

O'Neill is cool about top spot

FOOTBALL

By Claire Nash

WYCOMBE Wanderers' ever-more consummate consistency could take them to the top of Division Two tomorrow if they beat York City, and their top-of-the-table rivals Huddersfield and Oxford trip up.

Blues moved smoothly into third place, two points off the pace being set by Huddersfield, after beating Peterborough 3-1 with a superlative second-half performance last Saturday, which extended an unbeaten run to four games.

But manager Martin O'Neill is taking their campaign just one game at a time. "We have York then Shrewsbury in midweek, but I honestly don't know who we play the following Saturday. I never want to look forward too far," he said.

"I never get carried away with our position. We have taken ten out of 12 points. The best thing is that we can stick it out now," O'Neill added.

The most encouraging aspect of Blues' progress since their last defeat, a sobering 4-1 debacle at Stockport, has been their ability to grind away, even when up against it. Skipper Terry Evans typified such resolve with a sterling performance last weekend despite carrying a groin strain.

O'Neill is particularly pleased with the desire which is infusing his players at the moment. "That was as convincing as any performance this season," he said of the Peterborough win. "No one was frightened of having the ball."

Mickey Bell will make his Adams Park debut after last week's impressive Blues baptism at London Road. The left winger, filling a



Nice one: Wycombe skipper Terry Evans congratulates Cyrille Regis on his goal at Peterborough

wide role that has been nigh-redundant since Steve Guppy's departure to Newcastle, gave Blues' class-act striking duo, Cyrille Regis and Simon Garner, plenty to play with. "I think everyone was pleased with him," said O'Neill of the 22-year-old winger whose fee is to be decided at a forthcoming tribunal.

Matt Crossley is set to return after missing last weekend's clash with a thigh strain. Simon Stapleton looks likely to lose his place, with Jason Cousins reverting to his usual right back role after filling in for Crossley at centre back.

Rivals Huddersfield, meanwhile,

are playing Bournemouth at home tomorrow, while Oxford entertain Shrewsbury.

Wanderers play Shrewsbury at Adams Park next Tuesday (ko 7.45pm). The Shropshire club were Blues' sternest opponents in last year's promotion quest. Shrewsbury eventually clinched the Division Three championship. Wycombe could only draw 1-1 with the Shrews at home last October and lost the away game 1-0.

Wycombe's financial report for the past year was passed by shareholders at Monday's annual general meeting at Adams Park.

■The Leagueline Forum featuring Martin O'Neill and team skipper Terry Evans takes place at the Vere Suite on Thursday, November 17, starting at 8pm. Admission - tickets go on sale tomorrow - is free for members and £3 for non-members.

■The Wycombe Wanderers Independent Supporters' Club is holding its third meeting at the Keen Lounge at Adams Park next Wednesday, starting at 8pm.

■Blues' reserves' winning run in the Capital League was stemmed by a 1-1 draw at Crawley Town on Wednesday.