

Wanderers draw Boro for money spinning cup clash

Blues face Gazza & Co

REPORT

By Dave Peters

PAUL Gascoigne is set to play at Adams Park after Wanderers were dealt a glamour Worthington Cup second round tie against Premiership Middlesbrough.

Blues will travel to The Riverside on Wednesday, September 16 (ko 7.45pm) and then entertain Bryan Robson's men in the second leg at Adams Park on Tuesday, September 22 (ko 7.45pm).

Boro have reached the final for the last two years, and as well as Gazza, their squad also boasts Paul Merson and Gary Pallister.

Blues boss Neil Smillie said: "It's a fantastic draw and it will be a real adventure for us to play them.

"It's a chance for us to enjoy ourselves and earn some money. It is just the reward we deserved for knocking out first division Swindon in the first round."

The draw could hardly have been kinder to Wanderers as it offers them a real chance to earn Smillie some money to spend in the transfer market.

Boro regularly sell-out at their Riverside Stadium and Bucks fans should be queuing up to see Gazza and company in the second leg at Adams Park.

And the good news for Blues is that, unlike in the league, they will receive a share of both the home gate and the away attendance. Under Worthington Cup rules each club will receive 45 per cent of the nett gate.

Blues have promised, for their part, to charge normal Nationwide League match-day prices and to keep the programme price the same.

As well as providing Blues with a cash bonanza, the draw also rekindles memories of one of Wanderers' finest hours – when, as a non-league club, they took first division leaders Boro to a replay in the FA Cup third round in 1975.

Blues drew 0-0 at Loakes Park and then lost 1-0 to a last-minute goal in front of more than 30,000 fans at Middlesbrough's old Ayresome Park stadium.

Boro and Wanderers were last out of the hat when the draw was made live on Sky television on Wednesday night. But boss Neil Smillie missed the draw. He was watching Chelsea reserves, scouting for a new midfielder.

The home leg tickets go on sale today.



WANT-AWAY: Michael Simpson has had his transfer request accepted by Blues boss Neil Smillie who has found it difficult to accommodate the 24-year-old midfielder in his first team plans at Adams Park. Report: Page 111