

Cash till rings for cut-price Bell

'All I want to do is establish myself'

WINGER Mickey Bell feels more and more justified with every game that he was right in choosing to sign for Wycombe two weeks ago.

The 22-year-old, who has slotted smoothly into Steve Guppy's old role for Blues on the left flank, said after Tuesday's 1-0 victory against Shrewsbury: "I'm really pleased to have come here. The lads seem to have accepted me pretty quickly."

The midfielder has helped return Wycombe's 4-4-2 formation to a

semblance of its former glory. His steady flow of service to Blues' strikers Simon Garner and Cyrille Regis, to the latter particularly, is reminiscent of ammunition Guppy fired in for Keith Scott.

Blues lacked balance after Guppy's departure to Newcastle United before the start of this season and right winger Dave Carroll looked as though he had lost a soulmate.

But Bell is determined to make his mark. He helped Wycombe secure a win over Shrewsbury, which moved them into third in Division Two, after

sound showings in his two previous appearances.

"I knew Steve Guppy from the two games I played against him for Northampton last season. He and I are similar players. Hopefully, I can step into his shoes."

Bell, who has been speedily accepted by Wycombe's supporters because of his boundless enthusiasm, is guarded about looking beyond success at Wycombe.

"All I really want to do is establish myself here before I think about anything else," he said.

WYCOMBE Wanderers boss Martin O'Neill is happy to fork out £35,000 for wonder winger Mickey Bell after a tribunal set the fee yesterday afternoon.

The decision scuppered Bell's former club Northampton Town's bid to make Blues pay £125,000 because they believed the 22-year-old was a better player than Steve Guppy.

O'Neill has declared that Bell has got potential to be as good, if not better, than Guppy, who was signed by Newcastle United for £150,000 before the start of this season. But the Wanderers manager has added that the new arrival, Blues second most expensive signing, still has to prove himself.

Bell's fee could rise to £55,000 if he makes 40 appearances for Blues, with £10,000 paid after 20 games and another £10,000 when he hits the 40 mark. But O'Neill, whose offer for Bell was £100,000 less than Northampton's asking price,

By Claire Nash

was delighted with the tribunal's decision.

"We thought what they (Northampton) asked for was ludicrous. How they were going to justify that was beyond me," said the Wycombe manager. "I thought it was a very fair hearing. I am happy to pay the money for Mickey. He has got a lot of potential and I hope that, eventually, he will make light of the fee."

The tribunal, where the decision is made by a body consisting of representatives from the Football League, the Professional Footballers' Association and an independent party, was the first Wycombe have been involved in. The fee is arrived at after various factors, including his age and how long the player has been at his old club, have been considered.

"It was harrowing really," said O'Neill. "Mickey had to go in and state his case for leaving Northampton. They had not made a fantastic effort to keep him there."