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Stags knock back Blues

WANDERERS have had a £200,000 bid for Mansfield Town striker Chris Greeacre turned down, the BFP can reveal.

Blues boss Lawrie Sanchez swooped for The Stags 19-goal hitman after abandoning his plans to sign Northampton Town striker Jamie Forrester.

Sanchez said: "I made Mansfield an offer and they rejected it and I haven't got any more money to offer."

Sanchez switched his attention to the third division club's 23-year-old top-scorer after pulling the plug on the £200,000 Forrester transfer.

He called the deal off after Forrester failed to agree personal terms after more than a week of negotiations.

He said: "We called the deal off. It was not adding up as we

DAVE PETERS

FOOTBALL

thought it would and we are back to the drawing board."

The Wanderers chief was not prepared to threaten the harmony in the dressing room by breaking his wage structure to land the 26-year-old who scored 19 times for the Cobblers last season.

His decision not to meet the former Leeds, Utrecht and Auxerre goal-getter's wage demands has been criticised as unambitious by a section of the Blues support.

But Sanchez hit out at the detractors by revealing that the board are already budgeting for a loss of £750,000 for the forthcoming season to finance a play-off bid.

Sanchez said: "The club are ambitious and the fact that they



On its head: Blues' Greeacre bid was turned down

are prepared to be running that deficit shows we are ambitious

and for fans to say the club aren't is wrong.

"We are trying to run a team to get promoted.

"That's what it costs to run a football club. Reading are running a £4 million deficit this year."

Sanchez was given £400,000 to spend on players this summer, plus some extra for wages, and half of his transfer kitty went on Darren Currie.

He said: "I haven't got the money to muck up. I'm speaking to clubs about centre forwards and I'm also trying to bring in a centre half.

"If we had got Forrester it would have used up all of our money and a big chunk of wages. The deal was too rich for us and we have got to move on."

Sanchez has lodged enquiries about three other players but says he won't be rushed into

anything hasty.

He says: "I'm still looking for players, but whether anything happens before or during the season only time will tell. I can only spend the money once, so I've got to spend it wisely."

Sanchez had another nibble at former Port Vale striker Tony Naylor last week but the talks came to nothing.

The 34-year-old who top-scored for Vale is available on a free but Sanchez could not persuade the ex-Valiants striker to uproot from his Potteries base and would not entertain allowing him to spend half the week in the Midlands and the rest at Adams Park.

He said: "That's not an option. It's not the way to run a professional club. If we did that Paul McCarthy would have wanted to train with Brighton and so on."

Blues offer Holligan year long contract

WANDERERS have offered Gavin Holligan a one-year-deal and the chance to relaunch his career at Adams Park.

The former West Ham striker is thinking over the offer and boss Lawrie Sanchez is hoping he puts pen to paper.

The 21-year-old barged his way into Sanchez's plans with

a first half double at Crawley.

Sanchez said: "We've offered him a year and I'm hoping he will come back and say yes. He's got good pace and a good touch and I'm giving him the chance to prove himself."

Holligan's career went sour after he joined West Ham in a blaze of publicity for £150,000

from Kingstonian two-and-a-half years ago.

He made his one and only Hammers debut against Liverpool at Anfield but then fell out of the picture with injuries and loss of form and was loaned out to third Division Exeter and Orient before he was released in the summer.

Rivals jump queue for Maher

WANDERERS face competition from Luton Town for the signature of Bohemian centre half Shaun Maher.

The third division Hatters have jumped to the front of the queue in the race to sign the 23-year-old by inviting him to play in a trial match for them on Tuesday.

Blues boss Lawrie Sanchez will now watch him in that game before deciding whether to make his move for Maher, whose Bohemian contract is about to expire.

But Sanchez needs convincing, he said: "He's one of the biggest wage earners at Bohemian. He's not a cheap alternative."