

Wycombe settle Chelsea date

FOOTBALL

By Claire Nash

WYCOMBE Wanderers have finally secured their friendly date against Chelsea at Adams Park, two seasons after the Premiership club's chairman Ken Bates first pledged that they would visit.

The match takes place on Wednesday, August 10 (ko 7pm).

A pre-season fixture was set up between the two Blues in August last year. But Chelsea boss Glenn Hoddle, who had only then just become manager, withdrew his team because it took place too soon after the annual Makita international tournament, which they won.

Beaconsfield-based businessman Bates, who has described Martin O'Neill's Blues as his local team, hoped the teams would do friendly battle after Wycombe were promoted to the Football League last year. He said then: "What greater way of celebrating the move up than by Chelsea coming to play them in a challenge match before the start of next season?"

The early kick off time is due to upgrading work on the Adams Park floodlights.

O'Neill hopes to have arranged a further friendly to add to the only other home date against Leicester City on Monday, August 1 (ko 7.45pm). In the meantime Wanderers' players begin pre-season training today before embarking on a four-day tour to Holland and Germany, starting on Sunday, July 24, where they will play representative sides including one against a Combined Services XI.

They will travel to Berkhamsted Town for Ray Jeffrey's testimonial the day after their return on Thursday, July 28 (ko 7.30pm).

●Wanderers fans may be prevented from witnessing Blues' first League trip to Birmingham City's St Andrews ground which is currently being redeveloped. Wycombe are due to play Birmingham on Tuesday, August 30. "It has been indicated to the Football League that Birmingham will have a problem at the beginning of the season in as much as away fans are concerned," said a Football League spokesman this week. But he added: "It is subject to discussions between Birmingham City and the Football League and no decisions have been made as yet."