

Blues bring Matt back

MATT Lawrence could be back in Wycombe Wanderers colours when the Blues entertain Notts County at Adams Park tomorrow.

Manager Neil Smillie has spent the last two days locked in talks with the former Wanderer and is confident he will sign from Fulham in time to play tomorrow.

Blues sold the 24-year-old to Fulham for £30,000 two years ago and have had to up the ante in their bid to bring him back.

Smillie said: "We've had to offer Fulham more than we sold him for but he's a much better player now. When we sold him he wasn't a

REPORT

By Dave Peters

footballer but he's been coached by people like Kevin Keegan and Ray Wilkins and he's a footballer now.

"He was Fulham's young player of the year last season and has played more than 60 games for them. He's a quality player with energy and enthusiasm."

Lawrence, who has lost his place at Fulham and did not play for them in their midweek win over Wanderers, is keen to return to Adams Park.

Smillie persuaded Lawrence, who

can play anywhere at the back or in midfield, to return on a three year deal after convincing him that other new players are on the way.

The transfer has been on the boil for a few weeks now, but has been held up by a couple of hitches.

Fulham delayed it because they did not want Lawrence playing against them last Tuesday and then it was held-up by a further 24 hours because Lawrence's agent refused to discuss it on Wednesday because it clashed with the Jewish Day of Atonement - but it will now go through subject to personal terms being agreed.

And Smillie doesn't foresee any problems with that.

But Lawrence will not be joined by his Fulham midfield team-mate Neil Smith.

Fulham agreed to let Smith go as well, but Smith who has lost his place at Craven Cottage, turned down the move and is talking to his former club Gillingham instead.

Smillie has also been frustrated in his attempt to sign Bristol Rovers centre half Andy Tillson. The fee had been agreed but then Tillson injured his knee and the deal is now off because he needs an operation.

The Blues boss has now switched his attentions across Bristol and resurrected his attempts to bring City striker Steve Torpey in on loan at Adams Park.