

Backers for Blues

WYCOMBE Wanderers have announced new sponsors for the Valley Terrace - AXA Equity and Law, taking over from the Bucks Free Press.

The company has signed a three-year contact with the club giving them exclusive rights to the name of the AXA Equity and Law Stand and fascia.

The 18th issue of Blues News, Wanderers' official newspaper is published today in the Wycombe Leader as a pull-out, again taking over from the Bucks Free Press.

The Woodlands Terrace will be known as the Evans Halshaw Stand.

Pre-season friendlies:

Thursday July 20 v Poole (a) 7.30pm

Tuesday July 25 v Ipswich Town (h) 7.45pm

Thursday July 27 v Aldershot Town (a) 7.30pm

Saturday July 29 v Oxford City (a) 3pm

Tuesday August 1 v Southampton (h) 7.45pm

Saturday August 5 v Reading (a) 3pm

New man at Wanderers

BLUES fans can expect a sudden announcement this morning (Thurs) as Wycombe Wanderers appoint a new manager.

The man Wycombe are said to want is former Crystal Palace boss Alan Smith sacked from Selhurst Park at the end of last season.

But there have also been whispers at Adams Park that a straight swap with John Deehan formerly of Norwich is also on the cards.

SMITH'S A HAPPY WANDERER

ALAN SMITH will be named as the new manager of Second Division Wycombe Wanderers today - after turning down a coaching job at Premiership champions Blackburn.

Smith, who left relegated Crystal Palace last month after falling out with chairman Ron Noades, was offered the chance to work in the new Blackburn set-

up, where Ray Harford has been promoted to manager with Kenny Dalglish becoming director of coaching.

But instead he opted to succeed Martin O'Neill, and he said last night: "It would have meant uprooting everything to move north and I wouldn't have been in charge. This is a fresh start for me and I will be running the whole show."

SOCCER LINES

★ ALAN SMITH will be named manager of Second Division Wycombe today after turning down a coaching job with champions Blackburn. Smith, who left relegated Crystal Palace last month after falling out with chairman Ron Noades, replaces Martin O'Neill who left to take over at Norwich. Smith said: "Wycombe appeal to me because they are an ambitious club."

★ Ipswich are giving a testimonial season to veteran John Wark, 38 next month... Derby have signed keeper Russell Hoult from Leicester for £200,000... Crystal Palace have signed Hereford defender Gareth Davies for £120,000... former Sunderland and West Ham striker Bryan "Pop" Robson has quit the Manchester United coaching staff to take up a similar role at Roker Park... Middlesbrough boss Bryan Robson wants Portsmouth midfielder Alan McLoughlin... Oldham's veteran striker Andy Ritchie, 34, is wanted by Scunthorpe as player-coach.

Smith's a Wanderer

ALAN SMITH will be named boss of Second Division Wycombe Wanderers today after turning down a coaching job at champions Blackburn.

He left relegated Crystal Palace last month after falling out with chairman Ron Noades.

Smith takes over from Martin O'Neill, now at Norwich. He said: "The Blackburn offer would have meant uprooting everything. Wycombe appeal because they are ambitious and I'll run the whole show."

Amateur SEAN DEVINE, 22, is set to make the leap from the Beazer Homes League Southern Division to playing in Europe.

The ex-Millwall junior is joining Cypriots Omonia Nicosia for £20,000 from Fisher '93 and will play in the UEFA Cup.

FORMER CRYSTAL PALACE CHIEF IS APPOINTED AS THE NEW BOSS OF WANDERERS

WYCOMBE WANDERERS today appointed Alan Smith as their new manager - less than six weeks after he left Crystal Palace following his long and public feud with chairman Ron Noades.

Smith today agreed a two-year deal with Wycombe, who narrowly missed out on promotion to the First Division last season.

The former Palace manager, who had been at Selhurst Park for 11 seasons before his departure in the wake of the club's relegation from the Premier League, succeeds Martin O'Neill, who took over at Norwich two weeks ago.

David Kemp, who was Smith's assistant at Palace, will be the right-hand man to Smith at Adams Park. Last season, the pair helped

Smith is Wycombe manager

by KEN DYER

steer Palace into the semi-finals of the FA Cup and the Coca-Cola Cup.

Smith, a highly-respected coach who has been linked with jobs at Bolton, Luton and Huddersfield, was satisfied he had made the right decision about going to Wycombe.

"I will be running the football side of the club from top to bottom - and that is something I relish," he said today.

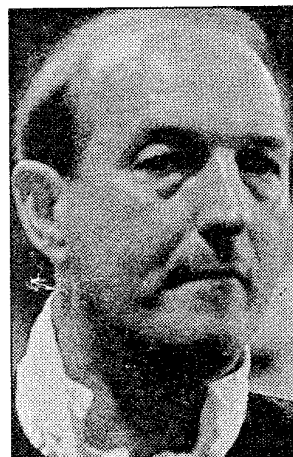
"I don't consider it a

smaller job than at Palace. Size is all in the mind. You can have small-minded people at big clubs - and vice versa.

"I have been impressed by the set-up at Wycombe and by the club's ambition. They particularly want me to build up the youth set-up at and that is something I have done before, both at Wimbledon and Palace.

"I am hopeful I can continue to produce good players and that we can continue the progress which the club has made since it came into the League."

Aston Villa's recent £2.5m recruit Gareth Southgate, who was one of Smith's proteges at Palace, said today: "I am delighted Alan is back in football so quickly. Wycombe are a progressive club and I am sure he will do well there."



Ambitious... Alan Smith

Dream job as Smith doubles his money

By RICHARD LEWIS

ALAN SMITH took control at Second Division Wycombe yesterday and finally landed in football's big money league.

The former Crystal Palace boss, who was the lowest paid manager in the Premiership, has almost doubled his £52,000 Selhurst Park salary.

On top of the cash windfall Smith has been given the prospect of spending each day at the serene setting of England's Bisham Abbey training ground, which Wycombe are using from next season.

Smith said: "The set-up here is fantastic and the package I've been given could not be bettered by any First Division club with the exception of Wolves.

"Everything is based on excellence from the training ground upwards. It is better than many Premier League clubs."

Smith parted company with Palace in acrimonious style at the end of last season as chairman Ron Noades wanted total control of the football side of the club.

Build

But within six weeks Smith has secured one of the top jobs in the lower leagues—beating 40 top applicants including Mike Walker, Ossie Ardiles and Steve Perryman.

"I'm going to be running the football side of the club from top to bottom and that means a lot to me," added Smith. "I was upset to leave Palace but things couldn't really carry on as they were."

Smith has signed a two-year contract at Adams Park and hopes to build on the work of predecessor Martin O'Neill who took Wycombe from the Vauxhall Conference to the Second Division.

He insisted: "This is an ambitious club and there are good times ahead. The thought of going to Bisham Abbey to train really excites me.

"During my time as a coach I've produced around £25 million worth of talent at both Palace and Wimbledon and I'll do my best to develop the local youngsters here."