

WIMBLEDON manager Joe Kinnear yesterday rejected Andy Kerr, sensationally dropped this week after accusing Wycombe Wanderers of blocking his Premier League ambitions.

But Kinnear is convinced the Blues centre half, rated at £50,000, has the ability to make the grade in professional football.

The Dons manager also revealed he is interested in winger Steve Guppy, a trialist with Charlton Athletic last season.

Kerr was left reeling on Tuesday after an outraged Martin O'Neill chose to leave the fully-fit defender out of Wanderers' game with Welling.

Wimbledon were initially willing to take Kerr on a further month's loan after he impressed in a fortnight's trial. But O'Neill was not willing to decontract Kerr to play in Wimbledon reserve games, and the defender spoke out in frustration.

Kinnear said: "Andy's done very well, but I've already got three centre halves. I told Andy to stick at his game because while he's not going to make it with us, he's definitely got the potential to make it with someone else."

"I think he can make it with a Football League side. He's got to take it one step at a time — it's not that easy to jump straight into the Premier League."

The Wycombe manager, disappointed with this newspaper's handling of the story, was not willing to discuss matters this week. Last Saturday, he said: "If they'd been that interested they would've come in with a solid offer."

Wimbledon have started this season badly and are bottom of the Premier

By PETE LANSLEY

League after four games. They sold Terry Phelan to Manchester City this week for a reported £2.5 million, but Kinnear said this would not change his plans.

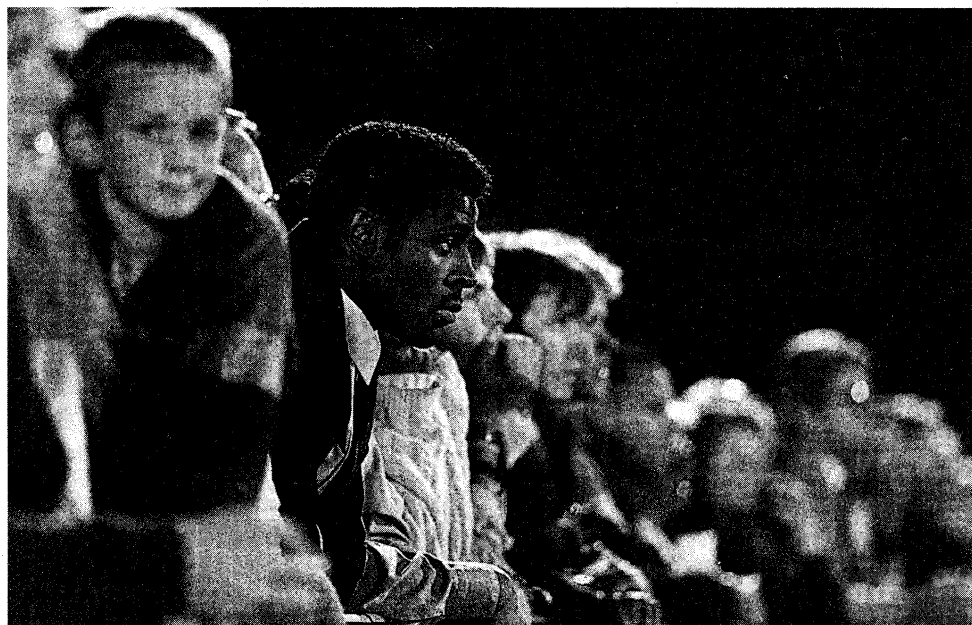
He added: "We were talking, or Wycombe were asking, for £50,000. That was their evaluation and there's no reason why they shouldn't get full value from him."

The Dons boss continued: "We watch all these non-league matches. I also liked Guppy, and we'll see how he develops. It's only a general interest, but we'll monitor progress. Things can change from day to day — people move on, others get injured — and opportunities are always around the corner for these lads."

Kerr, uncertain what the future now holds for him, said: "My mind has got to concentrate on things here until my luck changes." He maintained yesterday that he would give his all for Wycombe if selected again.

It looks unlikely that Kerr will play tomorrow, at least for Wycombe Wanderers.

● THE reserves lost 5-1 at Reading in the Capital League this Wednesday.



Out in the cold: Andy Kerr's is just another face in the crowd as he watches his Wanderers team-mates overcome Welling this week
Pictures by MICHELLE O'CONNOR

What is wrong with the Wycombe players?

IT LOOKS for now as if everyone has lost out over Andy Kerr's bid to play for Wimbledon.

Wimbledon were, however understandably, unable to check him out for a full month and see if he adapted to life at a Premier League club. The Wycombe manager has lost one of his best players for at least a couple of games, as he obviously thinks Andy isn't in the right mental state to give Wycombe his best. And, let's not forget, the Wycombe fans have also been deprived of one of their heroes.

STANDPOINT

I get exasperated while Martin O'Neill cuts off his communications with the paper. But most of all, you have to feel sympathy for the player himself. Outspoken or not, can you imagine his frustration? Would you have kept it bottled up? Like several of his team-mates, there are no better players outside the League, and yet the scouts continue to hum and haw.

What is their problem? Over the last

two and a half years, Wycombe's success is unmatched by any Conference side, and the nucleus of the side remains. These players must be doing something right. I'd be as sad as anyone to lose Guppy, Kerr, Stapes, Jason or the others, but you can't tell me they're not better than many First Division players appearing at the Manor Ground or Griffin Park.

If Andy gets the chance to go on loan to a nearby League club, I will wager they will soon want to make it permanent.