

Striker's finish was pure genius

TIM SINGLETON reports

WYCOMBE Wanderers' manager Martin O'Neill this week acclaimed the genius of star striker Mark West whose cheeky goal unlocked the Altrincham defence on Saturday.

West struck in the 63rd minute at Adams Park, superbly dummying defender Paul Rowlands before sliding the ball past Jeff Wealands.

"A lot has been said about John Barnes' goal against Aston Villa but I don't think Barnes' even compared to that," claimed O'Neill.

"I thought it was out of this world. There's not too many League players who could do that," he said.

West was typically modest about his stunning strike. "It's nice to score after not scoring for so long. I've tried it a few times out wide but this time it happened in the box."

Adams Park is buzzing this week, with O'Neill admitting that he is delighted with Wanderers' unbeaten start.

O'Neill has also made his first step into the transfer market with the signing of winger Simon Hutchinson who stepped off the bench at Bath on Tuesday to make his first appearance in a Blues shirt.

Hutchinson, 20, who spent three years with Manchester United, was snapped up for £7,000 from HFS Loans League outfit Eastwood Town after a tip

off from John Robertson, who O'Neill played with at Nottingham Forest and who is now in the manager's berth at O'Neill's old club Grantham Town.

Hutchinson will fill the space vacated by Wycombe favourite Kevin Durham who this week left for rival Conference front-runners Barnet in a £15,000 deal.

"He can go past players," says O'Neill of his new wingman. "I think he can play a bit. You can make up your own mind. We've spent less than half the money that we got for Durham. I think he'll be good value."

O'Neill also explained his reasons for letting Durham go after 189 appearances and 39 goals for Wycombe.

"Kevin has never really per-

formed since I've been here. I've made a judgement on what I have seen and not what other people have said about him. My job is to improve the team," he said. "He'd lost his way a little bit and had a few problems outside football. The move might be beneficial to Kevin and I hope it is."

After the midweek cup action O'Neill must now turn his attention to tomorrow's Conference game with Northwich Victoria at Adams Park (kick off 3pm).

Although he admits to knowing little about the Cheshire outfit, O'Neill told the Bucks Free Press: "I think Northwich will be extremely difficult."

"They've had a couple of bad results and our lads could be over confident but there is a difference between going out and fearing no one and being cocky."

"We're not good enough to be cocky."

Victoria, who finished 15th last term, have endured a torrid start to the present campaign and languish next to bottom as they await their first Conference victory, although Tuesday's three nil win over Gateshead in the Bob Lord Trophy will have boosted the Vics' confidence.

Veteran keeper Dave Ryan has departed to be replaced by ex-Bangor man Trevor Ball while other new recruits include defender Mark Wrench from Wrex-

ham and midfielder Steve Holland from Rochdale.

Dave Young could feature in defence after returning from a spell in the United States.

Meanwhile former secretary John Goldsworthy is helping out at Adams Park following Alan Hutchinson's resignation.

Hutchinson, who had been secretary for a year, resigned due

to other business commitments. "I'm always willing to help out," said the affable Goldsworthy after Saturday's match.

"It's an advantage having done the job for so long. The basics don't change. I'd sweep the courtyard if necessary."

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