

Game lined up in memory of Kevin Durham

PETE LANSLEY reports

BARNET and Wycombe have provisionally agreed to donate the proceeds of their James Thompson Shield match to a fund being set up for Kevin Durham, the former Blues star who died of a heart attack in Majorca last week.

A minute's silence was observed in memory of Durham, who was 29, at last weekend's annual conference for the GM Vauxhall Conference.

Durham's funeral will be held at Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford next Monday (2pm start).

Barnet manager Barry Fry said: "Martin and I agreed, and my chairman agreed, that when Wycombe play Barnet in the shield the proceeds will go to a fund set up for Kevin's little boy."

"Martin's been very helpful. We're just awaiting the Wycombe chairman's confirmation, but we don't expect it will be a problem."

O'Neill said: "A chairman who spent £1,500 on an operation for a player not even at the club — Matt Hanlan — would probably consider Kevin Durham's plight favourably."

The shield match, the non-league's version of the Charity Shield, played between the Conference champions and the FA Trophy winners, will be staged at Adams Park at a date to be announced.

● FLOWERS can be sent to Reeves and Paine, Abingdon Road, Oxford.

INNUNDATED Blues have had to turn down down the offer of a friendly with First Division Queens Park Rangers.

Rangers, who came and won 4-1 at Adams Park in a friendly last August, find themselves crowded out as Blues already had dates with Coventry City and West Ham United in the week suggested.

West wins top soccer award

BLUES star striker Mark West, who was named as the GM Vauxhall Conference player of the season at the weekend, has admitted he would have to think long and hard about moving to a Football League club if any offers came in.

Amazingly, the 25-year-old striker has not had a single offer from a league club despite his most successful season ever for Wycombe Wanderers.

Mark scored 38 cup and league goals in Wycombe's FA Trophy-winning season, including the spectacular diving header which sunk Kidderminster at Wembley.

On Saturday he was voted the outstanding player of the season by the GM Vauxhall Conference managers at their annual congress in Manchester.

The delighted striker told



Mark West

The Star: "I was surprised to be named as player of the season, it's a great honour. Everything seems to be going my way at the moment."

Mark picks up a £1,000 cheque and a golden boot for his efforts. As well as the goals, the Blues hero

also celebrated the birth of his son, Matthew, midway through the season.

Mark is happy to stay at Wycombe, but admitted: "I'd have to think long and hard about any offer from a Football League club. But there simply haven't been any."

"I enjoy playing for Wycombe and if the coming season is half as good as the one that's just finished, I'll be pleased."

Looking back over the Trophy winning season, Mark refused to pick out any one particular goal as his favourite, saying: "They were all special. Every time the ball hits the back of the net is a great moment for me."

Mark was also named as one of the players in an all-star Conference team last Saturday, along with Blues captain, Glyn Creaser.

O'Neill may quit Blues

WYCOMBE Wanderers Football Club may be losing their inspirational manager Martin O'Neill to Bristol Rovers.

The Football League Second Division side is reportedly interested in the former Nottingham Forest and Northern Ireland player becoming the club's new leading light following the departure of former manager Gerry Francis to QPR.

But the Blues boss, who guided Wycombe to success in the FA Trophy, told The Star yesterday: "All I know is what I have read in the papers."

"No one from Bristol Rovers has made enquiries through official club channels. Until they do I can't comment."

"They may be a promi-

by Claire Nash

nent Football League side, but Wycombe could also soon be playing in the Football League if we con-

tinue to be as successful as last season.

"I have not visited the club, but the fact they have no pitch at the moment is one factor I would need to take into consideration."

Martin did admit that managing a side like Bristol Rovers would be a step in the right direction for his managerial career.

Bristol Rovers Football Club secretary Bob Twyford said: "I am not in a position to confirm whether Martin O'Neill is on our shortlist of candidates to succeed Gerry Francis. It's all press talk at the moment."

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Martin O'Neill