

# Wasps deal gets closer

RUGBY giants Wasps have formally asked the sport's authorities for permission to play at Wycombe next season.

The BFP has learned that they have applied to Rugby England Limited for permission to play their home matches at Adams Park next season and that the financial side of the deal has now been all-but sorted.

In an exclusive interview, Wasps director of rugby Nigel Melville revealed to the Free Press that it is now a question of dotting the i's and crossing the t's and sorting out details such as catering contracts.

He said: "It's with the lawyers at the moment. I hope we can get it sorted within the week. Prices and money is not the huge issue."

Wanderers will be given £250,000 up front by the rugby club to help fund the cost of a new pitch and undersoil

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RUGBY

heating.

The Blues will then receive £300,000 rent in the first year and £312,000 in the second year - with Wasps having the option of extending the contract beyond that.

In addition, Wanderers are currently negotiating a lucrative percentage of the extra food, drink and car parking income which a top-flight rugby club would generate.

Melville said: "I would love to come to Wycombe. It's a fantastic stadium in a strong rugby area."

"If Wycombe are going to get a better pitch and we are going to get a good pitch, we are both winners."

"I want to play on a good surface with good facilities and a good crowd

and Wycombe can deliver all of these."

Wasps have been forced out of their current tenancy agreement at Queens Park Rangers' Loftus Road ground because Fulham Football Club gazumped them.

Rangers accepted a seven-figure sum from Fulham to groundshare next season forcing Wasps to find alternative accommodation.

Wycombe is Wasps' first choice although the BFP has learned that they have also agreed a back-up plan with arch-rivals Harlequins should their plan fall through.

Wasps fans say moving to Quins is as unthinkable as Spurs sharing with fierce rivals Arsenal.

Wanderers have already had a steady stream of Wasps followers checking out their facilities at Adams Park and the Wycombe Wanderers' safety certificate already includes rugby.



**Nigel Melville**