

O'NEILL GETS HIS MEN

Blues sign up Garner and Brown

By CLAIRE NASH

MARTIN O'Neill is celebrating success on the transfer market with striker Simon Garner joining Blues' fold on Friday and midfielder Steve Brown poised to sign yesterday.

"I think both of them will do all right for the club," said Wycombe's manager.

"I think the players here are apprehensive and excited at the same time about the new arrivals."

Garner, 34, joined on a free transfer from West Bromwich Albion after discussing terms with O'Neill. They didn't take long to come to an agreement.

Former Blackburn Rovers marksman Garner, who has netted around 200 goals in his career, signed a one and a half-year contract within an hour of arriving at Adams Park.

"He is a proven goalscorer. He will not have lost his knack overnight," said O'Neill. "If he still has the right attitude I think he will benefit from playing first-team football here."

O'Neill revealed that Keith Burkinshaw, the West Brom manager, was initially asking £20,000.

Garner, who played against Wycombe in the FA Cup second round in 1992, is grateful for an opportunity to revive a career which had stalled at The Hawthorns. "I do not think I would have dropped down a division if I was not coming to a club that is going places.

"I am here to score goals. I hope that is what I can do for them."

Northampton skipper Brown ended his days with the Cobblers on a high note at Carlisle on Saturday. He led them to a 1-0 victory, their first in 20 matches.

O'Neill tabled a £70,000 bid for the 27-year-old central midfielder late last week.

Brown's arrival was delayed because of an injury crisis at Northampton. But it could not be soon enough for O'Neill. "I have been interested in Brown for quite some time," he said.

Brown, similarly, was delighted to be offered two-year contract. "I want to play for Martin O'Neill," he said. "I just want to get out there to do the job Martin O'Neill wants me to do."

Brown's fee is £40,000, plus £15,000 after Brown makes 15 appearances and another £15,000 after 30 games.