

Kerr faces three-week wait

WANDERERS defender Andy Kerr could be training again in three weeks' time.

An exploratory operation on Wednesday diagnosed his knee injury as a torn cartilage, a spokesman at Wycombe told the Bucks Free Press.

Meanwhile, Wycombe boss Martin O'Neill has issued a message of optimism after Blues' disappointing 3-0 defeat at Conference leaders Colchester United last Saturday.

"We are certainly not down," declared O'Neill this week. He pointed out Wycombe are still second but is conscious Wanderers must combine their attractive football with sharper finishing.

Blues have the chance to rediscover their form when they take on Northwich Victoria in tomorrow's Conference fixture at Adams Park (ko 3pm). The match is in doubt because of the recent bad weather. A pitch inspection will be made by the match referee this afternoon.

Meanwhile, O'Neill is striving to build a side capable of winning the Conference. "Part of the game against Colchester made me think we are good enough. But for a lot of the game against Colchester we were just not good enough," O'Neill told the Bucks Free Press.

On keeper Paul Hyde, whose error cost Wycombe the crucial first goal against Colchester, O'Neill said: "Paul let everything get to him on Saturday: the crowd, the barracking.

"The first goal affected the rest of his game. Personally speaking, he was very disappointed in himself and I wasn't altogether pleased myself.

"If he is going to make strides in this league and do anything for us, he has got to put this in the back of his mind and get on with what I know he is capable of and that is an excellent job for us."

Against Northwich tomorrow Wycombe manager will meet up with former Northern Ireland team-mate Sammy McIlroy, the former Manchester United midfielder, who is now manager at Northwich.

"I am more looking forward to trying to win the game. We really need to get back on the winning trail," said O'Neill.

McIlroy last week resumed his playing career at Northwich Victoria.

The 37-year-old, who assumed the managerial reins at the Drill Field during the summer, played the first half of Fri-

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day's 2-2 friendly draw against Third Division Stoke City.

McIlroy, who has been suffering from a long-standing knee injury, will examine the effects before making a decision about resuming his playing career on a competitive basis.

Gareth Ainsworth and Andy Graham scored Northwich's goals.

The Vics face a difficult Christmas programme. The schedule opened with a 1-1 draw against pacesetters Colchester United and extends into the Christmas period with games at home to Macclesfield Town and neighbours Witton Albion.

O'Neill has several injury worries for tomorrow's match: Jason Cousins (ankle), and Matt Crossley (leg).