

O'Neill snub quells speculation storm



Harmonious duet: Wycombe chairman Ivor Beeks and manager Martin O'Neill are united in irritation about job rumours

ALL'S quiet for now on the Norwich front after Martin O'Neill turned his back on speculation and media hype by taking a week's break.

A spokesman for Canaries chairman Robert Chase, meanwhile, has hit back at criticism from Blues chairman Ivor Beeks about the way Norwich's search for a new manager has been conducted.

Beeks commented: "I'm as fed up as the next fan. I do think that Norwich should make a statement to me if they are interested in Martin O'Neill."

But Norwich press officer Malcolm Robertson retorted: "It's all very well for Mr Beeks to criticise,

but we haven't announced a shortlist. We have not named anybody. We want to find a new manager in a professional way and make an announcement at the proper time."

Robertson distanced Norwich from the shortlist which O'Neill's name was reportedly on along with those of Barnet manager Ray Clemence, Crewe boss Dario Gradi, and Norwich caretaker Gary Megson.

There is no doubting that O'Neill's links with the Carrow

Road club as a player make him a strong candidate. But everything depends on whether Chase wants to talk to him. Megson remains favourite for the vacancy.

O'Neill, meanwhile, was disparaging of all the fuss before the Bank Holiday. "If between now and when I get back in a week's time some jobs have gone, then that's too bad. I won't be changing my holiday plans.

"My chairman told me he would ring me with anything, but no approaches from Norwich have been made," he said.

O'Neill, who has also been linked with the vacancies at Manchester

City, Sheffield Wednesday, Arsenal and Derby, went on to pledge his loyalty and allegiance to Blues by declaring that he will not apply for any jobs.

"I have a job here," said the Wanderers boss.

Speculation is still on the cards, however, as O'Neill has made no secret of his ambition to manage a Premiership club and he says he will keep an open mind if any approach from any club is made.

What is clear is that Wycombe's charismatic boss is not going to be seen chasing any job and is quite happy to bide his time from a secure standing at Adams Park.

REPORT
By Claire Nash