

Williams: I'm ready if Frank is not fit

LAWRIE Sanchez has given rookie keeper Steve Williams a vote of confidence ahead of tomorrow's Nationwide League curtain raiser against Stockport – and the young stopper has insisted “I won't let you down.”

The 21-year-old reserve – who was considered too inexperienced by the gaffer to face Spurs in the first

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pre-season friendly – is standing by to make his league debut against County hotshot Luke Beckett and Stuart Barlow, a habitual tormentor of Wanderers.

Sanchez will delay naming his team until lunchtime today to give first choice stopper Frank Talia more time to prove his fitness.

Talia trained alone yesterday, while the rest of the squad rested up, but Sanchez will not risk him if he has not recovered from the neck injury he picked up in front of supporters at the club's open day.

Sanchez had hoped to play Talia for the reserves in their 2-0 defeat against Orient in a specially-arranged match at Brisbane Road on Tuesday, but Talia wasn't ready.

Tom Gott kept goal

instead while Williams stayed with the first team.

Sanchez said: “I will decide on Friday but I will be quite happy to play with Willo.”

He's done everything I could've hoped for. Having left him out against Tottenham because I didn't think he was ready, he's come in and done very well.

“He hasn't looked out of place at all and when he's been called upon to make saves he has and he has put himself in the frame.”

Sanchez brought in 44-year-old ex-England goalie Dave Beasant to face Spurs but Willo has proved his worth since that snub.

He shutout Aylesbury, then upstaged England number one David James in the 3-1 win against Watford again and then made it three wins out of three for the first team in last Saturday's 2-1 win over

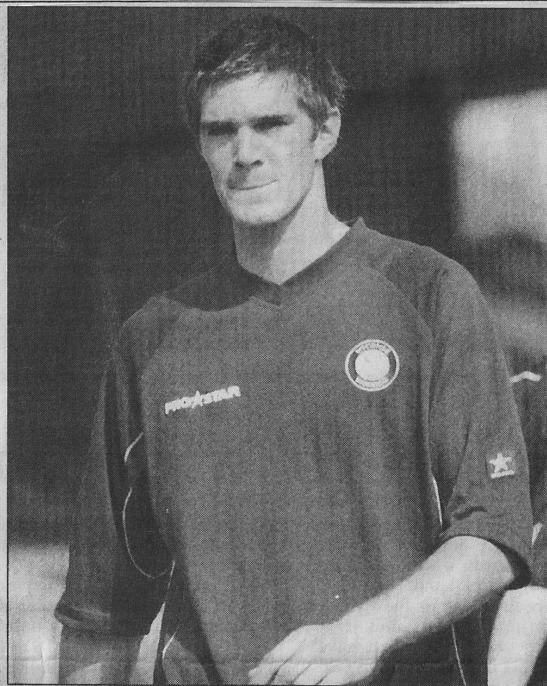
first division Watford.

He said: “I feel ready for it. I have played well in the pre-season games and if I get the chance on Saturday I'm sure I won't let anyone down. This is what I've been training for and I will be ready if I'm called upon.

“I have been trying not to think too much about it but it would be fantastic if I do get the chance to make my league debut on Saturday.

“Stockport have got some very good strikers but I've played against Jermaione Defoe, Freddie Kanoute and Bruce Dyer in pre-season and if the defence help me like they have done in the games so far then I'm very confident I can do a decent job.

“The pre-season games have given me a lot of confidence and I'm definitely up for it. I know I have got the ability.”



Ready and waiting: Steve Williams