

FA scupper Carroll's England ambitions

BLUES midfielder Dave Carroll this week spoke of his disappointment at being withdrawn from the England semi-professional squad because he is Scottish.

"Obviously I am disappointed. It would have been an honour for me to play. It has happened and I now want to forget it and get on with playing for Wycombe," he said.

The Paisley-born midfielder was initially named as one of five Wycombe players in the England squad to play Wales next month.

But, despite Carroll's England schoolboy international caps and residency in this country for 19 years, the FA said he is not eligible after it was pointed out by the Bucks Free Press.

Wycombe manager Martin O'Neill would not criticise the FA, but he tentatively blamed it: "I think the FA may have been responsible for the slip up."

By **PETE LANSLEY**
and **CLAIRE NASH**

But Tony Jennings, manager of the national side, said: "It's very unfortunate but rules are not there to be broken."

Carroll played three times for England under-18 schoolboys. But selection depends where the player attends school. Carroll moved to England when he was seven.

The player, who is entitled to play for an FA representative side, said last Saturday that he presumed he was eligible for England selection because his records, stating his place of birth, were regularly published in match-day programmes.

Wycombe keeper Paul Hyde, meanwhile, is on standby for a call-up if needed.

Of the four Wycombe players selected, including defender Andy Kerr, Jennings said: "Their midfield has proven to be more reliable."

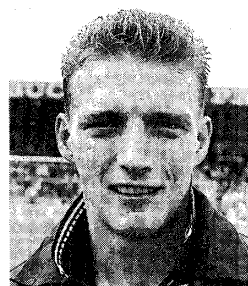
"I've thought for two years now that Simon Stapleton has done well for Wycombe. With Steve Thompson and Paul Richardson, I've got variations," he said, adding: "Steve Thompson's a very experienced player who, with no disrespect to Slough, has gone into a better side and developed as a player."

Steve Guppy, who was robbed of a first cap by food poisoning last year, has continued to impress Jennings this season.

England's game with Wales takes place at Cheltenham's Whaddon Road ground on March 2.

The FA wanted to stage an international against Finland at Adams Park in April, but Wycombe Wanderers could not fit the fixture in. It will be held at Woking's Kingfield ground instead.

England squad: McKenna (Dagenham), Price (Stafford), Shirliff, Watts, Conner (Dagenham), Shail (Yeovil), Kerr, Thompson, Stapleton, Guppy (Wycombe), Richardson (Dagenham, on loan to Kidderminster), Cavell (Dagenham), Leworthy (Farnborough), Robbins (Welling), Ross (Marine)



Simon Stapleton



Steve Thompson



Steve Guppy



Andy Kerr