

Hero Ryan's call of duty

KEITH Ryan was Wanderers absent hero as the Blues celebrated their great escape with a champagne party on the coach home from Stockport.

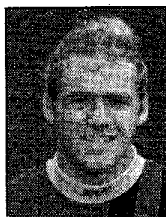
Rhino, 200 miles away in Shrewsbury, gave the signal for the party to start as he phoned the Blues dugout to tell them that Shrewsbury had lost 2-0 against Preston and that the Blues were safe.

Ryan, armed with his mobile phone was sent to Shrewsbury's match while Terry Skiverton was sent to Rotherham to report on York's progress there. Either York or Shrewsbury had to lose to keep Wycombe up.

Ryan said: "Shrewsbury hit the woodwork twice in the first half and were all over Preston and I could tell Hilly was biting his nails when I told him the bad news.

"But as soon as Preston scored I was jumping out of my seat and on the phone to Hilly. I was in the middle of the Shrewsbury fans so I don't know what they must have thought of me jumping up and down and shouting into my phone, but I didn't care I was just happy to pass on the good news."

As the second half wore on and Skiverton came through with the bad news that York were two up at Rotherham, Hill became more worried that Shrewsbury would equalise.



On call: Ryan

REPORTS

By Dave Peters

Hill said: "I kept looking at the phone beside me saying please don't ring again. Then with four minutes to go I rang Keith. He said it was still 1-0 but that it was all Shrewsbury and that they'd had corner after corner.

"Then he said 'oh hang on a minute Preston are on the break, they've just scored.' I said go home son, we're safe."

As Wanderers' match at Stockport finished, Hill ran onto the pitch relaying the good news from Shrewsbury. The players hugged each other in celebration and ran over to the far side to celebrate with the 700 Wycombe fans.

Jason Cousins collapsed on his back, Keith Scott threw his shirt into the crowd and Paul McCarthy wore a huge grin.

Sponsor Derek Vere gave every player a bottle of champagne as they boarded the team coach for a happy journey home.

Chairman Ivor Beeks driving back down the motorway rang the team coach and sang 'We are staying up' at manager John Gregory down the telephone.

Hill said: "Ryan and Skiverton played a very important role for us. They have been very much a part of what has happened.

"But it wasn't Preston that kept us up. We did it ourselves with the games we won this season."

Gregory said: "I'll be ringing Gary Peters (Preston boss) to say thank you."