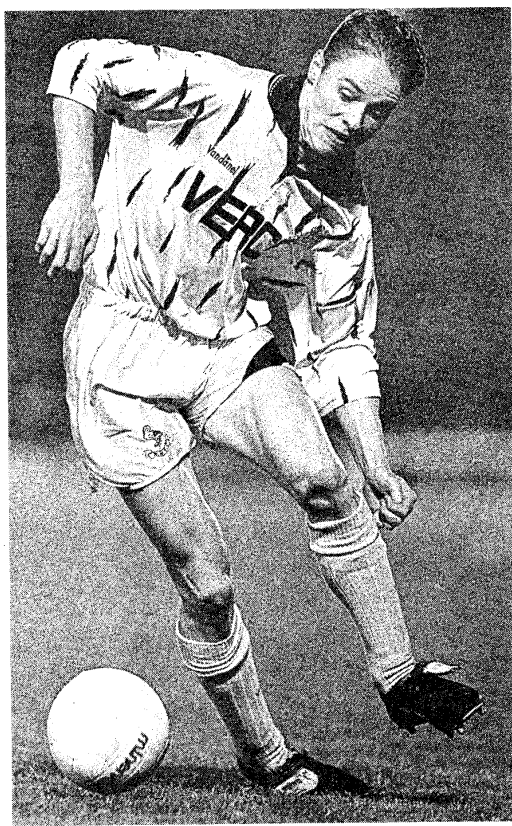


Guppy and O'Neill rewarded for great season

BLUES SECURE TOP AWARDS



Quality play: Tricky winger Steve Guppy shows his clever skills
Picture by MARKUS KINCH



Class act: Martin O'Neill gives his appreciation as his Blues players take on the might of West Bromwich at Adams Park. Wanderers emerged covered in glory with a 2-2 draw, though they lost the replay

By CLAIRE NASH

STEVE Guppy and Martin O'Neill have gained a second prestigious non-League double for Wycombe Wanderers by clinching the GM Vauxhall Conference Player and Manager of the Year awards.

The winger and Blues boss led Wanderers' near-monopoly of all major prizes up for grabs at the Conference's annual general meeting in Blackpool on Saturday.

O'Neill had been the overwhelming favourite to take the manager's award after guiding Wanderers to the Conference championship, and with it promotion to Division Three, and winning the FA Trophy.

His non-League managerial peers agreed with his choice of player of the year by voting for Guppy.

"It was brilliant news. I am really chuffed about it. It was totally unexpected," said Guppy.

O'Neill has consistently

paid tribute to his skilful left-winger, whose pace and incisive crossing, as well as vital and spectacular goal-scoring at crucial moments, were invaluable last season.

But Guppy also had to endure fans' moans the moment he was not firing on all cylinders.

O'Neill said in his end-of-season programme notes: "For a winger to remain as consistent as he has done for over seven months of the season says plenty about the lad. I sometimes feel the crowd expect miracles from him."

"He has on occasions this season gone close to providing such miracles."

Seven Wanderers players were also named in the Team of the Year. Paul Hyde, Jason Cousins, Andy Kerr, Simon Stapleton, Steve Thompson, Guppy and Keith Scott were joined by Farnborough's David Leworthy and Bromsgrove's Stewart Brighton, Kevin Richardson and Paul Webb.