

O'Neill willing to splash cash

MARTIN O'Neill is going to spend a 'huge' amount of money if that's what it takes to secure a new player to boost Wycombe Wanderers' efforts to finish in the Division Two top five and qualify for the play-offs.

The Blues boss is planning to clinch a major signing by the end of next week. This would be in time for Wycombe's crunch match against Wrexham, who succeeded where Wanderers failed in dumping Premiership opposition out of last Saturday's FA Cup third round, beating Ipswich 2-1.

"We are in the market. If buying a new player, that I think can do a decent job, means we have to spend more money than we have before, then we need to consider doing that," O'Neill declared this week.

The manager is not necessarily going to follow Alex Ferguson's lead at Manchester United, the latter splashing out £7 million on Newcastle's Andy Cole this week.

O'Neill is obviously not living on Planet Mega-Bucks. But he has at least £200,000 at his disposal, underlined by a six-figure bid for former Adams Park favourite Keith Scott two weeks ago. And there may be more money in the bank to smash Wycombe's £40,000 record fee.

By Claire Nash

"We should be okay. We still have money from the Scott and Guppy deals. We are in a good position, fourth in the league. Spending money should not be a massive problem," he said.

O'Neill has, if anything, staggered followers by spending so little during his five years with Wycombe. But he is very much aware of the need to shore up his resources with Wanderers' nearest rivals Birmingham, Huddersfield and Oxford splashing out in recent weeks.

O'Neill believes all of his side's playing departments need bolstering with back-up for his veteran strikeforce of Cyrille Regis and Simon Garner, a creative midfield player and defenders. "That sounds general but it's true. I think we can improve everywhere," O'Neill commented.

Asked if any new faces would arrive by tomorrow's game against Rotherham, he replied that he hoped the deal would go through next week.

■ Wycombe lost their unbeaten home record in the Capital League on Wednesday night when Brentford inflicted a 2-0 defeat.

■ The Adams Family fanzine's belated next edition is due out on February 4.

■ FA Cup: Pages 30 and 31

West Ham revel while Wycombe ponder 'if onlys'

WHAT THEY SAID

"There's no story for you, so I don't know why you want to talk to me." – Wycombe boss Martin O'Neill speaking to the shock-expectant press throng after the game.

"We struggled in the League because we were missing the likes of Alvin Martin, John Moncur and Tim Breaker. But they were all back today and we were a different team." – West Ham manager Harry Redknapp.

"We didn't need telling by Alan Hansen that this was going to be a tough game. We knew before we came." – Alvin Martin, West Ham's veteran centre half and 1980 FA Cup medal winner.

"I think, to be fair, we could have played a little bit better. For the first half, West Ham definitely knew they were in a game. But we conceded a goal at a terrible time, three minutes into the second half." – Wycombe full back Jason Cousins.

"Wycombe are a good team. We are really happy we are through it." – Michael Hughes, the Hammers winger who carved openings for both their goals.

"I think we just threw it away in the second half. That's very disappointing. After that West Ham wrapped it up." – Left winger Mickey Bell, who was awarded Wycombe's man of the match.

"Once we got in front, there was only going to be one result." – West Ham goalscorer Tony Cottee.

"I don't think we were outclassed by any means and we must take something positive away from that." – Wanderers midfielder Keith Ryan.

Saints march in

FOOTBALL: Chalfont St Peter are looking forward to their biggest match of the season when they visit Wycombe Wanderers in the Berks and Bucks Cup on Tuesday (ko 7.45pm).

Wanderers boss Martin O'Neill has said he will field a 'pretty strong side'. Season ticket holders can buy seats at £6. Concessions are £3. Terrace tickets are £5. Vice presidents' tickets are £10.