

West hammers in a treble reminder



Report by
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WANDERERS striker Mark West blasted his way back into contention for tomorrow's title shoot-out with Colchester United with a hat-trick for the reserves on Wednesday night.

Last season's supporters' player of the year, dropped for last Saturday's home game with Cheltenham, gave Martin O'Neill the best possible reminder of his capabilities by converting his chances as the Capital League side went down 4-3 at Leyton Orient.

West, scorer of 40 goals in all competitions last season, still leads the Wycombe scorers' chart with nine this season. But after a back injury followed a run of two goals in nine matches, West has returned to fitness to find himself out of favour and on the substitutes' bench for three of the last four games.

The 25-year-old striker remained modest and patient this week as he told the Bucks Free Press: "I had a couple of dodgy games, but he (O'Neill) got the right to drop me. There's no point in steaming in and asking why aren't I in."

"I thought I might have got on last Saturday, but I'm sure I'll get my chance, whether it's this week, next week or the one after."

West, in his testimonial season with Wycombe, added: "I'd like to be back in. The confidence is okay. I'll put a couple in if I'm playing."

For the last five games, except last week's FA Cup defeat by Kettering, manager O'Neill has played Dave Carroll at centre forward alongside Keith Scott.

The pair have produced a goal a game between them, while O'Neill has also sold Mickey Nuttall during this spell.

O'Neill, while paying credit to West, defended his selections.

"Until I leave this club, mine's the only judgement that counts," he said. "Keith Scott is a better player than Mickey Nuttall. I look at a lot of options. I've left out Mark West and Dave Carroll, who are far better players in the technical sense. I don't pick a team because of what someone costs."

The manager continued: "Only Colchester have scored more goals than us. It's everybody's business in the team to score goals. I have the utmost faith Mark West will come through it. The ball will go in off his shin or his backside, and it'll start Mark West off."



**Mark West
clocks up another award last Saturday**

"All good players go through bad spells. Perhaps it's because of his successes last year, but I have not lost confidence in Mark West."

"He'll play a significant part in our attempts to get in the Fourth Division this season."

Yesterday O'Neill added: "He was in contention before he scored a hat-trick."

West, who has scored 164 goals for Wycombe Wanderers, admitted last year's accolades — three player of the year awards, and an England semi-professional cap were the highlights — have added pressure. "Everybody expects a lot — you're up there to be shot at for a while. But people will forget in a month or so."

He was recalled to the team for the Kettering game last week. "I had a couple of headers and if they'd gone in, it would've been alright," he said. "I didn't think I did any worse than anyone else but you've just got to accept it."

Colchester manager Roy McDonough was surprised to be told West was dropped last week: "Wycombe are good all along their front row. Guppy's quality; if Hutchinson's in, I like the look of him; but West's the man who looks like he'll do things for them."