
Press tip Blues' supremo to replace Clough

O'Neill weighs up Forest vacancy

**Report by
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WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Martin O'Neill left his future managerial options open this week as speculation put him at the top of the list of candidates to replace Brian Clough at Nottingham Forest.

But while Forest fans have put their former favourite in pole position, Blues fans made their feelings quite clear at Tuesday's Drinkwise Cup Final decider at Adams Park.

Cries of "Don't go Martin," and "Martin, Martin, give us a wave," greeted Wycombe's charismatic leader as soon as he walked from the players' tunnel to the dug-out.

O'Neill gave nothing away two days after his former manager announced his retirement, although his loyalty



Martin O'Neill ponders his future

towards Wanderers was uppermost in his mind when he spoke to the Bucks Free Press following Wycombe's disappointing 3-2 defeat.

O'Neill admitted he wants to see Wycombe through their first ever season in Division Three. But he cryptically added that there are some things that cannot be refused.



Brian Clough: Set to quit Nottingham Forest

"A large part of me wants to follow things through here whatever. Sometimes I suppose financially, there are things you cannot turn down. I have no intention of giving up this job at Wycombe lightly," he said.

When asked if he is interested in taking over from his former boss, he said: "The best way to answer that is

that I enjoy the job down here. I am not going to leave this football club at the drop of a hat.

"You may think that Nottingham Forest is not at the drop of a hat. If it is Nottingham Forest or another club, it is a decision I will not take lightly if that decision is to be made."

O'Neill's guarded comments were made after, and contrasted with, statements some national papers reported.

They included: "Managing Barcelona would not frighten me now. It's going to be an enormous task to replace Brian Clough, but no job is impossible," and: "After what I have achieved at Wycombe, I would be surprised — and a little disappointed — if I was not one of the favourites."

Forest chairman Fred Reacher's comments that he would rather someone with

knowledge of the club's set-up take over, have underlined O'Neill's credentials for the job.

Chants of "Martin O'Neill's red and white army," have become a regular mantra at Forest's City Ground during their slide to the bottom of the Premier League.

O'Neill spent ten years at Forest earning League Championship, European and League Cup medals.

Forest fan Andy Low, editor of the club's fanzine Tricky Tree, believes O'Neill, who left in 1981, is the right man for the hot seat.

"People realise it would be a gamble with him having no League management experience. But they do not want anyone within the club to take over because things will carry on as they have. They want someone new, but someone they know and respect."