

Blues face tough Coca-Cola quest

By **CLAIRE NASH**

Thompson back in the frame

MARTIN O'Neill believes Wycombe Wanderers have a very steep mountain to climb in the Coca-Cola Cup second round, second leg after being beaten 3-0 by Coventry City on Wednesday night.

The Blues boss gambled on hastening highly-rated midfielder Steve Thompson's return from a recurring groin strain to bolster his team for the first-leg tie at Highfield Road, which was watched by more than 4,000 Blues fans.

But Thompson had to be replaced after only 37 minutes.

There was also bitter disappointment for Andy Kerr who was dropped for the clash against Bobby Gould's Premiership side following Blues' 5-2 defeat by Colchester last Saturday.

"I will never forget this. I was gutted not to make the team. We have lost just one game. Even if I was playing badly, this was an ideal opportunity for me to put it right," said Kerr, who has only recently signed a one-year full time contract after having a week-to-week agreement since the start of the season.

But O'Neill said: "It was unfortunate for Andy, but by his own standards, he has not been playing well."

Kerr was due to play for Wycombe's reserves last night in a friendly, while Thompson is hop-

ing to make O'Neill's squad for tomorrow's game against Doncaster at Adams Park (ko 3pm).

In O'Neill's second defensive shuffle on the trot Kerr's place was filled by Matt Crossley, who moved from his one-game slot at left-back, where he was replaced by on-loan Graham Potter.

On-loan Terry Evans started in Crossley's usual centre-half position.

O'Neill was disappointed his players could not give Coventry more of a battle.

"It's going to be hard for us in the second leg. I thought we played well intermittently.

"But we conceded by our own standards some very poor goals. I was disappointed we did not get a goal back," said O'Neill.

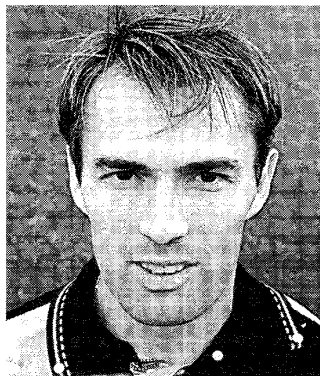
The game was the first Blues have not scored in this season.

They play Coventry in the second-leg tie at Adams Park on Tuesday, October 5 (ko 7.45pm).

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Steve Thompson: Comeback



Andy Kerr: Dropped