

out as Scott joins Stoke

MARTIN O'Neill has lost out in a bid to bring former Wycombe Wanderers favourite Keith Scott back to Adams Park.

It was a move that promotion-chasing Blues' legion of fans have longed for, almost since the striker's departure more than a year ago. The Wycombe boss made Swindon Town a six-figure offer for the 27-year-old centre forward on Thursday night. But it was not enough.

Stoke City boss Lou Macari upped the stakes on Friday with a £300,000 bid which was accepted by Swindon's player/manager Steve McMahon.

Scott was happy to hear his old club was interested in him.

"I would like to think that one day that I could be in a position to go back to Wycombe. But I cannot really let my heart rule my head and go back purely for an emotional reason. Hopefully it will be the right thing to do at the right time," he said.

O'Neill, frustrated his offer had not secured Scott's return, believed it would have been an ideal boost for his side.

Wycombe take on West Ham in the FA Cup this Saturday before embarking on a gruelling second half to the season to stay in the running for a play-off place. They are currently fourth in Division Two.

"It is frustrating. The amount we offered was obviously a lot more than we've ever offered for anyone else here," he said.

The manager did not reveal his figure, but he has more than £200,000 to spend.

Speculation has been rife since the tail-end of last season that Scott would return to Wycombe. The striker joined his former team-mates at their post play-off celebrations at Wembley in May and is a frequent visitor to Wycombe's training sessions.

"Our offer came out of the blue. I don't think Keith would have even known about it. We made an offer on Thursday night. It was not enough, and Stoke City made an offer the next day," said O'Neill.

One factor behind Swindon's selling Scott, scorer of 12 goals this season, was to help boost funds to buy on-loan central defender Ian Culverhouse from Norwich City.

Swindon sold Scott for exactly the same figure they initially paid Wycombe. Blues received £75,000 more after Scott had made 25 appearances. Wycombe would have been entitled to a percentage of Stoke's fee if it had been above £300,000. The striker almost scored on his debut for Stoke, but was robbed by a goal-line clearance.

Good luck in the Cup tomorrow

HISTORY will be made tomorrow as Wycombe Wanderers and Marlow battle against giants in the FA Cup. Buckinghamshire is truly on the road to Wembley.

The Blues confront mighty Premiership opponents West Ham, while Marlow, of the Diadora League, come up against Endsleigh Division One side Swindon Town. The sides have never got further in the competition, so whatever happens, the area salutes you lads.

And the best of luck also goes to High Wycombe's son and former Blues defender Andy Kerr, whose Enfield team clash with Leicester City tomorrow.

We'll be rooting for you all tomorrow. Let's make it a day to remember for all the right reasons.

County is ready for FA Cup fever

ADAMS Park will play host to its largest-ever crowd when Wycombe Wanderers take on West Ham in the FA Cup third round tomorrow.

Meanwhile, thousands more Buckinghamshire fans will be travelling to Wiltshire and London as Marlow tackle Swindon and Aylesbury battle against Queens Park Rangers.

Extra police and club stewards have been drafted in at Adams Park to cope with the expected 9,500 fans. The gates will be open half-an-hour earlier at 1pm.

Both the club and police are not expecting any trouble from the fans.

Police sergeant Phil Turner said the match was being treated as a high category game. Officers will be on duty at the ground, surrounding area, town centre and train station.

Club safety officer Frank Knowles is confident it will go smoothly: "West Ham fans are reasonably well-behaved and very few supporters are as well-behaved as the Wycombe ones."

He said 14 extra stewards and car park attendants will be brought in, to ensure safety gangways and pathways are kept clear.

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