

Injury and flu-hit Blues take a much-needed break

WYCOMBE Wanderers are without a fixture tomorrow because their scheduled opponents Gillingham are involved in FA Cup action.

Blues did try to move their home midweek match against Wigan on March 21 forward, but the league leaders weren't interested.

At the time, Wycombe were disappointed but now Wigan's refusal has worked in their favour with the current flu and injury crisis which is sweeping through the camp.

● Gary Goodchild's brave youth team, who were beaten by a late controversial penalty in the fourth round of the FA Youth Cup by Newcastle United at St James Park, did have some consolation when four of their side were chosen to play for the FA Youth team.

Young guns Roger Johnson, Ian Simpemba, Peter Holsgrove and Leeyon Phelan have all been picked for the squad which will face the Combined Services at Portsmouth on Sunday, February 27.

Holsgrove may have to miss out though, as he is currently struggling with an injury.

Their call-ups are a tremendous boost for the youth team who became the first side in Wanderers history to reach the FA Cup fourth round at any age level.

● Teacher Bob Davies came to the Blues rescue at Preston last week by offering them a training pitch at his school.

Davies, who played for Wycombe in the late seventies and early eighties, helped out his old

club by offering them a training pitch at Preston's Broughton High School where he is the headmaster.

● Club statisticians are delving into the record books to see if Matt Brady is the fastest player to score on his league debut in the quarters.

Brady struck just five minutes into his league debut at Preston last Saturday and, although it is still awaiting confirmation, that's believed to be a record.

● The reserves lost 4-3 at Southend on Tuesday with Dannie Bulman, Mo Harkin and Danny Senda on target.

● The Blues travel to Berkshire on February 8 to take on Thatcham in the quarter-final of the Berks and Bucks Cup.

Lawrenson: Blues need to decide if it's buy-buy Devine

MATCH of the Day pundit Mark Lawrenson took time off from his television work to watch his beloved Preston play Wycombe on Saturday and delivered his verdict on Lawrie Sanchez's side *writes Dave Peters*.

The former Liverpool star ended up singing the praises of Blues' 16-goal leading scorer Sean Devine and said Wycombe must now decide whether to cash in and sell him, or push the boat out and buy someone alongside him to take Wycombe onto the next level.

He said: "Devine looked a good player up front. He certainly is capable of playing at a higher level, he's got a lot about him.

"If Wycombe had someone alongside him

they'd win a lot more games.

"I don't think there's a lot wrong with Wycombe. Power to Lawrie Sanchez. He hasn't spent any money this season but he's probably gone as far as he's going to go with what he's got and a decision has got to be made whether to sell Devine and get three or four players in with the money or whether they can buy without selling him.

"They haven't got enough to compete with Wigan, Bristol Rovers and Preston. It's a question of the haves and have nots. You can only get so far with free transfer players."

Wycombe currently stand on the precipice of courting a big money backer to invest some

cash in the club and Lawrenson sounded a note of caution as they wait to decide which way to jump.

He said: "It's a big decision. I worked for Robert Maxwell. It was great while things were going well but when there are problems you can be worse off.

"Wycombe fans have to think back to where they were five years ago, they have made really good strides."

He saw Wycombe on a day when all three of Devine's striking partners were missing with Andy Baird out with the flu and Jermaine McSporran and Paul Emblen struggling with long term injuries.