

Blues careers hinge on O'Neill's meeting with Beeks

MARTIN O'Neill will decide whether to pledge his commitment to Blues for another year by this time next week.

The future of the Wanderers supremacy will be assessed before squad-building plans for the 1992/93 season can begin.

The Blues careers of seven players are uncertain after O'Neill announced his retained list this week. Gary Smith, John Deakin and Gavin Covington head the list of players who have not been offered new contracts.

The Wanderers manager met

**Report by
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briefly with his chairman, Ivor Beeks, on Wednesday, but the duo decided to postpone negotiations until after this weekend's GM Vauxhall Conference meeting in Brighton.

O'Neill, whose previous 12-month agreement has now expired, told the Bucks Free Press: "Let us go to the Vauxhall Conference meeting first. I'll throw something reasonable to him on Monday, and one

way or the other we'll resolve something by the end of next week."

Other Wanderers players will await the outcome of these discussions before they commit themselves to Blues' next promotion drive.

The contracts of Steve Walford, Peter Johnson, Chuck Moussaddik and Trevor Roffey are also now up, although they can still prove they have a future at Blues if they impress in pre-season training.

O'Neill expressed particular sympathy for Covington, the former Hitchin left back, who would have

started last season in the first team if injury had not struck.

Once O'Neill's own future is established, he would want to have talks with Covington, Smith and Deakin. "Those people are free to talk to whoever they like," said the manager. "I'll be talking to those three about what may possibly be happening, but if someone came in for them, I couldn't do anything about it."

O'Neill, surveying the list of players freed by Football League clubs, is on the lookout for a keeper to put extra pressure on his number

one choice, Paul Hyde.

Moussaddik was kept out for almost the whole of last season by a torn hamstring, but the 21-year-old is confident he will be staying with Blues.

After loan spells with three clubs last season, Moussaddik said this week: "I impressed Hayes at the start of the season and Wealdstone at the end enough for them to be interested in me."

"I don't think there's much between me and Hyde," he added. "In his (O'Neill's) mind, I'm his number two. He does this to make me work harder in pre-season."

Stadia U-turn gets approval

WANDERERS have welcomed news that lower division Football League clubs will not be forced to make their stadia all-seater.

Peter Mellor, Minister for Sport, has reconsidered this aspect of the Taylor Report, which insisted all grounds be converted by 1998.

So if Blues win promotion to the League next season, they will not have to plan to make Adams Park an all-seater stadium.

Wanderers, preparing for the possibility of promotion at the end of last season, were considering seating the Woodland Terrace. Now certain of playing in the GM Vauxhall Conference next season, Blues will make no significant changes to Adams Park.

Director Graham Peart said: "It's good news in the way that all clubs will be able to give supporters what they want rather than impose a particular style of facilities for no particular reason."

Peart added: "We would like to see the stadium mature a bit before we consider any major changes."



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