

GARNER'S UP FOR GRABS

By **CLAIRE NASH**

ADAMS Park favourite Simon Garner has been released by Wycombe Wanderers.

The 35-year-old striker can look for a better deal elsewhere after Martin O'Neill gave him a free transfer at the weekend.

Garner, a driving force in Wanderers' Division Three play-off success last year, was offered new terms – without a pay cut said O'Neill.

"I have given him a slightly improved contract. However, since Simon is of an age where he could still perhaps get a better deal elsewhere, I won't stand in his way. But there is a contract for him here if he wants it," said the Wycombe manager.

He added: "I could keep Simon here and ask for some money for him. But I'm not going to do that. He came here on a free and has done splendidly for us."

The Blues boss said he has not offered lower wages to Garner, who was a vital mainstay in Wycombe's near miss with the Division Two play-offs although the goals dried up after Christmas. The manager did, however, suggest a pay cut to Garner's fellow veteran Cyrille Regis who was given a free transfer earlier this month.

The Wycombe manager would be happy for one or other, or both, to stay. The experienced professionals' presence has been invaluable, particularly for the likes of Blues young guns Miquel Desouza and newcomer Anthony Clark.

But O'Neill is also aware that Garner and Regis, who both attained legendary status at their former clubs – Garner still holds the goalscoring record for Premiership champions Blackburn Rovers and Regis will always be revered as a god at West



You what: O'Neill was mystified by a report of a rendezvous with Norwich chairman Robert Chase



Will he stay, or will he go? Regis can also return to Wycombe if he isn't signed up by another club

Rumour factory revs up over O'Neill's plans

Brom and Coventry – will not be content with playing second fiddle.

"I don't think the transfer market is an easy place to be at this time of year, but Cyrille's and Simon's reputation may enable them to be in the frame for something," commented O'Neill who is streamlining his squad to accommodate big-signings for the coming next season.

Meanwhile, formalities over Peter Garland's free transfer from Charlton should be completed once the 24-year-old central midfielder returns from a holiday in ten days time.

Defender David Titterton has been released. The full back, who joined on a free from Hereford two years ago, missed most of the season with a crippling knee injury. His contract will be extended until the end of September if he does not find a new club.

O'Neill has put a £15,000 fee on Lee Turnbull's head. The midfielder/striker is on Scunthorpe United's wanted list after a month on loan towards the end of last term.

The Division Three club are mulling over the personable Turnbull's price tag. He was signed from Doncaster for £20,000 in February last year.

■ It's now perm one from five, with speculation continuing as ever to put Martin O'Neill in line for one of an increasing number of managerial hot-seats.

Vacancies now exist at Premiership outfits Sheffield Wednesday and Manchester City, one of O'Neill's former clubs, and Crystal Palace, Derby County and Norwich City, another of his ex-teams, in Division One.

O'Neill was reportedly supposed to be meeting the latter's chairman Robert Chase for talks at a Cambridge hotel today. But it was news to the Blues boss. At the time of going to press yesterday he said he had not been informed by chairman Ivor Beeks of any approaches.

■ Wycombe play Ipswich Town in their first home friendly on Tuesday, July 25. Blues entertain Southampton on Tuesday, August 1.