

Norman awaits the outcome of discussions with Blues

CHESHAM defender Sean Norman's possible return to Wycombe hangs in the balance this week.

Generals' boss Gerald Aplin has not confirmed whether he received Blues manager Martin O'Neill's request to speak to the former Wanderers player.

A seven-day notice, put in by O'Neill for permission to talk to Norman, presently without a contract at Chesham, expired on Wednesday.

But Aplin said: "No one has talked to me directly. If a notice was put in, I have not been told about it."

He expected Norman, who is suffering from a thigh injury, to be at Chesham's home game against Kingstonian tomorrow.

"He has been to the club for treatment to his injury. He went to our game against Staines on Tuesday night and should be at Saturday's

CLAIRE NASH reports

game to watch."

Aplin added: "We do not like to lose players. But if any club comes in for them I would tell them. We would not stand in the way of players in regard to their achieving their ambitions."

Norman would help plug Blues' gap for a naturally left-footed defender if he returned to Wycombe.

O'Neill said he would be in touch with Norman by the weekend.

But he added that he would not be panicked into a new signing because of selection difficulties, caused by injuries to Keith Ryan and Matt Crossley, who recovered to play on Saturday, and skipper Glyn Creaser's suspension.

But there was encouraging news this week for O'Neill, who is set to take the same side which beat Witton 2-1 last Saturday to Kidder-

minster tomorrow.

Ty Gooden, who ruptured ankle ligaments in training last month, came out of plaster on Tuesday. His recovery is expected to take another four to six weeks.

Blues' assistant manager John Reardon estimated it will also be another four weeks before Ryan, who strained his ankle two weeks ago, is fit again.

But Crossley, who came through the Witton game without any undue after-effects, is set to play tomorrow, as is Jason Cousins, who spent most of the week in bed with a cold.

"It should be a good footballing game. Kidderminster are renowned for playing good football. And they have been going well in their recent cup and league games," said O'Neill.

He added that Wycombe are determined to rid themselves of the spectre of their last two away defeats

at Bromsgrove and Bath.

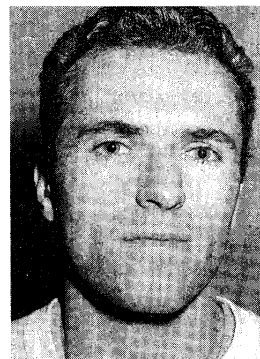
But popular former Blues midfielder John Deakin will be keen to show Blues' legion of fans what they have been missing since he joined Kidderminster at the start of the season.

The 26-year-old has played every game for the Harriers, except three which he missed through injury. He is relishing the prospect of taking on his former team-mates.

"It should be a good game. I hope we do ourselves justice. But as is often the case the result will be in the lap of the Gods."

● IT will be a family affair for Kim Casey when he visits his former club Kidderminster tomorrow.

The striker, who lives just 30 minutes away from Aggborough, has booked two rows in the stands for his relatives.



Sean Norman: This week his immediate future in football hangs in the balance as a proposed return to Wanderers is mooted

IN OFF THE POST

Dear Sport

MY initial reaction to the news that an under 19 match is to be played at Adams Park was one of annoyance.

Whilst staging an international in Wycombe can only be of benefit to Wycombe Wanderers, it is ironic that (unless matters have altered in the last five days) their own youth team are not allowed to play their six home league games at the ground.

One route to being an U19 international is via county and then regional representation. Wycombe Wanderers' present youth squad have been discouraged from representing Berks and Bucks.

Name and address supplied.

WYCOMBE Wanderers' secretary John Goldsworthy replies: "The youth side are allowed to play their FA Youth Cup games here, but their league games are due to be played at Beaconsfield."

"We are trying to minimise use of the pitch because of the poor condition it got into at the end of last season. This international is a prestige match which is expected to attract a crowd of 2,000 plus."

● THE lilting Irish tones of Martin O'Neill's voice are set to be crackling out of your radios next Wednesday night if the Wycombe manager steps in to host Gary Lineker's Football Show on BBC Radio Five.

O'Neill has been invited to sit in the hot seat to co-ordinate the chat and reports on a night of European soccer action while Lineker is in Japan.

But O'Neill is unsure whether he would accept the invitation. "I'm very flattered to be asked, but I'm not as used to asking the questions as I am answering them."

Chesham United defender Mark Lawrenson, was Radio Five's expert out in Moscow last Thursday, when he had to squirm his way through a calamitous 4-2 defeat for Liverpool, the club with whom he won the European Cup in the 80s.

● Bookmakers Ladbrokes have suspended betting odds on Wycombe clinching the Conference title following Saturday's victory over Witton, which secured a 16-point margin at the top of the table.

O'Neill's cup hopes

CLAIRE NASH reports

BLUES' boss Martin O'Neill is determined his side will pull-off an FA Cup run of the highest order this season.

"I especially want to do well in the FA Cup. It would be a great all-round positive experience for the club, the players and the fans."

"We reached the Second Round against Peterborough two seasons ago. I believe we can go further this year," said O'Neill who believes Blues' league form will help them focus their energies on the FA Cup.

Last night's replay between Merthyr Tydfil or Oxfordshire club Abingdon decided who their First Round opponents would be.

"The romantic in us all would prefer to have Abingdon in the first round. It would be a big, glamorous game for them and I am sure they will bring fans down in their throngs," said O'Neill beforehand. He added that Wycombe know Merthyr well enough from their league confrontations.