

BLUES STRUCK BY MENINGITIS

Players told to stay home after virus fells Beeton

WYCOMBE Wanderers cancelled a pre-season friendly in Ireland at the eleventh hour after Blues' player Alan Beeton was struck down with the potentially fatal meningitis bug.

Twenty-year-old Beeton was rushed into an isolation ward at Watford General Hospital after contracting the viral strain of the disease, which is the less serious of the two types of meningitis.

As the seriousness of his condition emerged, Wanderers immediately cancelled their tour to Dublin in case any of the other players or staff showed signs of the illness and the club's medic ordered all players and staff to stay at home. They were even advised not to kiss their

By **DAVE PETERS**

wives or girlfriends for 48 hours, the incubation period of the disease.

Beeton, who is expected to be released from Watford General tonight, said from his hospital bed: "I was so scared I thought I was going to die. When I came into hospital I couldn't even talk and it felt as though there was a bomb going off in my head."

Club spokesman Alan Hutchinson said: "We had to cancel the trip. We didn't know at that stage whether anyone else was infected. It would have been totally inappropriate to go."

Beeton was struck down by the terrifying disease less than 24 hours after he had played a full



Serious: Alan Beeton

90 minutes in Wanderers' pre-season match at Marlow last Tuesday.

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Beeton's dad tells of fear for 'spaced out' son as virus strikes

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He was on his way to the following night's match at Oxford City when he complained of a violent headache and was taken home by Blues' groundsman Jim Gardner.

Beeton's dad, also called Alan, said: "We were really panicking. He looked awful, really spaced out, he said he had a blinding headache and was cold. He said he could feel every heartbeat going through his head."

The following day they took him to the doctors and within hours he was referred to Watford

General Hospital where he was given antibiotics to tackle viral meningitis.

Mr Beeton said: "He was burning up. He had a raging temperature. They isolated him on a ward and that really scared us. Meningitis is one of those terrible things and we feared the worst."

Despite the cancellation of Saturday's match, some 50 Blues supporters made the trip to Dublin for the friendly match which had been arranged against Bohemians.

Beeton's dad added: "I feel disappointed for all the fans who paid out to go to Ireland and so

will he. Alan will be gutted the trip has been cancelled because of him."

Beeton is now out of danger and is expected to be allowed home today.

He was the only player affected, although Wanderers had another scare when midfielder Martyn Lee was sick twice last Wednesday, and defender Nicky Leach was referred to his GP but in both cases they were minor illnesses.

Lee said: "When I heard about Alan I was a bit scared but luckily I was alright."

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