

Folan winner keeps kids on the Cup double trail

By David Groves

Palace Juniors 1
Wycombe Juniors 0

WING wizard Tony Folan scored a great goal to put Peter Nicholas's Palace Juniors in the final of the Southern Junior Floodlit Cup in Wednesday's semi-final replay at Selhurst Park before a crowd of 420.

His wonder strike set up a two-legged final against Liam Brady's Arsenal youngsters as the Eagles kids kept on course for a historic cup double as well as the South

East Counties League Second Division championship.

Wycombe's juniors, managed by former favourite Neil Smillie and assisted by ex-Palace and Wycombe boss Alan Smith's son Matt, provided an early scare when an Alan Beeton header struck the crossbar.

But two minutes into the second half Folan made a decisive run in from the left and hit home an unstoppable 16-yard shot before being mobbed by his delighted team mates.

They are back at Selhurst Park on Thursday next week for the first leg of their FA Youth Cup semi-final against Blackburn Rovers. "This is the big one and I hope everyone will get behind the lads so that we can take a lead to Ewood Park," said Nicholas. They play for a place in the final against either Luton or Leeds United.

Palace - Ormshaw, Hibburt, Carlisle, Kennedy, Wozzley, Mullins, Stevens, Graham, Martin, Morrison, Folan. Subs: Kendall, Sears, Loughran, Clarke, Evans (not used).

Smillie's boys do Wanderers proud

NEIL Smillie was beaming with pride after his youth team were beaten 1-0 by Crystal Palace in the Southern Junior Cup semi-final replay on Wednesday.

Palace, top of the South East Counties Second Division and already through to the semi-final of the FA Youth Cup, now meet Arsenal in the final.

Smillie said: "I'm proud of everyone of our lads. They're a credit to themselves. We've played Palace three times in a week now (including Saturday's drawn 0-0 game) and one goal separated us.

"The Palace side had eight players who have been signed on as professionals and only three first year trainees. I came through the youth ranks at Palace 20 odd years ago with Kenny Sansom, it's well established. Our scheme is two years old and I think it is fantastic that we've been able to compete with them. We gave a very good side a real fright."

Manager John Gregory believes part of the reason for the youngsters success is that a lot have already been turned down by clubs.

He said: "For people like Lee Allen who was released by Tottenham this is a second chance and they are determined to make the most of it."

● Wanderers are calling on fans to continue backing the Blues.

Boosted by the club's Quid-a-Kid scheme more than 6,500 fans, the second biggest gate of the season, roared the Blues to victory against Shrewsbury. The attendance beat the Nottingham Forest cup gate and was second only to Watford's visit.

Keith Scott said: "They were fantastic and they can play a big part."

Assistant boss Richard Hill added: "We need everyone to get behind us. They played a very important part and we need them to do that again."

Goalkeeper Martin Taylor said: "They were superb. I was really surprised by the fantastic reception they

gave me."

Some 342 fans braved the holiday traffic jams to get to Bury on Easter Monday. But while that was good the Blues need more. Struggling Peterborough took 1,000 to Notts.

John Gregory said: "It would be brilliant if we could get a good turnout at Luton on Tuesday. We really need them there. We had 1,400 at Watford and I was gobsmacked by that."

● WWISC is running coaches to Tuesday's all-ticket match at Luton, departing from Wycombe 6 Cinema at 5.30pm. To book ring (01494) 524341.

● Assistant manager Richard Hill became the 49th player used by the reserves this season when he came on as sub as a strong side came from behind to win 3-1 with two goals from Anthony Clark and one from Paul McCarthy on Wednesday.

The result extended Wanderers' 14-game unbeaten run in the Capital League and kept them in second place two points behind Peterborough who have played one game less.