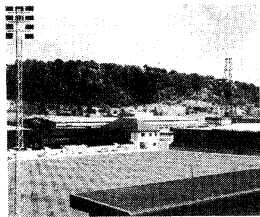


O'NEILL STAYS AT ADAMS PARK



Home sweet home...

MARTIN O'Neill has resisted a lucrative three-year contract with Bristol Rovers to remain manager of Wycombe Wanderers.

Following Rovers' generous bid to entice the former Nottingham Forest star into Football League management, O'Neill now looks set to become one of the best rewarded managers in the history of non-league football as he sets about fulfilling Wycombe's dream of League football.

Director Alan Parry described O'Neill's decision as a landmark in the club's history.

And yesterday chairman Ivor Beeks spoke of the deal which will give O'Neill, now on holiday in Portugal, every reason

to stay happily at the Adams Park helm for at least another year.

"We've renegotiated Martin's contract and he's staying to do the job he came to do," said a delighted Beeks.

"The fans, the board and everyone at Wycombe is right behind him, and I know he wants to succeed here."

It was O'Neill's gut feeling before he departed for further talks with Rovers director Geoff Dunford on Friday morning that he would stay with Wycombe.

Blues board proclaim their boss's loyalty

PETE LANSLEY reports

Parry said: "Martin in his heart of hearts didn't want to leave — he's started a job he wants to finish."

"It's a real landmark for Wycombe Wanderers when a Second Division club make a very good, genuine offer for our manager, and he decides to stay at Adams Park — especially a man of Martin's calibre, who has seen football at the highest level."

"It's the best news the club have had in a long while."

O'Neill will still not work on a contract of any specific length, but Beeks did say their arrangement is "on the basis of his staying for a year."

Beeks added: "It's the best deal we could come up with. But I don't think it was all about money — I'm convinced Martin wanted to see us into the Fourth Division."

Now Parry hopes this will be the catalyst to propel Blues in the direction of the League.

"I just pray that the commitment and loyalty he's shown is

reflected by other people: that the fans really get behind the team, and for the local authority, if they hadn't learned from Wembley, that there's never been a better chance for Wycombe to go for the Football League," said Parry.

Rovers chairman, Denis Dunford, father of director Geoff, said: "We feel we have lost a very good manager in Martin O'Neill."

He added that O'Neill was not happy with pressure from some quarters of the press.



Martin O'Neill: happy to continue