

Smith starts to wield the axe

REPORT

By Claire Nash

ALAN Smith's team rebuilding plans at Wycombe Wanderers begin in earnest today when he informs the players he no longer needs that they are surplus to his requirements.

Smith is set to release a good many of the 12 players whose contracts end next month. But he has confirmed that he has offered new terms to midfielders Dave Carroll, Steve Brown and Keith Ryan.

"Those three have performed pretty well all season. I want to keep the better players, not get rid of the nucleus of next season's squad," said the Blues boss yesterday.

Wycombe bowed out of their Division Two season in 12th place on 60 points. Smith said after last Saturday's final game, a 2-1 defeat at Bristol Rovers, that he wanted to wait until he had spoken to those on his not-wanted list before releasing their names.

The manager's biggest close-season problem, though, will be succeeding in bringing in his own, and ideally better, players with no money.

Smith is not unduly concerned that some of those players still under contract are unlikely to attract attention from other clubs to boost the coffers.

But he did admit that it doesn't help. "It's difficult but they are the facts. I have seen a lot of games and have certain players in mind who I would like to bring here, but it is down to the finances," he said.

Smith confirmed his priorities are a goalkeeper and strikers.

Wycombe chairman Ivor Beeks has confirmed that the club's resources are limited, and added



In good spirits: Alan Smith shares a joke with captain Terry Evans in Blues' final training session

that they are looking to the new £1.8 million 5,000-seater stand for a cash infusion.

"We have not got a great deal of money to play with. We are looking to other areas for our resources. Once the stand is up and running, we hope it provides a positive cash-flow," he said.

New additions to Blues' squad are likely to arrive between when

training resumes on July 12 and when the new season begins on August 17.

Meanwhile, Smith hoped that his appearance at last week's independent supporters' club meeting will help smooth his rocky relationship with the Blue Army.

"Perhaps some good will come out of it. Views were stated. I'm always happy to communicate if

people have a legitimate grouse."

Blues reserves won the Doxhill President's Cup with a 2-0 win at Fulham in Wednesday's final.

Defender Terry Skiverton scored both goals in front of a 600-strong crowd containing more than 100 faithful Blues followers.

Wycombe: Cheesewright, Stevens, Hardyman, Cousins, Skiverton, Stapleton, Lawrence, Solomon, Desouza, McGavin, Harkin. Subs: Markman, Hall, Wright.