

Wanderers maestro says farewell to Wycombe



Here he goes: Martin O'Neill announces his move to First Division club Norwich City at a press conference with Canaries' chairman Robert Chase

O'Neill: Why I left the Blues

WYCOMBE Wanderers' lack of big-money resources was a major factor in Martin O'Neill's decision to join Norwich City this week.

He told the Bucks Free Press yesterday: "What I have learned is that financially, Wycombe cannot cope with the very big teams – clubs on the financial level of Birmingham City – yet as a manager I expected to be able to cope with that.

"Others expected me to cope with that as well."

'Club couldn't compete with big boys'

CLAIRE NASH

SPORTS EDITOR

The charismatic Irishman, who took Wycombe from the non-League to Division Two in just two years, believes Wanderers would have won promotion last season if they had had the luxury of a multi-million pound backer, as

Birmingham do in porn king chairman David Sullivan.

Failure to gain promotion was at the crux of O'Neill's decision to accept Norwich's offer on Tuesday.

But he is leaving Wycombe in a healthy financial state as the club have received around £200,000 compensation from Norwich for the remaining

two years on his contract.

Wanderers director Graham Peart said: "We are as distraught as anyone else at Martin leaving.

"But if there is any comfort in his going, it is that we have got a reasonable amount of money for him which will be used to strengthen the squad."

Community leaders this week lined up to pay tribute to O'Neill, who placed Wycombe firmly on the football map and, as a result, lifted the profile of the town.

Former Wycombe District Council chairman Bob Barber said: "I am very disappointed because I thought he was going to stick by us."

O'Neill, 43, praised Wycombe chairman Ivor Beeks and said he owed his new job to an amazing five years with Blues.

He told the BFP: "I owe the club everything. The only reason I am in the position I am, is because of my experiences at Wycombe.

"The club gave me an opportunity when others were steering well clear of me."

Wycombe are now inviting written applications for O'Neill's replacement. Interviews are expected to start in a week's time.