

Ryan's new injury blow

Blues captain out until Christmas

REPORT

By Dave Peters

WYCOMBE Wanderers unluckiest player, captain Keith Ryan, will not play again until the New Year after suffering fresh injury heartbreak.

Jinxed Rhino, who has already lost two years of his career with successive knee injuries, notched an unwanted hat-trick when he collapsed after an aerial tussle one hour into Monday's match at home to Bristol Rovers.

And this week devastated boss Neil Smillie confirmed: "Keith is unlikely to be back before Christmas."

But the good news is that unlike the two previous occasions, when he ruptured his cruciate ligament to put his career in doubt, this time it is the medial ligament in his right knee, which is less serious.

Ironically the 28-year-old midfielder, who is now on crutches, was the victim of his own courage this time.

Smillie hadn't expected him to play at all over the bank holiday weekend as Ryan had turned his ankle in the Walsall game.

He was nowhere near fit enough to make the squad at York on Saturday but was so determined to help Blues get their first points of the season that he put on a heavy strapping for Monday's visit of Bristol and declared himself fit to play.

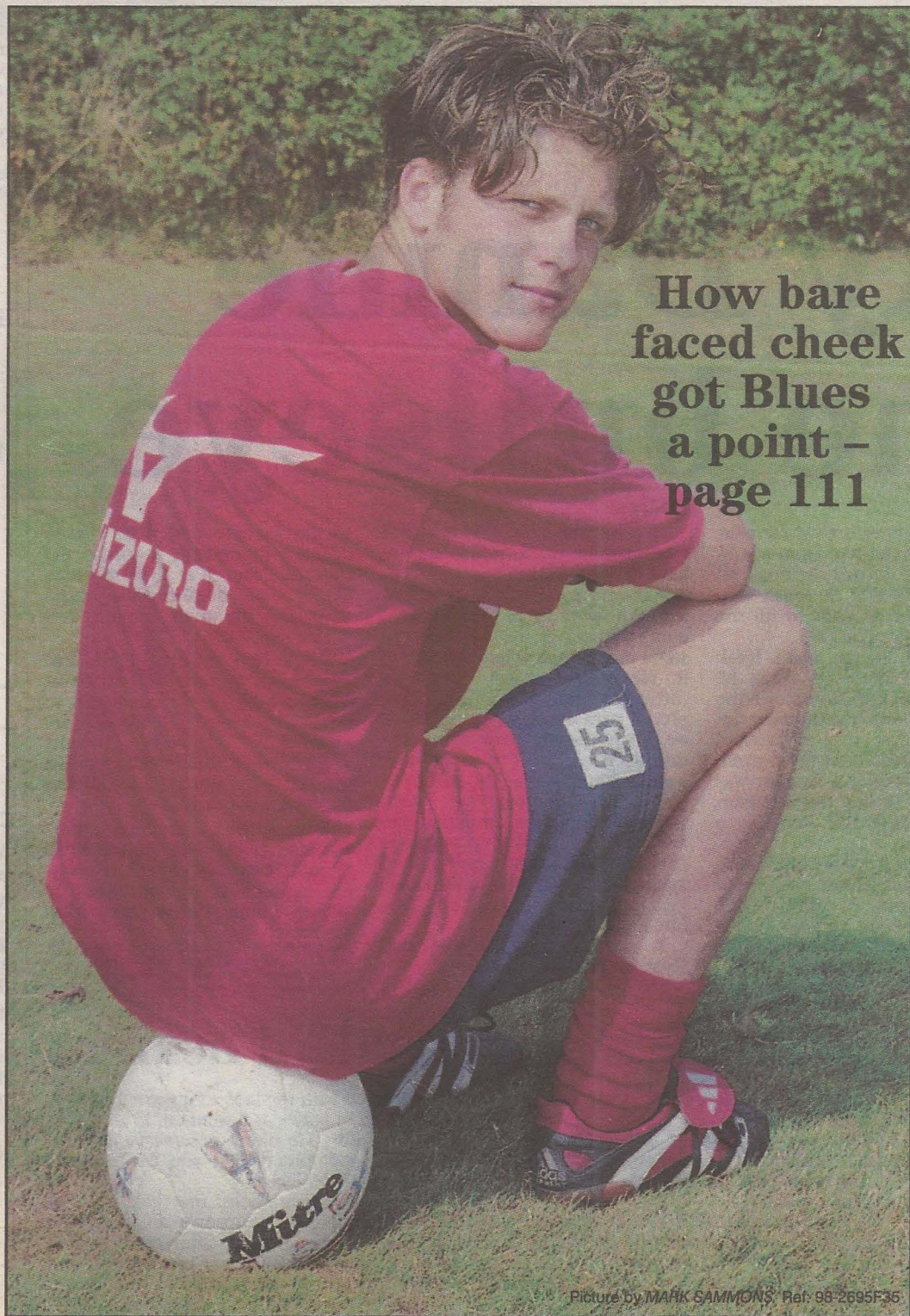
Ryan said: "I made the decision to play with my ankle on Monday and perhaps it would have been better if I hadn't now."

Smillie added: "Keith was at the back of the queue when good luck was given out. He didn't deserve that."

"He put himself on offer to play with his ankle and then this happens to him. It is a massive blow to us."

Smillie admitted that Ryan's injury has made the search for new players all the more urgent.

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