



VISITING BLUES: Children at Wycombe Hospital got an early Christmas present on Monday when Wanderers players rolled up with gifts. The youngsters benefited from the club's fines system, which the players have to pay into for various offenses. This year the Blues collected £180 in fines, which was converted into Christmas presents for the kids.

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Wanderers stick with fab four

BLUES boss Lawrie Sanchez has insisted a flat back four will be Wycombe's preferred option this season after seeing his battlers pick up a point at Bristol despite finishing with just ten men.

The Wycombe defence were a revelation in the goalless draw at Ashton Gate, Jamie Bates in particular, and it was enough to convince Sanchez that 4-4-2 is the best option for Blues.

He admitted afterwards: "We're a 4-4-2 team and that is the way we'll play."

"At times, through circumstances, we've played three at the back, but I think in a 4-4-2 everyone has a specific job. No one gets lost."

Sanchez decided to opt for four at the back after admitting that his side looked more comfortable in that formation. Blues had played five at the back in the 2-1 defeat against Millwall the week before mainly to accommodate Gary Ablett, Jason Cousins and the returning Bates.

But the favourite formation paid dividends at Bristol last Friday night.

Wycombe looked in real trouble when they lost striker Andy Baird with 20 minutes to go. He was sent off for the first time in his career following two yellow cards.

His first arrived when he came off worse in a clash of heads with City's Shaun Taylor which saw the Wycombe striker needing four stitches.

His second came when he slid into Peter Beadle just as tempers were beginning to flare after Beadle had stamped on Blues midfielder Steve Brown.

Afterwards Sanchez branded the sending off as laughable.

Moments before Baird's dismissal, Beadle reacted to a Brown foul by stamping over the Wycombe midfielder in an incident which saw both booked.

The next 60 seconds got heated and Baird's physical challenge gave the referee an opportunity to try and reaffirm his control.

Losing Baird was just what Wycombe did not need against an impressive Bristol outfit who had already hit the woodwork twice by that stage of the match.

Once through Carl Hutchings' blast from 25 yards and again through exciting on-loan Arsenal youngster Tommy Black.

He was a bag of tricks but Wycombe's defence held firm despite a succession of crosses for him on the right and Brian Tinnion and ex-Wanderer Mickey Bell on the left.

Bell was booed at every opportunity by the travelling fans but he simply responded with a classy display.

With Bristol rampaging down both wings, Wanderers' defence was on overtime. Three times they had to clear off the line.

But it wasn't all one-way traffic.

Wycombe had some good chances and were only denied by the athleticism of City keeper Billy Mercer who dashed off his line to save from Baird, Keith Ryan and Dave Carroll.