

Long-serving players count cost of progress



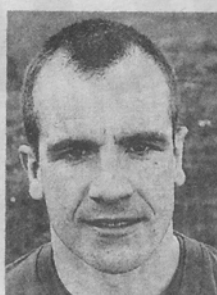
Free agents: Kerr



Mark West



Hakan Hayrettin



Nicky Reid



Nick Cusack



Tony Cunningham

"It will be a big wrench," says Kerr

THE shedding of players at Wycombe before their delayed close-season has begun hints at the amount of upheaval ahead.

Blues need to mould a new squad to mount an assault on Division Two, or ensure they negotiate Division Three next year.

But the departures of two of their longest serving players, Mark West and Andy Kerr, although not completely unexpected, underline the flip side of success for any progressive outfit.

West, 28, the only player at the club born and bred in Wycombe, has served the club for ten years.

But the striker has struggled to get into the frame as a part-time player and has been on loan at three clubs

this season: Kidderminster for only half a match before breaking his leg; Aylesbury and more recently Yeovil.

Central defender Kerr, 28, has been with Blues for six years. He too has faced a battle to break into the team and retain his position.

Daunting competition in the shape of Matt Crossley, Terry Evans, and more recently, Glyn Creaser, has made his task that much harder this year.

It is no secret, also, that he and manager Martin O'Neill have not always seen eye to eye.

Kerr says his last day with Wycombe at Wembley will perhaps be one he won't want to remember, whatever the result.

"Saturday will be my last day seeing

people at the football club. It will be a big wrench because I have known a lot of these people as long as I have been here. I wish the guys well."

He added: "From a professional point of view, it's probably the best thing."

The popular defender paid tribute to Wycombe's supporters. "As far as the fans are concerned, I will miss them as well. For the first five years they have been brilliant and gave me the confidence to play as well as I have done."

In the meantime the defender will pursue a burgeoning sideline as a trainee disc jockey at High Wycombe's ElevenSeventy radio station while he considers the next move



Alec Norman