

Smillie extends Harkin's contract to keep Premier clubs at bay

Hands off our Mo warns Blues boss



Twinkle-toes: Maurice Harkin is set to continue tormenting defences in the Wanderers cause

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BLUES boss Neil Smillie signed Irish youth international Maurice Harkin on a long-term contract to warn off two Premiership clubs who had been sniffing around the twinkletoe teenager.

Harkin is now tied to the Adams Park club until 2001 while fellow youngster Alan Beeton has also signed an extension to his contract keeping him at Wanderers until June 2000.

That means that if any big club tries to poach them, Wanderers will be protected by a transfer fee.

Smillie said: "I haven't actually had any bids for him but I know there are a lot of other clubs looking at him including a couple of Premier League clubs.

"I don't want to sell him. He's an exciting young player."

And he warned potential poachers that they would have to beat the £1 million Blackburn paid Gillingham for 17-year-old Jim Corbett this summer. That deal worked out at a £525,000 down-payment with an extra £475,000 winging its way to the Gills when Corbett has played 25 first team games.

Smillie said: "For me that is the

yardstick. Mo has played more first team games than Corbett has for Gillingham."

Meanwhile, Dave Carroll and Steve Brown have ended speculation about their futures by signing new two-year deals to stay at Adams Park.

The out-of-contract midfield duo put pen to paper last week and will report back for pre-season training with the rest of the squad on July 1.

Carroll, Wanderers' longest serving player, had been expected to sign but the signature of Brown was a big relief to the Blues boss.

Third Division champions Notts

County had wanted to sign Brown and three other clubs were reportedly interested.

Smillie said: "I'm delighted to sign Brownie and Carroll again. They are valuable members of our side. John Cornforth and Michael Simpson were brought in by the previous manager to replace them but they have ended up in the side before them under both me and John Gregory."

All four of the players have signed on the club's new performance related deals which were thrashed out by previous boss John Gregory and chairman Ivor Beeks.