

Rogers: I'm not Matt

ROOKIE right back Mark Rogers has pleaded with Blues fans not to compare him with Matt Lawrence when Wanderers visit Millwall tomorrow.

Rogers was boss Lawrie Sanchez's choice as a replacement for Lawrence when he sold the defender to Millwall for £250,000 last season and the Canadian, who grew up as a centre half, is still wearing L-plates in his new role.

Rogers said: "It's not fair to compare me with Matt Lawrence. He's a very good player and he's been playing right back his whole career. I have nothing but respect for Matty."

"I'm nowhere near as good as him yet but hopefully I can be. Whose to say what boundaries there are. I didn't think I would be playing in England but here I am playing first team football."

Rogers was surprised when Sanchez decided to groom him as Lawrence's replacement and the Canadian, who scored his first career goal in Tuesday's cup disappointment at Barnet, is growing into the role.

He said: "Every game I play I want to improve. I'm getting forward more each game and I'm getting into the role a bit more. I've got to forget about being a centre back and concentrate on being a right back."

Rogers knows he has got to improve his distribution from the full back position.

He said: "The thing with Matty is that he's very good going forward and I know I've got to become more like him."

Rogers certainly isn't fazed by the defensive side of things and after growing up on a diet of ice hockey in Canada he can handle even the most physical of strikers.

He said: "If you get hit by

a 250 pound guy travelling at 60 miles per hour you know about it."

Meanwhile, Lawrence is looking forward to lining up against Wycombe tomorrow as Millwall go into the game on the back of two straight league wins and a Worthington Cup win.

He said: "It'll be strange playing against 11 friends but I'll be treating it like any other game."

"We've made a good start and people are talking about us going up. But it doesn't mean anything yet."

Wycombe have no fresh injury worries going into the Lions' Den but Millwall could be forced to make changes.

Neil Harris last season's top scorer with 25 – and the first man to score 20 in a season for Millwall since Teddy Sheringham – is a big doubt.

Fellow strikers Richard Sadlier and Paul Moody are also nursing injuries, Sadlier broke his arm in pre-season and Moody missed the Brighton match with a groin strain. Winger Paul Ifill is also doubtful with a hamstring injury.

It could all add up to a second game for 17-year-old striker Kevin Branniff who scored on his Millwall debut against Brighton.

Harkin out

WANDERERS, who have named an unchanged side for their first three matches, will be forced to make changes when Luton visit Adams Park on Bank Holiday Monday (ko 3pm).

Midfielder Mo Harkin is unavailable for the clash after being called up to play for the Northern Ireland Under-21s.

His absence could mean a first start to the season for Stewart Castledine, Wanderers' summer signing from Wimbledon.



Familiar face: Matt Lawrence faces his old club this weekend

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