

O'Neill gives Lynch and Cooper six-month deal

Ex-Bees spread their wings at Wanderers

By CLAIRE NASH

BARNET forward Tony Lynch has been signed up by Wycombe Wanderers with a six-month full-time contract — giving Blues' prolific marksman Keith Scott and fellow strikers Kim Casey, Mark West and Dennis Greene added competition for places.

Lynch, released by Barnet in the close season, is joined in his half-year tenure by fellow former Bees team-mate, full-back Geoff Cooper.

The 32-year-old defender has been called on for the past two seasons by Blues boss Martin O'Neill to fill Wanderers' most unsettled position at left back and has seen Wycombe through testing times in gaining promotion to the Football League.

Lynch, meanwhile, was given an opportunity in three out of four friendlies this week to show what he can do.

"I have taken on Tony Lynch until the end of the year and will then take it from there," said O'Neill.

"I am looking to expand the squad. Tony has got good ability and is capable of turning matches, so I am going to take a chance on him," he added.

Lynch was renowned for flashing hot and cold at Barnet, having a major impact when in form, but losing his first team place after going off the boil.

Cooper, who re-joined Blues on-loan in April, was released from Barnet along with midfielder Hakan Hayrettin, two months ago and has been a free agent ever since. But he continued training with Wycombe during the close-season, where he impressed O'Neill.

"Geoff has done very well in training. I am looking to him to battle for a place and I hope he can fill the left-back role," said the manager.

Barnet midfielder Duncan Horton made his first appearance



Tony Lynch: Will increase competition for places



Geoff Cooper: Solves problem position

as a Blues trialist at Merthyr Tydfil on Wednesday night, but nothing has yet been decided about his future.

● MARTIN O'Neill has issued a broadside that he will not break his budget for anyone.

Defender Andy Kerr and non-League player of the year Steve Guppy have not completed contracts with the Wycombe manager, a month after Blues' first batch of full-timers signed up.

But O'Neill says he is convinced Kerr will sign, although the defender has not yet replied to the Wanderers boss' offer. "I am quite sure he will sign," said O'Neill.

And of the situation with Guppy, he said: "I have got no real problems." But O'Neill added: "I am not going to be breaking any budgets."