was released by Torquay United, training with the squad with a view to a permanent deal.

The Wycombe boss said: “If they do well here pre-season in the friendlies, I will probably break my neck to try and keep them.

“The free transfer list has been around some time,” said O'Neill, “but they have to have the right type of experience and need to be the right type of personality to have around a football club.”

Report by PETE LANSLEY

Other players, presently “nameless”, will be swelling the Wycombe training next week as the canny Irish manager continues his “look now, buy later” policy.

There has been quite a change in personnel over the close season at Chesham.

Coach Dave Brown comes from working alongside Steve Perryman at Brentford to team up with Keith Power, Keith Collins and John Clements.

Assistant manager Collins said of the appointment: “We're glad to have him aboard. He's a hundred per center, enthusiastic about the game, and knows his job.”

The 17-man squad also includes four new faces while five players have departed.

Emmanuel, who also enjoyed a successful spell at Harrow Borough before his move to Hayes, was watched several times last season by assistant manager Keith Collins.

Collins praised the all-action style of 23-year-old centre forward Byron Walton. “He never gives defences a rest for 90 minutes.

His spirit is infectious, he's quick and he will score us 20 goals plus, without a shadow of a doubt,” vowed Collins. “He'll be our penalty taker too.”

Garry Attrell, who once scored the Slough goal that knocked Millwall out of the FA Cup should provide some trickery up-front. “He's the type of player that goes past three or four players and scores a goal,” enthused Collins — while Micky O'Shea plays the anchor role.

“He is a player John and I have admired for a long time. He plays within a 30-yard square, wins the ball, knocks it about, has been known to score goals from 25 yards”, said Collins.

On the way out are Mark Butler, who was due to sign for Egham on Tuesday of this week, and popular defender Dermot Drummy who becomes assistant manager at Finchley.

Also departing are Peter Brown, Martin Hirst and Glenn Price, who moves to Hayes.

Meanwhile, former Chesham player Peter Sansom, who was sacked at the tail-end of last season, is hoping to sign for St. Albans.