

Blaster Bates says Blues should chip in goals from all parts of the field

JAMIE Bates has his sights set on scoring more goals after his dramatic double killed-off Bury last Saturday and fired Wanderers back into the promotion picture.

The veteran defender smashed home a free kick and then powered in a last minute header to give Wanderers a 2-1 win and the points, after Bury had equalised from the penalty spot.

And Bates reckons Wanderers need more goals from people like him if the Blues are to continue their charge towards Division One.

Bates said: "If we had Sean Devine fit this season we would walk this league. But he's not going to play so the rest of us are going to have to chip in with goals."

Bates, 32, won promotion to the first division with Brentford in 1992 and he reckons the only difference between Wanderers and that Bees

side is in the striking department.

He said: "When we went up at Brentford we had Dean Holdsworth who scored 30 goals for us in a season. Sean would have done that for us if he was fit."

But Bates believes Wanderers can still scrape enough goals together to stay up there in the promotion frame.

He said: "If me and the some of the others can come through with a few goals there is no reason why we can't go up. We're as good as that Brentford team."

"There's still a long way to go this season but I think we can go up. The spirit here is fantastic and there is nothing wrong with our commitment."

"When I first came here 18 or 19 months ago the boys were dreading putting on the shirt but now everyone is confident. We're going into games believing we can win them."

Wanderers' new-found spirit was evident last Saturday when they overcame a crippling injury crisis to sink Bury.

They were without nine players through injury or suspension and despite conceding an 81st minute equaliser from the penalty spot, Bates headed a late winner from Michael Simpson's corner.

Bates has now scored four times this season – three in the league and one in the cup – and his brace silenced his biggest critic – manager Lawrie Sanchez.

Sanchez said: "For some reason Batesy seems to be the one that gets my goat up a little bit, probably because his body language is so laid back that when he does muck up I sometimes think that he doesn't feel it as much as Macca or Cousins who wear their heart on their sleeves. But he does."

"He's come in for a few roastings

off me but the fact that he plays every week is an indication of how highly I regard him.

"I sometimes pull my hair out with him because I think he can be the best defender in this division. He's got everything, but sometimes he's sloppy."

"We talk about Sean Devine and Andy Rammell being the most important signings but Batesy coming in on a free transfer was just as important."

On Saturday, Sanchez mistook Bates for Rammell when he headed the winner.

He said: "He took his header like a centre forward. I honestly thought it was Rammell who had scored."

Bates said: "People may think I'm laid back but it's just confidence that comes from playing 600-odd. I might be a bit laid back in training sometimes but I'm always focused on Saturday."