

Scottie and Smillie play Father Christmas at hospital



The boy done well: Shannon Morris receives a present from Keith Scott and Neil Smillie after his tonsil operation

Ref: 98-4016F21

CHILDREN at Wycombe Hospital were cheered up by a visit from Neil Smillie and his team on Monday. The players went armed with

presents bought with money out of the club's fines kitty and a whip round from the players.

Jermaine McSparran was the last player to

top up the fines box when he was caught answering his mobile phone in the Adams Park reception area last Saturday.

Happy holidays – you'll be training

WANDERERS players will train on Christmas morning unless boss Neil Smillie has a last-minute change of mind.

He has told the players they will be in for about an hour tomorrow morning, although Smillie has hinted that a good session today could swing a change of heart.

Smillie said: "The boys are down to come in on Christmas Day. They'll probably come in a bit earlier and do about three quarters of an hour. Christmas is not a holiday period for footballers, it's a very busy time of year and Christmas Day training keeps them in the routine."

Last year, the players spent the day at home with their families as previous manager, John Gregory, played the psychological card.

He thought that giving the players Christmas at home would motivate them into producing a good performance on Boxing Day and it worked as Blues held Watford 0-0.

The methods may be different, but the situation is similar this year. Blues are still at the wrong end of the table while Walsall are joint top.

With Andy Baird out injured, man of the moment Jermaine McSparran will continue the striking duties up front alongside Keith Scott.

Blues can expect a tough

afternoon. Second-placed Walsall are the division's surprise package and have been completely turned round by new boss Ray Graydon since Blues beat them 1-0 at the Bescott Stadium on the last day of last season.

He has spent just £35,000 transforming the team that was comprehensively outclassed by Wanderers last May. That cash went on defender David Greene, who was a Wycombe target in the summer. The rest of Graydon's signings have been freebies. But the lack of cash has not hindered them. They are level on points with leaders Fulham and would have gone above Kevin Keegan's multi-million pound outfit

if they had scored just one more goal last Saturday.

Walsall will make one change from the side which beat Stoke. Centre half Ian Roper is suspended. Adrian Viveash will come in if he got through yesterday's behind-closed doors friendly with Birmingham.

It will be a big day for Wanderers defender Chris Vinnicombe who could have joined the Saddlers this summer but chose Wycombe instead.

Walsall beat leaders Stoke 1-0 in front of a record Bescott crowd of over 9,000 last week to make it seven league games unbeaten, and six of those have been wins.