

Carroll is a Celtic man



Celtic star: Dave Carroll

DAVE Carroll achieved a boyhood dream when Martin O'Neill let him play the last five minutes for Celtic in the Jason Cousins testimonial on Tuesday.

Scottish-born Carroll grew up supporting the Hoops but thought his chance of ever playing for them had long gone.

But O'Neill handed Carroll his big chance after he had turned out for Wanderers in the first half.

O'Neill said: "His mother asked me and I was absolutely delighted to oblige. Davey would have been too shy to ask for that.

"Davey has been a Celtic fan for a long long time. He always used to talk about them when he was playing for me, especially ten minutes before he was going out to play for Wycombe."

And Carroll was thrilled by the gesture.

He said: "As a kid I always wanted to play for Celtic and now I have fulfilled a lifetime ambition. It was unbelievable to be out there playing for them. It is something I will never ever forget."

And O'Neill was delighted to oblige, also paying tribute to the players who helped give him such a bright start to his cv.

He said: "I think that Jason Cousins, Dave Carroll, Keith Ryan and Steve Brown from the early days have proved themselves over a ten year period from almost the minute I arrived here.

"I'm delighted they've had great careers and that they ended up playing in an FA Cup semi-final which is absolutely fantastic. When we got promoted from the Vauxhall Conference to the Football League, they all took drops in wages. They were doing two jobs semi pro to become professional players and that says everything about them.

"They are a credit to themselves and to this football club."