

O'Neill raps Wanderers' title odds

Report by CLAIRE NASH

MARTIN O'Neill has described bookmakers' odds putting Wycombe Wanderers as favourites to win Division Three at their first attempt as nonsense.

The Blues boss admitted he was amazed that his team were being favoured at 11-2 by Ladbrokes and Surrey Racing, whose odds were published in last Friday's edition of the Racing Post.

He added that he doubted any Wanderers fans would be putting their money on it. "I do not give any credence to this sort of thing at all, it is non-sensical, especially since we not even kicked a ball yet. I think other teams in the division such as Crewe, Walsall and Scunthorpe, will be having quite a laugh to themselves," he said.

But a spokesman for second-favourites Crewe, who missed out on promotion to Division Two after being beaten by York in last month's play-offs at Wembley, was not too surprised at the bookies' choice.

"The newest team up always tend to be rated favourites. It happened with Barnet. It does not really make much difference to us."

Colchester United, who are 16-1 to win Division Three, were amused.

"I don't think anyone takes these things too seriously. I cannot see how the bookmakers can say Wycombe are favourites before the season has started," said club secretary Sue Smith.

Having O'Neill as manager, Blues' firm financial footing, their players and healthy crowds on the terraces, are reasons why they look attractive contenders, said a Surrey Racing spokesman. "It is unusual that they are favourites just after being promoted," he added.

● WANDERERS' players' contracts are due to be finalised within the next week.

Martin O'Neill wants to have the issue of who's going full time and who's remaining part time decided by the end of this month before looking at new signings.