

Devine on the bench as Wanderers shoot for cup glory

WATCH OUT HE'S BACK

FOOTBALL
By Dave Peters

WANDERERS travel to Fulham tonight with star striker Sean Devine hoping to come off the bench and dump the Premiership millionaires out of the FA Cup.

Devine made his first team return after 20 months out with a career-threatening knee injury when he came on as a substitute in Saturday's 0-0 stalemate at Wrexham.

He will start on the bench again tonight but assistant boss Terry Gibson would not be surprised to see him come on and mark his return with a goal.

He said: "No-one thought Roy Essandoh would be the hero for us last season but he came from nowhere to win the quarter-final and I wouldn't put it past Sean to do something similar."

Gibson refuses to accept that Wycombe's best chance of glory went last week when Steve Marlet earned the Londoners a 2-2 draw with an equaliser two minutes from time.

He said: "I don't think our best chance has gone. It was obviously very disappointing to draw after being in front but I think we've got just as good a chance as we had in the first game."

"It's going to be very difficult but I still believe we can win it. It's another special night in the club's history. We know we are going to have to work twice as hard as we do in the second division and that we've got to stop their best players from playing."

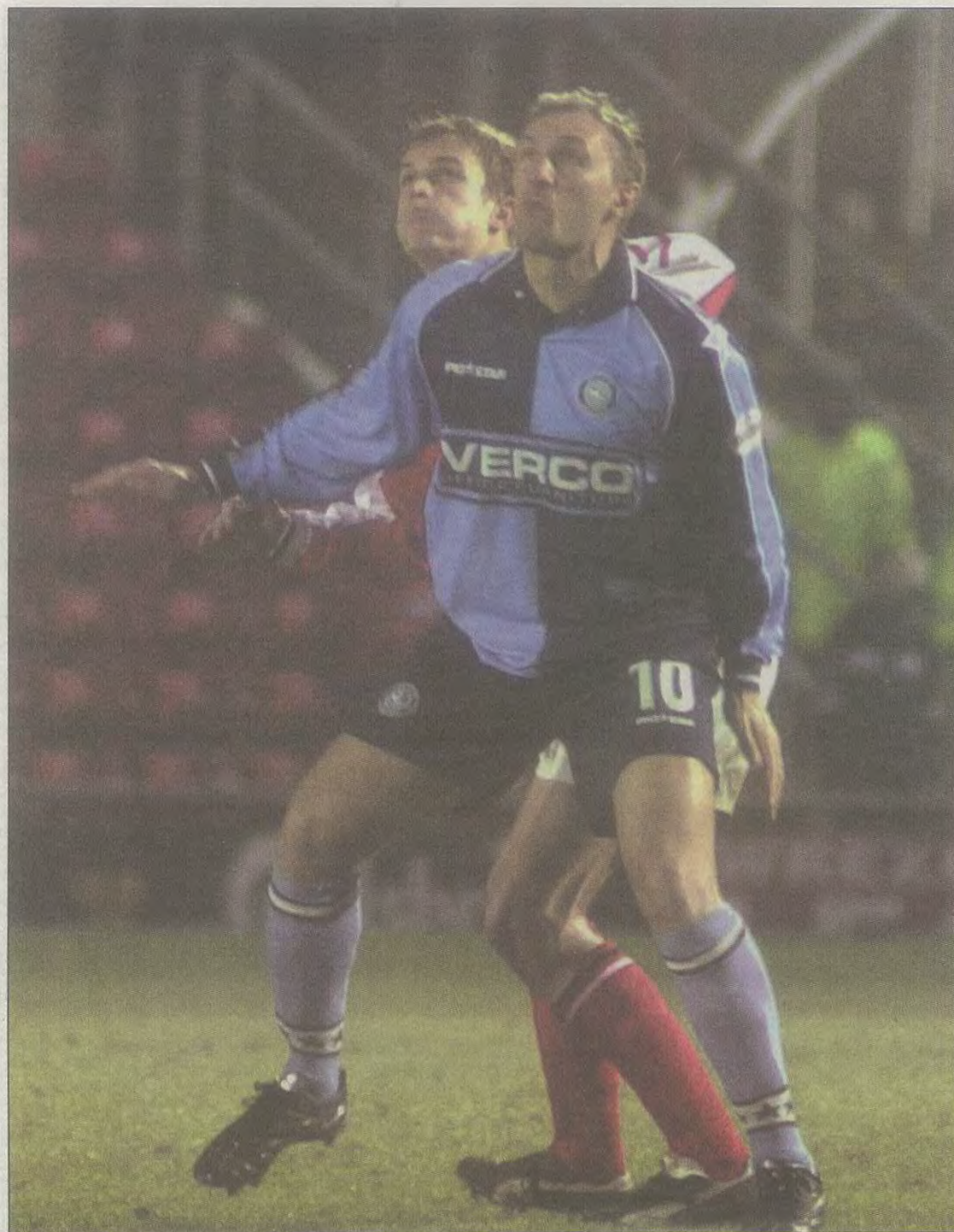
"But if we can keep it to 0-0 with 20 minutes left, I think we have got the players like Sean and Jermaine McSparran who can win it."

Left back Chris Vinnicombe and striker Paul Emblen return to the 18-man squad after their bans but Andy Rammell and Paul McCarthy are injured and Danny Senda is suspended.

Blues' optimism was summed up yesterday when the players practised penalties, confident they can take Fulham the distance.

Tonight's match (ko 7.45pm) is all-ticket to Blues fans although Fulham followers can pay on the night.

At the time of going to press, Wanderers had 200 tickets left from their 3,600 allocation and these are available from Adams Park until 3pm.



The picture every Wycombe fan wanted to see: Sean Devine in action at Wrexham

Carroll is hoping for a happy return

DAVE Carroll returns to Craven Cottage tonight knowing that if things had worked out differently he could have been playing against Wycombe Wanderers tonight.

The 35-year-old walked out on a professional contract with the London club to go to University in America when he was a youth teamer at Craven Cottage.

He said: "I don't regret leaving Fulham. I had the chance of going to university in America and I chose to do that instead - but I came back home after a couple of weeks."

"I made my choice. I had played in the reserves a few times and I thought I would go to America because I thought I would regret it otherwise."

"I don't regret what's happened. My career has worked out alright. It was one of those things I felt I had to do at the time."

After returning from the United States, Carroll hooked up with non-league Ruislip Manor before joining Wycombe for £6,000 14 years ago.

Carroll, making his first Nationwide League start of the season, was the star of Saturday's 0-0 draw at Wrexham even though he was playing in the unaccustomed position of right back in place of the suspended Danny Senda.

Senda is suspended again tonight and Carroll is expecting to retain his place as Wanderers aim to cause the shock of the third round by knocking the Premiership side out on their own patch and earning a trip to York City or Grimsby Town in round four on Saturday, January 26.

Carroll told the BFP Midweek: "I hope I'm playing. It will be great to go back to Fulham and even better if we get a result."

"I don't think there will be anyone there from when I was there as a kid but it will be a big scalp for us if we can turn them over."

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