

Sanchez calls for more of the same from his miserly defence



Winging it: Keith Ryan looks like a natural wingback

WANDERERS' new-look mean defence will put their miserly reputation back on the line against championship-chasing Oldham tomorrow

The Blues have not conceded a goal in open play this year since switching to a back five and manager Lawrie Sanchez is looking for another lock-out as Blues chase their first double of the season.

But the re-shaped Wanderers rearguard can expect their sternest examination so far. Second placed Oldham – with former Chesham United players Fitz Hall and Wayne Andrews in their ranks – arrive boasting a proud unbeaten away record in the league this season.

And they have harvested maximum points from their last three away-days with victories over Crewe, Chesterfield and Tranmere.

But after seeing his charges end Bristol City's 19-match unbeaten run on New Year's Day, Sanchez believes the Blues can torpedo Oldham's run providing his defence stay mean.

Sanchez said: "We've done well since the turn of the year because our defence have given us a chance. Changing to five at the back has made us much more solid. Before the New Year we were 2-0 down in

matches before we started but now we are much tighter and I'm always confident we will score goals."

Sanchez will send his famous five Danny Senda, Keith Ryan, Roger Johnson, Andy Thomson and Mark Rogers back out again tomorrow with the instructions to keep it blank during the first half and then hope that the rest of the team will do the business at the other end.

The return of towering teenager Roger Johnson at centre back along with the splendid form of veteran Keith Ryan as a makeshift wing back have been pivotal to Blues defensive revival.

Sanchez said: "They've both done very well in there. We've seen Roger do the job there before but Rhino has done brilliantly in a new position."

Sanchez originally brought in specialist left back Ijah Anderson on loan to cover for the injured Chris Vinnicombe but Rhino's performances in that position have been better than anything Anderson produced there in his short spell at Adams Park.

Sanchez will name the same side that drew 0-0 at fast-improving Mansfield, providing Dannie Bulman shrugs off his foot injury.

The midfield scrapper

missed two days training this week with a bruised foot which he aggravated during last week's draw at Field Mill.

Bulman said: "It's painful kicking the ball. There is a lot of bruising but I'm hoping to play. I would say it is seventy-thirty in my favour."

Wanderers go into the game chasing their first double of the season having beaten Iain Dowie's men 2-0 at Boundary Park in August but Sanchez says that counts for nothing tomorrow.

He said: "I wasn't impressed with Oldham when we won up there but they've gone on a tremendous run since."

"They will come down here with a lot of confidence. Our reports say they can be an aggressive side who are very effective at counter-attacking."

"Even though we are at home we cannot chuck everything at it. We must get to half time without conceding."

Oldham will be without top scorer Clive Wijnhard but they have brought in giant Stockport striker Ben Burgess on loan instead.

Former Chesham striker Andrews is available after suspension while a host of Premiership scouts are expected to watch former Meadow defender Fitz Hall, now rated at £2 million.