

Devine deal hits a snag

SEAN Devine's £80,000 move to third division Exeter City was hanging in the balance last night after the Grecians only offered him an 18 month deal.

The 30-year-old – who came off the bench to score two goals in Saturday's 3-1 win over Port Vale – wants another year on top of that before uprooting his family and moving west.

Exeter are prepared to shatter their 22-year-old £65,000 transfer record to land Devine, who they see as the key to third division survival.

They have offered him an 18-month deal with an extra one-year option. But Devine, who says he never wanted to leave Wycombe, wants the extra 12 months guaranteed before

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signing.
He said: "I want two and a half years and that's the only blip. I don't want an option, I want something concrete.

"Nothing has been finalised yet. I've left it with my agent."

A decision is expected on Monday.

Devine added: "Everything Exeter had to say seemed good. It sounded quite promising and I was very interested in what they had to say."

The hitch will be good news to Wanderers fans who are planning a Save Our Sean protest at tomorrow's second division game at Cheltenham.

They are furious that Wanderers are prepared to sell their

record scorer, who has shot to the top of the club's scoring charts again this season with eight goals.

But Blues insist it is good business for a player, who is one of 12 Blues players whose contract expires in the summer – and he could leave for free then.

Devine has been in and out of manager Lawrie Sanchez's side since recovering from a career-threatening knee injury which robbed him of 18 months of his career.

Sanchez said: "In the current football climate it's a fair bid for someone whose contract is running out.

"I cannot promise Sean anything beyond the end of the season and if someone like Exeter can, then he's got to look at

it. It is in his lap."

Chairman Ivor Beeks revealed there has been a backlash from angry fans, but insists it is a good deal.

He said: "We didn't go looking to sell Sean but we have received a very good offer for him and if he hadn't scored those two goals on Saturday it wouldn't have created such a fuss.

"In my time at Wycombe I've always tried to act in the best interests of this club and this is no different.

"But the fans see me as some great ogre who is selling the club's silverware.

"It's all very well for people to get upset but you have to look at the position in the cold light of day.

"In the current climate it is a

lot of money for someone who is out of contract in the summer."

Earlier it had looked that the deal might hit a hitch because Devine wanted a sweetener to leave the Blues, but he has now decided to waive any demands for a pay-off.

Devine said: "I've never wanted to leave Wycombe. I love it here but if the club want to cash in on me, I've got to accept that. If I'm not wanted here, I've got to look after my family and my future."

Devine signed for Blues in a record £220,000 deal in 1999 and in the following season he set a new Wanderers scoring record with 23 league goals.

His record stands at 46 goals in 93 starts for The Chairboys.

More Wanderers: Page 12