

Boss scores a hat-trick

Baird, Westhead and Cousins to stay on

STRIKER Andy Baird is set to give Blues boss Lawrie Sanchez a massive boost by signing a two-and-a-half year contract, the Bucks Free Press can reveal.

And 23-year-old reserve goalkeeper Mark Westhead will make it a double celebration for the Wanderers boss by putting pen to paper on his two-and-a-half year deal.

Sanchez, who committed skipper Jason Cousins to the club for three more years last week, is delighted to complete his hat-trick.

He said: "I want them both to stay."

Baird had been stalling all season on signing a new deal after admitting that interest from first division clubs Bolton and Portsmouth turned his head. But he says the arrival of Sanchez was the main reason in his decision to stay at Adams Park.

Baird said: "The new gaffer has been the deciding factor. There's something about him. He's changed things at the training ground and the players are enjoying it a lot more."

"It's been quite a transformation. He's got high expectations and different ideas and has given us self-belief."

Baird says he will sign the new appearance-related deal although there are a few minor complications still to be sorted out.

Sanchez said: "I think it's in his best interests to stay here at the moment and if he's good enough he will get his big move later."

Meanwhile, reserve goalkeeper Westhead has also decided to stay on and fight it out with Martin Taylor

REPORT By Dave Peters

for the first team spot.

Westhead said: "I was first offered the contract in October by Neil Smillie and didn't sign it but now the new boss has come in I've got another chance to prove myself."

"He's willing to take a chance on me and I want to repay his faith."

And Sanchez will continue his team-building for next season by offering leading scorer Keith Scott a new contract when his current one expires this summer, the Bucks Free Press can reveal.

Sanchez said: "I would like to keep Scottie here next season and I've made that plain to him."

The boss has also made a move for Bristol City's utility player Matt Stowell as he bids to stamp his own influence on the Adams Park set-up.

Sanchez has offered to take over the last 18 months of Stowell's Ashton Gate contract, but only if the west country men are prepared to lose the £15,000 they paid Slough for him, and let him go on a free transfer.

Stowell has played two reserve matches for Blues in midfield and at centre half, where he looked particularly impressive against Brentford a fortnight ago.

Sanchez said: "He wants to come and join us and if we can get him on a free we will take him."

In the short term, Sanchez is trawling the loan market and hopes to make a move before the deadline.

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Staying: Andy Baird will be signing a new contract