

The boss goes for old hands

WANDERERS look set to attack Liverpool with a twin strike force boasting a combined age of 70 next week.

Veterans Andy Rammell and 36-year-old new signing Guy Whittingham are currently in pole position for the two striking places in next Sunday's semi-final at Villa Park.

The squad's senior citizens both showed signs of forming a partnership when they were paired for the first time in Tuesday's goalless draw with Millwall.

Now they will be given the chance to improve on that tomorrow when Blues entertain Wigan at Adams Park (ko 3pm) in their last game before next weekend's big cup match.

Rammell is still not match fit following his five week lay-off with a groin injury but Sanchez believes he and ex-Portsmouth man Whittingham will give Wycombe the best chance of beating the Scousers.

He said: "They've got a combined age of 70 but they've got a lot of good experience and I thought they showed encouraging signs together."

With the exception of cup-tied new signing Chris Marsh, who will play tomorrow but can't play against Liverpool, Sanchez is expected to field the team he will play against Liverpool.

Steve Brown comes back into the side tomorrow after his four-game ban.

And Sanchez is looking for the team to sign off with a morale-boosting win against a Latics side who are clinging onto a play-off place despite a run of eight matches without a win.

They shuffled their pack on transfer deadline day by signing Kenny Dalglish's son Paul on loan from Norwich and recruiting goalkeeper Rafael Nuzzo from Italian club Reggianna.

Sanchez said: "We had a good performance in the week and we need a decent result before we go to Liverpool."

Baird blow – out until 2002

WANDERERS striker Andy Baird won't play again until 2002 after it was discovered that the medial knee ligament injury he picked up in the FA Cup fifth round win at Wimbledon was hiding a much more serious cruciate injury.

The cruciate problem only showed up in a scan on Wednesday and will sideline Baird until the New Year.

The 22-year-old hitman is the third Wanderers striker this season to be struck down by the cruciate curse which used to be described as a career-ending blow until the advances in medical science.

Lawrie Sanchez said: "I can't believe our bad luck. Some clubs go for years without getting a cruciate injury among their squad and we've had three in one season."

Baird will now follow the same long course of treatment that strikers Jermaine McSparran and Paul Emblen have been on.

Baird, who is nicknamed the Crash Test Dummy at the club because of all the injuries he picks up, did at least receive some good news this week when Sanchez told him his contract, which was due to expire this summer, would be extended.

Sanchez said: "We will look after him. I'm not in the habit of discarding injured players. His career has been blighted by injuries and he will be given every chance to get fit and prove himself again."

