

Wanderers reject goes from nought to £75,000 in six months

Blues miss the pay day

NON-LEAGUE Farnborough Town look set to embarrass Wycombe Wanderers by cashing in on teenage reject Martin Rowlands.

Nottingham Forest, Wolves and Reading are all chasing the 18-year-old midfield terrier who was released by Wanderers boss John Gregory last summer.

Farnborough manager Alan Taylor says he will start the bidding at £75,000 for a player Wanderers let go for nothing last summer. As of yet, though, no club has made him an offer.

Rowlands is proving Wycombe wrong after they let him go. He has bounced back and is now one of the hottest properties in the Vauxhall Conference.

Taylor said: "I would be very surprised if Rowlands is still with us at the end of the season. He's attracting a lot of interest at the moment. Nottingham Forest have been to our last three games. He's been excellent for us. He's played 24 out of 28 Conference games for us this season and there aren't many 18-year-olds who are able to do that."

Farnborough could also cash in on another former Wanderers youngster, 18-year-old Neil Baker.

He quit his YTS scheme at Adams Park last year because he was struggling to adjust to full-time training, but according to Wolverhampton Wanderers' clubcall this week the Molineux outfit are now lining up a bid for him, which would give him a second chance.

Taylor said: "We would be looking at £75,000 for each of them."

But, while there was little Wanderers could do to persuade Baker to stay, it is Rowlands being chased by a

REPORT By Dave Peters

trio of first division clubs that could haunt hard-up Wanderers.

Rowlands was part of Neil Smillie's successful youth team squad which reached the Southern Junior Cup semi-final last season but was squeezed out when it came to contract decision day last summer.

He was the odd one out as Gregory went for Alan Beeton, Mo Harkin, Gary Wraight and Aaron Patton to join his professional squad – and the first three of those four have all broken into the first team this season.

If letting Rowlands go does prove to be a mistake Wanderers will not be the first club it has happened to. Tottenham Hotspur did not fancy Graeme Souness as a youngster and Manchester United famously rejected both David Platt and Peter Beardsley.

Boss John Gregory was unavailable for comment.

● Wanderers managed to hold Division Two moneybags Fulham to a goalless draw last Saturday.

Gregory admitted: "It was Harrods against the corner shop and we showed there's still plenty of life in the corner shop."

The Wycombe boss may have been happy after the clash, but earlier he had been angered by comments from former Blues boss Alan Smith in the matchday programme.

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● Blues defender Nicky Mohan could make a comeback tomorrow, when Wycombe take on Blackpool at Adams Park, after being sidelined by his one-year-old daughter.

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Big loss: Blues reject Rowlands could fetch £75,000 for Farnborough