

Smith to give Blues a tough first night

SMUDGER Smith returns to Adams Park tonight to ensure Wycombe Wanderers' tough start to the season continues.

Tough-tackling Gary joined tonight's opponents Welling United on a free transfer from Wycombe last week and now gets an immediate chance to remind the Blues what they will be missing.

Wanderers' first home match (ko 7.45pm) follows Saturday's 1-1 draw at Macclesfield, where a point was gratefully accepted.

Smith, 23, made his Welling debut in Saturday's 3-1 home defeat by Telford and survived a clout on the head to complete the game.

The former Colchester and Enfield midfielder played a total of 86 games for Wycombe in his two and a half years with the club. Martin O'Neill said: "Gary arrived a week before me

and during that time, when fit, he's seldom been out of the 13 up until the end of last season. He did brilliantly for us."

O'Neill, towards the end of his playing career, actually played alongside Smith for Fulham reserves in the mid-80s. The manager explained his decision to release the tigerish midfielder. "He's done pre-season training with us and he hasn't done badly. But I couldn't guarantee him something in the first team, and Welling can."

"Money wasn't a consideration for Gary. I'm sorry to see him go, but the situation hasn't changed here and he's just what Welling want."

● **TRIALIST** midfielder Alan Devonshire, injured in Blues' friendly at Harrow last week, was due to have an operation on his fractured cheekbone yesterday.