

Direct play's the right way

Sanchez says the new system is playing to Blues' strengths

LAWRIE Sanchez has hit back at critics of his long ball game and told fans it's here to stay.

The Blues boss refuted their claims that it's boring and pointed to the nine goals his side have rattled in during their first five games.

Wanderers slammed four past QPR on Bank Holiday Monday as they got lift off with their first win of the season.

And Sanchez said that even in Saturday's 3-0 defeat at Bristol City – the only match where Wanderers have failed to score – his side created enough chances to have snatched a draw instead of sinking to their first defeat of the campaign.

He said: "All we're doing is

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FOOTBALL

playing to our strengths. We've got good forwards at the club now.

"We're capable of scoring goals, what we're trying to do is to get the ball to them early and make sure they see plenty of it during a game."

Some fans have been quick to brand Sanchez a route-one merchant this season because of his background with long ball specialists Wimbledon, but Sanchez says it is not just his former club who have been successful by pressing the fast forward button.

He said: "A lot of people talk about a lot of stuff. I

watched Manchester United play against Chelsea last week. Man United get the ball forward quickly but no-one mentions that.

"The proof is in the pudding. All we're attempting to do is to get the ball from back to front as quick as we can and to get crosses into the box on a regular basis."

He says the new tactic has only come undone because of uncharacteristic mistakes at the other end of the field.

He said: "Whatever system you play it doesn't legislate for you defending badly. You've still got to defend well and we haven't done that this season."

The direct approach reaped its rewards with a rash of goals in the blood and guts clash

against QPR, when all three strikers netted, but Sanchez insists that it also worked as an attacking weapon in Saturday's defeat at Ashton Gate.

He said: "We got done 3-0 but we've created more goalscoring opportunities in a 3-0 defeat than we did sometimes when we were losing 1-0 or 2-0 last year."

"The biggest thing we've got to do is to stop the goals going in at the other end."

Sanchez kept his side locked in the dressing room for more than an hour at Ashton Gate after seeing his defence torn to shreds by City.

Defender Chris Vinnicombe said: "Everyone had their say. It was constructive rather than heated.

"We were trying to iron out a few things and make certain that everyone knew and did their jobs.

"The balls from back to front haven't always been of the certain quality that the strikers need. Sometimes it's too short or too long for them.

"We need to work on it and make sure we get the ball in the right channels.

"It's collective responsibility. We haven't been keeping clean sheets and keeping goals down to a minimum. That was our strength last year.

"We know we've got things to work on and stopping goals is one of them and we will work hard on the training pitch to iron it out."

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