

We all agree Martin was right to stay



Chris Metcalfe: O'Neill would not desert club



Pam Stephens: Did not know who Martin was



Alfie Carter: Expects the manager to get a large rise

Martin O'Neill passed up the chance to step into Brian Clough's Nottingham Forest shoes. But was it the right decision? DAVID CLOUGH asked the people of High Wycombe

HANDS off our Martin, said the High Wycombe public – then their footballing hero agreed he would stay at Adams Park.

Supporters were adamant the inspiration behind Wycombe Wanderers' run of success should resist the monetary and glamorous draw of managing Nottingham Forest, where he used to play.

Martin O'Neill's decision – astounding to many national sport pundits – has only reaffirmed the convictions of his own public.

They knew all along, or so they insisted last week, that Wycombe Wanderers have so much to offer him and he could not accept the Nottingham Forest position, for which the national press seemed convinced he was destined.

Chris Metcalfe, who has supported Wycombe for 13 years since he was eight, says O'Neill's decision is not surprising and is also unquestionably right.

"Forest got relegated, and Wycombe got promoted. All the major players for Forest are going to continue their international duty so they will be leaving at the end of this season, because they know that the Premier League is the place that people look," explained Rover factory worker Chris from Claremont Gardens, Marlow.

Chris adds there are no such problems at Wycombe, where the club has forward momentum and potential.

"Leaving now would be deserting the club. He was not going to do that. He has done all this at the club, so why leave now?" he asked.

He added: "I reckon they will take Division Three by storm next season."

A more objective opinion was voiced by student Rachel McKay, who is an Oldham Athletic fan but has equally flattering things to say about O'Neill.

"I think he has made the right decision to stay. I do not think he should have gone up to Notts Forest. That would be out of his league just now," said 20-year-old Rachel, of Abercrombie Avenue, High Wycombe.

"I think he is right to stick with a winning side at the moment," she added.

Rachel's friend Becky Thomas, also a student but a fan of Wolves rather than Oldham, agrees that Martin O'Neill is sensible to stay put.

"If I had been him, I would have been tempted. But I think he needs more experience. It is better for the team too in such an important year," 20-year-old Becky, of Green Street, pointed out.

The older generation seemed less interested in the future of O'Neill.

Retired Alfie Carter, of Rowan Avenue, High Wycombe, boasts proudly that he is unconcerned about the football club or its manager.

"I don't know anything about Wycombe Wanderers," said 65-year-old Alfie. But he said: "If that was me, I would stay at Wycombe, because they are going up a division, and I expect he will get a good rise."

"He has made a good choice, because Wycombe have a good team and everything."

Pam Stephens, from Sands, did not know who Martin O'Neill was until last week. She said: "To be honest I had never heard of him until my mum said something about him earlier in the week. She seemed to know who he was and all about him."

If Pam ever wants a crash course on Wycombe Wanderers, she could do worse than look up Martin North, of Terryfield Road, Totteridge.

Martin, 28, seemed to be more clued up on Wanderers than the great man himself and he had no doubts that O'Neill knows what he is doing.

"He is smarter than people think. Players at Forest are trying to sort out contracts. There would be a lot of problems up there. He knows what he is doing in the job," Martin said.

"Obviously, I think he will have to strengthen the side, but I am happy he knows what to do," Martin added, displaying a confidence in his namesake seems to be shared by most of High Wycombe.



Becky Thomas: She would have been tempted to go



Martin North: Blues boss knows what he is doing



Rachel McKay: Forest is out of O'Neill's league