

LOYAL RYAN'S RISK

Midfielder says no to Leicester as Wycombe sign new goalkeeper

By **CLAIRE NASH**

WYCOMBE Wanderers midfielder Keith Ryan has turned down the chance to go to Premiership newboys Leicester City to stay with Blues.

The lionhearted 26-year-old dynamo was not happy with terms offered to him by former Wycombe boss Martin O'Neill, believing they would amount to no more than playing in the reserves, and has taken an admirable gamble in plumping for first-team action with Blues instead.

He said: "I didn't want to be a poor relation at Leicester. I didn't want to go there because of my relationship with Martin O'Neill. I want him, or any other manager for that matter, to come in and buy me and show faith in me.

"I appreciated his offer. I hoped that I would have been pushing for a first-team place there. But I don't think that would have been likely, not for my lack of trying. I would rather play first-team football with Wycombe instead."

Ryan's impressive act of loyalty saw him sign a new two-year deal yesterday, the midfielder believing that if both he and Wanderers perform to their potential in Division Two next season, there will undoubtedly be further offers coming his way from big clubs.

But it is still a considerable risk for the Wycombe stalwart to take. Manager Alan Smith and Blues fans will not be complaining, however, with Ryan's resigning following hot on the heels of the arrival of new goalkeeper Brian Parkin.



Making his mark: Blues midfielder Keith Ryan signs on the dotted line

The 30-year-old has been signed on a free transfer after being released by Bristol Rovers at the end of last term. The new addition puts a first-choice goalkeeper on Blues' books for the first time since Paul Hyde left at the beginning of the year.

Smith underlined his respect for Parkin, who he knew while he was at Crystal Palace, after Wycombe drew 1-1 with Bristol Rovers at Adams Park last November. Parkin made a string of impressive saves in the encounter. "My old players keep coming back to haunt me," said Smith at the time.

Blues supporters will remember Parkin from his ballooned clearance to Dave Carroll in the FA Cup three seasons ago when the midfielder went on to score.

Palace exchanged Parkin, together with a hefty fee, for Rovers' Nigel Martyn in 1989.