

BLUES AND EVANS TURN DOWN TOP CLUBS' BIDS

NICKY Evans' first week on the Wycombe transfer list has brought two bids from his former clubs — and both have been flatly turned down.

And while the deadlock between the striker and the club remains, the score between Evans and Martin O'Neill is one rejection apiece.

The offers came from two of the Conference's top clubs, Barnet and Kettering, confirming the esteem in which Wycombe's 32-year-old striker is held.

At the same time, Mick Nuttall will today sign for the Adams Park club, as exclusively revealed to you by the Bucks Free Press last Friday. The 22-year-old centre forward joins for a fee of £6,000.

O'Neill emphasised after Saturday's win he has been watching Nuttall since before Evans' transfer request. "If Nuttall comes and never kicks a ball for Wycombe because Nicky Evans and Mark West keep him out, I honestly won't mind," said O'Neill.

Of Evans' impending departure, the manager added: "He will go when it's right for Wycombe Wanderers. We need all the able bodied men we can get the way we're playing at the moment."

Barnet manager Barry Fry selected Evans only last week, when he picked the 13-goal marksman for his FA XI squad. Now this admiration for his former centre forward has led to a bid for his services, although O'Neill said: "Barnet put in a laughable offer for Nicky Evans. It was not enough for a player of Nicky's ability. I'll get as much as I can for him. I'll be looking for a very decent price for a very, very



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decent player."

The underlying feeling surrounding the Evans situation is he will not be moving readily. Evans himself cut out the opportunity of a return to a former club when he and Kettering failed to agree terms.

"I'll probably still be here when we get to Wembley," said Evans after the victory over Wealdstone left Blues four ties from a visit to the twin towers.

Evans has been playing with a slight hamstring problem for the last few games, but will again be available for selection for tonight's visit to Kettering.

Nuttall, meanwhile, comes into contention for tonight's game, while a second new face also arrives at the club.

Peter Leahair, a 21-year-old midfielder who watched Saturday's game, arrives at Adams Park on trial from the RAF. O'Neill said he has received very good reports of Leahair, who was most impressed with the set-up at Wycombe and rates his chances of getting into the Blues side.

While Leahair would



Nicky Evans on Saturday

Pictures by CHRIS BERRY

not require a fee, O'Neill's purchase of Nuttall takes his shopping bill to £13,000 since he came to Wycombe 11 months ago, still less than the money generated by the sale of Kevin Durham to Barnet earlier this season.

But O'Neill is not anxious to spend money for its own sake, indicating that rash purchases in the

time of an injury crisis can bring problems in the longer term. "If a player can tie his laces he's worth £3,000 these days," he said. "But with the money generated by the FA Cup run I would have thought there was money available. The truth is I have not really put it to the test. Gates are up, and the chairman has not said don't look at any

players.

"I'd like to think Wycombe could compete with Barnet in a year or so, who lose a game and go and buy a winger for £20 grand," added O'Neill.

● Wycombe have been drawn away to VS Rugby in the second round of the FA Trophy, to be played on Saturday, February 2.