

Confident Smith lays down law

WYCOMBE Wanderers players are primed to crack on with their Division Two quest against Bristol City tomorrow, believes boss Alan Smith, after dismissing suggestions that his dispute with goalkeeper Paul Hyde has affected team morale.

Smith is unhappy that the Hyde situation – with the transfer-listed stalwart having been dropped and replaced by Ben Roberts on loan from Middlesbrough – threatens to overshadow Blues' job in hand which is to get a convincing victory under their belt.

"I don't think it's affecting the players at all. I get the feeling among the players generally in training that the spirit's fine," said the Wycombe boss yesterday.

He revealed that Slough Town are the only club to have made an offer for Hyde. Smith said that the Wycombe goalkeeper is not interested in moving to the Conference club.

Although Hyde requested a transfer, the goalkeeper explained that he did it because he wanted to extend his contract.

"If Paul Hyde has the right to come in and see me, then so would stalwart players like Dave Carroll, Steve Brown, Matt Crossley and Keith Ryan.

But Smith said: "This has caused me a problem I had not foreseen I would have."

Smith believes that Roberts, Middlesbrough's 20-year-old reserve goalkeeper, is a more than adequate replacement for Hyde. He is

REPORT By Claire Nash

not unduly concerned about whether he will need to extend Roberts' loan at the end of the month, buy another goalkeeper, or the fact that the club is entitled to just one more on-loan player during the course of this season, after also bringing in Wimbledon striker Gary Blissett.

He is more concerned, however, that Wycombe have not won in six games, their last league outing at Wrexham ending in a 1-0 defeat. Blues were down to ten men after Jason Cousins was sent off.



Roberts: New goalkeeper

The club is now preparing to appeal after television footage showed that the player did not hit Wrexham's Peter Ward with his elbow. Smith believes it was the game's turning point.

He is confident that Wycombe will put their recent dip behind them. He said: "I really do believe there are more pluses than minuses at this club. The players are working hard in training, but they have got to translate this on the pitch, particularly at home."

Smith believes that City will come for a draw. Wycombe's Steve Brown is serving the second of a three-match suspension.

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Fans say dispute is sad

WANDERERS fans believe Paul Hyde and Alan Smith are both to blame for the disagreement between them.

Bob Officer, chairman of the Independent Supporters Club, said: "It's a great shame bearing in mind what Hyde has done for the club. The most worrying thing is that it got to this stage."

"It's not good for the rest of the team either. The team spirit there was before seems to be lacking. Although I feel for Hyde, Smith is the manager and he had to manage and at the end of the day he has to go with the way he feels."

"Smith has been in the game

a long time. Hyde has obviously put his back up. They're both to blame in a way."

Hyde's replacement Ben Roberts and on loan striker Gary Blissett are set to make their home debuts against Bristol City tomorrow.



Home debut: Blissett

■ **Jason Rowbotham's** fee for his transfer from Raith Rovers was set at £40,000 at a tribunal in Manchester on Monday. Rovers wanted £100,000.

Moussaddik – chucked

BLUES' reserve goalkeeper Chuck Moussaddik was released from the club because he did not figure in the club's plans, said boss Alan Smith.

"I need somebody who can play first-team football on a regular basis," the Wycombe manager commented this week.



Moussaddik: Bitter

Moussaddik, meanwhile, is bitter about

his departure from the club.

He said he felt he had been messed about after having to cut short a tour with the Moroccan national side only to find out he was no longer needed.

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■ **Blues News** returns to the Bucks Free Press next week.

To mark the Wanderers publication's re-launch, the first 50 people who take a copy of Blues News into Wanderers In Town next Friday will receive a pair of tickets for their game against Shrewsbury on Saturday, December 23.