

West on stand-by for England

PETE LANSLEY reports on all the latest from Adams Park

MARK West's superb first half of the season, capped by a goal and a satisfying performance for the FA team last Wednesday, has earned him a stand-by call for the semi-professional England squad due to play Wales at Stafford on February 12.

And after another match-winning performance against Barrow on Saturday, West was happy to confirm his allegiance to Wycombe Wanderers, scotching rumours that he and Andy Kerr were to put in transfer requests.

Blues travel to Bath City for their rearranged Conference fixture tonight (Tuesday, ko 7.30pm) with Kerr out, finishing his two match suspension.

Kerr also emphasised that he has no reason to wish for a move.

Watford manager Steve Perryman was at Adams Park on Saturday, but denied he was there to watch Mark West.

Meanwhile, several Blues squad players are due to receive a month's match practice by going out on loan to other clubs.

Martin Lambert made his debut for Dorchester in their goalless draw on Saturday, while Robert Thorpe was reported as playing well for Harrow in their creditable one goal reverse by Redbridge Forest.

Blues assistant manager John Reardon said Matt Hanlan, who impressed in his time on the pitch against Bracknell in the Berks and Bucks Cup game 12 days ago, is also looking for much needed match practice.

Andy Robinson, who played the first eight games of the season, has also decided to look elsewhere for a month's first team football after being overlooked for all but the Kettering cup game this year, despite three midfielders being out injured.

Robinson, 24, joined Blues after more than a year at Carlisle United but told Midweek he needs first team Conference football to get his appetite back. He added that in his three years at Wycombe, he has found chairman Ivor Beeks "the most honest man I've come across in football."

The former Manchester United and Bury midfielder is likely to line up alongside Matt Hanlan and RAF trialist Peter Leaheir in tomorrow night's Capital League clash with Aldershot (Adams Park, ko 7.30pm).

Trialists Andy Mason, a midfielder, and Gareth Evans, who both played in Wycombe's friendly at Hitchin last week, will also be looking for another opportunity to impress manager Martin O'Neill.

On the injury front, West hopes to play tonight despite a painful toe injury which is impeding his kicking with his left foot, while Gary Smith and Martin Blackler continue to make steady progress from long term injuries.

Smith, who suffered ankle ligament trouble after the win at Merthyr Tydfil more than a month ago, hopes to be back in training next week. Blackler, yet to kick a ball in 1991, was told by a specialist last week to continue the fitness work at the club as he suffers from sore muscles in the pelvic and groin areas.

Simon Hutchinson's hamstring injury means he is unlikely to face VS Rugby in the second round of the FA Trophy this Saturday.