

Blues hopefuls blow big chance to shine at Boro



Under fire: Peterborough found a way through Wycombe's defence three times last Saturday

BLUES boss Lawrie Sanchez gave his fringe players the chance to stake a claim for a first team place at Peterborough last weekend and then watched them blow it.

He made seven changes from the side which knocked Wimbledon out of the FA Cup four days earlier and then looked on in disbelief as they turned a two-goal lead into a 3-2 defeat in just 20 minutes at London Road.

He said: "I gave people chances and they didn't take them. The one thing it has proved is that we are not strong enough in depth to challenge for promotion."

He says he is now closer to deciding which players he wants to keep and which will go at the end of the season.

He said: "I know in my own mind who I want to keep and Saturday's result confirmed a few things.

"There were chances there for people who haven't been playing to become an integral part of it, but if anything it proved that I need the ones who are injured to come back and play."

Sanchez rang the changes with the FA Cup quarter-final at Leicester on March 10 in mind.

He left out Jamie Bates, Steve Brown, Dannie Bulman and Chris Vinnicombe because a booking for any of them would have ruled them out of the Filbert Street tie.

He was also robbed of the services of Jason Cousins and injured strikers Andy Rammell and Andy Baird.

Former Blackburn trainee

John Nutter was handed a debut at left back and there were recalls for Niall Thompson, Mo Harkin and Alan Beeton, who are all sweating on new contracts.

Harkin and Thompson were both substituted as Wanderers under-performed in a match which exploded into life with three goals in three minutes.

Wycombe had hardly been out of their half when they drew first blood with a sparkling Martyn Lee left foot volley which screamed into the back of the net from 25 yards.

Before Boro's on-loan Arsenal keeper Stuart Taylor could dust himself down he was picking the ball out of the same corner again as skipper Ryan caught him off guard from even further out with a daisy-cutter.

But 60 seconds later Wycombe's lead was halved. Paul McCarthy bravely blocked Leon McKenzie's shot but the Posh striker buried the rebound.

The home side levelled six minutes later. Wanderers allowed Dean Hooper's long hopeful cross to bounce in the box and their hesitancy proved costly as McKenzie headed in Boro's equaliser.

Boro completed their incredible fightback with a 34th minute winner and again Wycombe had only themselves to blame.

Ryan completely mis-kicked his clearance and Jason Lee bagged the winner.

Ryan did not come out for the second half as a precaution against a slight groin injury and was replaced by Bates who got through without collecting the

booking which would have ruled him out of the quarter-final.

Blues made their second substitution four minutes later with Stewart Castledine coming on for hobbling Canadian international striker Niall Thompson who was ineffective.

Castledine immediately bucked Blues' fortunes, carrying a greater threat in the unaccustomed position up front than Thompson had managed.

He won Wanderers a second half penalty which should have given them a point but Michael Simpson wasted the opportunity with a shot that was so soft it could have been taken in carpet slippers.

Sanchez said: "Simmo's penalty summed it up. They didn't win, we gave it to them."