

WYCOMBE TARGET VILLA MAN



Hyde: Attracting interest

ASTON Villa's Bryan Small is mulling over a move to Wycombe Wanderers after Alan Smith made a £150,000 offer for the defender.

The Blues boss had initially hoped to sign Small in time for tonight's friendly against Southampton at Adams Park (ko 7.45pm). But the 24-year-old former England Under-21 international has not yet made up his mind whether to accept Smith's personal terms.

The Wycombe manager confirmed that he has agreed a fee of around £150,000 with Villa boss Brian Little for the full back, which is £10,000 more than the club's current record acquisition, striker Steve McGavin. But the deal depends on whether Small wants to take a pay cut.

"We've left him to think



Creaser: Released

By CLAIRE NASH

about our offer and I hope to sign him by Tuesday. It's up to him whether he wants to make the move which is a downward move. But it would mean regular football," said Smith at the weekend.

The defender trained with Wycombe last week, but did not play in their last two friendlies - victories at Aldershot (1-0) on Thursday and at Oxford City (3-0) on Saturday.

Meanwhile, goalkeeper Paul Hyde, who missed the City game with tonsillitis, has reportedly been mooted along with Swindon's Fraser Digby as a target for Division One neighbours Reading. Their number one Shaka Hislop is expected to move to Newcastle United in a £1.75 million



Hutchinson: Released

deal this week. But Smith said that Hyde is here to stay, as is triallist Paul Hardyman, for now. The left back has been signed on a free transfer from Bristol Rovers.

Triallist Mark Foran, a Sheffield United defender, joins Hardyman in the squad for the Southampton game.

Smith's squad streamlining has led to the release of stalwart defender Glyn Creaser and injury-cursed winger Simon Hutchinson.

Both have struggled to secure regular first-team places since Wycombe entered the Football League two years ago, but they made notable contributions in getting the club there, which Smith recognised.

"Creaser has been of excellent service to the football club.

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"In my short time here I have become well aware that he is regarded as a very good man, but the facts are that he is 36. I cannot carry anybody for sentimentality," he said.

Smith said that Hutchinson, a 25-year-old former Manchester United apprentice, was not up to the standard he wanted and added that he has not been impressed by

many of the triallists' performances in friendlies thus far.

Smith wants to make the most of what he's got and has offered Blues' popular veteran Simon Garner a new year-long contract after telling the 35-year-old to cut out beer and cigarettes.

The former Blackburn Rovers legend, who remains the Premiership champions' record goalscorer, has not taken offence to being

ordered to give up his staple diet.

He said: "The club have made me an offer for the next 12 months. I will think about it over the weekend, but it's looking good."

Garner reminded Smith that he can still look good on the pitch by scoring the best of Saturday's three goals at Oxford City - his second in two games.

Garner looks likely to be superb, though, with McGavin and

Miquel Desouza, who is almost averaging a goal a game since his injury-interrupted arrival from Birmingham, leading the way up front.

Smith wants Wycombe's long-term injured - Terry Evans (shoulder), Keith Ryan (knee), Simon Stapleton (knee) and Gary Patterson (back) - to get fit again, preferably as soon as possible, before cutting any further swathes into his squad.

He has not signed Charlton midfielder Peter Garland, who was on the verge of joining Wycombe just before former Blues boss Martin O'Neill went to Norwich.

Smith is wary of completing the deal because of doubts over Garland's fitness with a recurrent groin injury. But he added that he has not ruled out signing the player altogether.