

Could Read be the man to save Blues?



Magic man: Paul Read does his juggling act against Crewe

WANDERERS striker Paul Read has dreamed of being a star of the Highbury stage since he was a lad, but right now it looks like the former Red could be making the dreams of Blues fans come true instead.

Read was the goal-hero again last Saturday, with his third in four starts for Wanderers since he joined from Arsenal in a deal worth £130,000.

At this rate Read could play a vital part in helping Wanderers avoid their worst nightmare – relegation. With goals a rare thing at Adams Park this season, the 23-year-old is like a breath of fresh air and he admits he is loving every minute of it.

After Saturday's victory Read, who was Arsenal reserves' top scorer for three successive seasons, said: "I see each goal I score here as proving a point to Arsenal. I feel a bit aggrieved that I never got the chance to prove myself."

And Blues boss John Gregory just cannot stop singing the praises of his new signing, who scored an impressive 23 goals in 26 games for the Arsenal reserves two seasons ago.

"He has got that goalscorers' instinct. You could blindfold him and spin him round six times and he would still point to the goal," said Gregory.

Read always believed he would make it at Highbury. He joined the Premiership club's youth side when he was ten-years-old, signing up with them on their YTS scheme when he left school, making

REPORT

By Sharon Walter

Arsenal all he has ever known.

"I set all my dreams on playing for the first team and having a really good career with them."

But despite his impressive reserve team record, Read began to realise it wasn't going to happen for him with the Gunners.

"I had been on a week-to-week contract with them since last summer. After it became obvious I was not going to get into the first team, I wanted to free myself up for other teams.

"Don't get me wrong, I had a great time there, I learnt a lot from the coaches," he added.

But the chances of ousting the likes of Ian Wright looked near to impossible: "Without being big headed, I think that could have been the only thing [the quality of Arsenal's first team strikers], I could have done the job."

But if he was close to a nobody at Arsenal, he has found it completely the opposite at Adams Park.

"It's nice to score goals and get all the glory but at the end of the day there are ten other players who have set up the chances for me.

"But that's one of pleasures of coming from Arsenal, I haven't been used to the attention that I have been getting recently.

"I just want to keep on getting the goals, but it's nice to get the compliments."

And Read reckons there are other advantages to being with the Blues: "At a big club you have pressure seven days a week. It's a little bit more relaxed here you can really get on with your job."

Read, who has signed a two-and-a-half year contract with the Blues, insisted there is no difference on the training field: "The training we do is Premiership training and the facilities at Adams Park are not second division."

The striker still believes he can get back into the top flight, though, and will use Wycombe to do it if necessary.

"I don't know how long I will be here. Obviously I will use Wycombe as a learning base and to get seen. But if it means that I stay at Wycombe the whole time and go nowhere else then I am happy with that." Now there's a comforting thought for Blues fans.