

Chelsea's work out helps Blues

WYCOMBE were boosted for Tuesday's game against Bradford by a 1-0 win over Chelsea in a behind-closed-doors friendly on Monday.

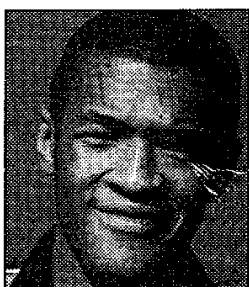
The game at Chelsea's training ground provided the Premiership club with a testing warm-up for last night's UEFA Cup semi-final first-leg match at Real Zaragoza, while Martin O'Neill gave some of his squad an opportunity to enhance starting-place aspirations.

Central midfielder Peter Garland, still short on fitness after an injury suffered at Charlton before joining Blues on loan, scored the only goal of the game.

Steve Brown, meanwhile, underlined improved strength-in-depth, after more than adequately coping with the demands in Wycombe's central midfield during his last three League games.

He contributed to Wycombe's goalscoring revival against Peterborough last week, and topped it with an impressive showing against Bradford on Tuesday.

Brown, who has spent most of the season at full back, has helped Blues' midfield become a force to reckon with again, after Keith Ryan's long-term injury dealt it a savage blow. And he has also enhanced his standing as one of the most popular players at the club, a complete flipside of this time last year when he struggled to settle in after moving from Northampton Town. "Brown had a great game tonight. He looks like the class player I knew he could be," commented O'Neill.



In form: Steve Brown

Bradford boss Lennie Lawrence also indirectly paid a compliment. "Wycombe have got strength and pace right through the middle and we did not have any of that in any shape or form tonight."

Jason Soloman marked his return after injury on Tuesday with his first Blues goal.

Cyrille Regis, although dropped for Wycombe's last two games, has directly influenced their current fortunes by taking Tony Hemmings, another scorer on Tuesday night, under his wing. O'Neill believes the respected veteran striker still has an important contribution to make on the pitch. "Cyrille needs a rest like anybody else. He knows he has not performed to the level that he reached at the beginning of the season. He's still in my plans," he said.

O'Neill hopes to call on the services of Danny Wallace again after just one appearance as a substitute following a free transfer from Birmingham. The striker is honing his depleted fitness in the reserves.