



Nice one Steve: Blues' player of the year Steve Brown is presented with his award by fan Michelle Evans-Riches

Brown socks it to doubters

WYCOMBE'S player of the year Steve Brown says he would happily have traded his award for a play-off place.

"I'm delighted to win it, but I would have traded it for a play-off place. I would even have traded my house, for three points and keep the season going to the last week," said Brown on Saturday.

The versatile player, who began the season as a utility left back and ended it as a vital mainstay in central midfield, received three times more votes than any of his teammates to win the Bucks Free Press Wycombe Wanderers Supporters' Player of the Year Award which was presented before Saturday's last home game of the season.

It was a far cry from this time last year. Brown was on the fringes of the first team after struggling to settle following his £75,000 move from Northampton.

He began this season in the last-chance saloon. Boss Martin O'Neill would have sold Brown if he had not proved his worth.

O'Neill in fact offered the player a £75,000 move to Division Three side Chesterfield early in the season, but Brown turned it down.

"There was no way I was going to go. I wanted to prove a point to myself, the fans and the manager. It took me a long time to settle in. I'm delighted the fans have voted for me and I look forward to getting things up and running again next year."

Blues' skipper Terry Evans was second in the fans' poll, beating fellow central defender Matt Crossley by just one vote.

Blues play Southampton in a pre-season friendly on Tuesday, August 1 (ko 7.45pm).

Missing play-offs hits players hard

WYCOMBE'S players not surprisingly found it difficult to get into the mood to whoop it up for Saturday night's end-of-season disco.

Long faces in the bar said it all. It was disappointing to go out of the play-off race with a defeat, but the players believed their season had still been extraordinary.

"To be so close and yet so far is a crying shame," said goalkeeper Paul Hyde. But he added: "It's been a great season. It would have been unbelievable to get promoted again. Maybe the club could do with another season in the same league."

Steve Brown said: "I think it's been a marvellous season. We've gone to clubs like Huddersfield, Birmingham and Oxford and beaten them. It's just a shame to see it go out the window, particularly against a side like Plymouth who've been struggling most of this year."

The supporters' player of the year wouldn't blame Blues' eight games without a win in February and March as a decisive factor, insisting: "Every team has a sticky patch. That's not an excuse."

"We had to get a result today and we didn't. We could go back over the whole season and pick

things out that we could have done differently.

"But that just makes it harder to stomach."

Full back Jason Cousins said: "It's a bit of an anti-climax. Even though the other results went against us, we let ourselves down today."

Wycombe need just a point from their last two games to clinch the Capital League title.

Blues beat West Ham 3-1 on Friday with goals from Danny Wallace, Miquel Desouza and Anthony Clarke. Their next game was against Sutton last night, and the last game is at Barnet tomorrow (ko 2pm).