

# Waddle joins Blues battle

## REPORT

By Dave Peters

CHRIS Waddle has issued a 'come and get me' plea to Wycombe Wanderers chairman Ivor Beeks through the Bucks Free Press.

Waddle's call comes as former Southampton boss Dave Merrington joined the growing list of those interested in becoming Wanderers' new manager.

Merrington, surprisingly sacked by Southampton last year despite keeping them in the Premiership, is now looking to manage again after settling his compensation wrangle with the Saints.

He said: "I'm considering the Wycombe position and weighing a few things up. It interests me."

Waddle, meanwhile, is the latest big name player alongside Ray Wilkins, Cyrille Regis and Neil Webb, to express his interest.

Waddle, who has already got his assistant lined up, spoke to the Free Press on Tuesday and asked us to pass his telephone number onto Beeks.

But while Beeks took his number he was surprised that both Waddle, who wants to be a player/manager, and Wilkins have asked to be head-hunted rather than apply for the job themselves.

The club advertised the post in last Saturday's Daily Mail and has already received more than 30 serious applications. They hope to start interviewing next week.

Beeks said: "I will take Chris Waddle's number from you but it slightly worries me when potential managers decide that Mohammed has got to go to the mountain instead of the mountain coming to Mohammed."

"Surely if the position is of such interest to them they could manage a telephone call or letter. I don't understand why people wait until we contact them."

Waddle said: "Wycombe know where I am. It is a job I'm interested in and if they want to speak to me I want to speak to them."

The 35-year-old, a former Newcastle and Spurs player, has 62 England caps.

# Beeks ready to take time

**Continued from back page**

Waddle added: "Player management would suit me. I've got a good number two ready to help me and I've kept myself fit and ready to play."

"I believe you can get out of the second division playing football. Swindon did it and Crewe have had a lot of success playing some really entertaining football."

After the Alan Smith fiasco, Beeks is determined to get the right man at the helm this time and warned fans that an appointment might not be made until the end of the month.

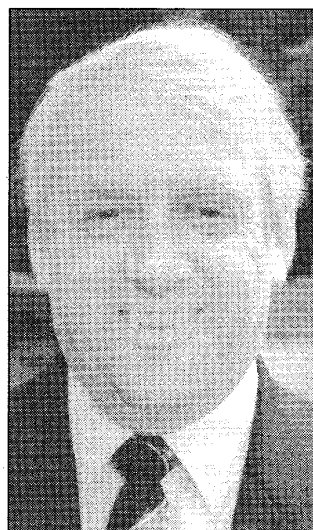
He praised caretaker boss Neil Smillie for giving them the time to get it right.

He said: "The fact that Neil's on two games on the trot takes the pressure off us making a quick decision. He has given us breathing space and if we get anything out of Saturday's game will give us a bit longer."

"I said to Neil right at the very beginning that I wanted him to take over as caretaker coach for a month or until such time as we've appointed a new manager."

"Neil's cv will be what he does over the next few weeks but at his moment in time I've asked him to do a job for us and he's doing just that. If things progress and Neil deals with the situation in a manner which the board feels brings him into contention then certainly they will look at it in that light."

But it looks as though Smillie will have to keep on winning if he is to get the nod over the other



**Taking his time: Beeks wants the best man**

candidates because Wycombe have been impressed by the quality of applications they have received.

Beeks said: "I am very excited about it. We've turned the paper over and we've got a clean sheet to start with."

"The quality of the people who have applied gives us a great opportunity. There are obviously a lot of experienced people who view Wycombe Wanderers as a job that's worth having and it would be wrong of me to give their identities away."

"We aren't a football club that changes its manager every five

minutes and the next appointment will be one we expect to last for a long time."

Wycombe say they are not restricted to just looking on football's scrapheap of unemployed people for their new manager. Beeks insists they are prepared to pay compensation to another club if they feel they have to poach from elsewhere to get the right man.

Beeks said: "If he is the right man for this football club I don't think the issue of compensation will play any part. What we are about is making the right choice for Wycombe Wanderers."

■Wanderers' Terry Skiverton was on stand-by to join the England training squad at Bisham Abbey last week as Glenn Hoddle suffered a mini-injury crisis.

The England coach was short of bodies for a practice match and his assistant John Gorman phoned Wanderers to see if they could help out.

Blues caretaker boss Neil Smillie said: "John Gorman phoned asking if we had any players just coming back from injury and for a while it looked as though Terry might be able to help out, but in the end they did not need him."

Skiverton said: "I would have loved to have gone. It would have been a great experience for me to play against people like Shearer."

■Wycombe's new £2 million Servispak stand will be open to the public on Monday, October 21, from midday until 9pm.

First team players will be on