

Bell tolls for hotshot Blues triallist Andy

TRIALLIST Andy Bell staked his claim for a Wanderers contract when he scored his fourth goal in two appearances for Blues reserves.

The former Blackburn trainee and England Youth striker followed up his hat-trick for Wanderers against Colchester last season by heading home Wycombe's second in Wednesday's 4-2 defeat against Reading in the Pontins Combination Cup.

The young hitman, who is also interesting Bournemouth, will sit down with his agent Mel Eves and manager Lawrie Sanchez this weekend.

Sanchez said: "He knows where the back of the net is and he has got a knack of scoring goals."

"He's been brought up at Blackburn in a very good academy and that stands out."

But Wanderers have an abundance of strikers with Jonny Dixon, Craig Faulconbridge, Richard Harris, Billy Harding and on-loan Simon Patterson and with limited resources Sanchez still needs more convincing.

He played Bell again in a full-scale practice match yesterday.

It has taken Wanderers longer than they wanted to have a second look at Bell.

After his hat-trick last season they invited him straight back to play in another reserve match but he had to pull out with food-poisoning. Then they planned to give him a first team

DAVE PETERS

WANDERERS

run-out in pre-season but he had to cancel after picking up a hamstring injury.

Bell, whose father Norman was a goal-grabber for Blackburn and Wolves, proved he is a chip off the old block as he smacked a fierce first half shot against The Royals crossbar before heading in Lewis Cook's corner as Blues battled back from 2-0 down.

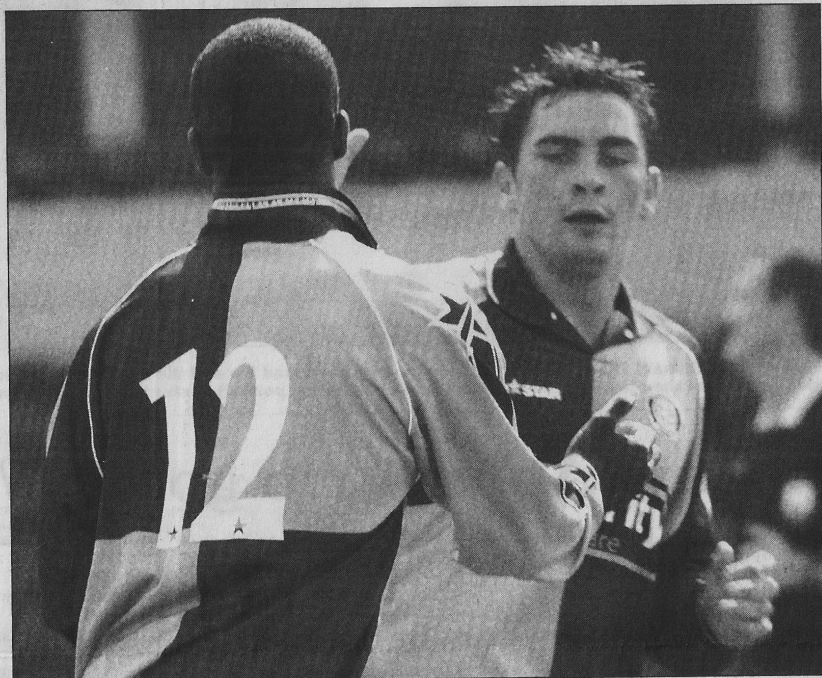
Reserve team boss Peter Cawley said: "He did himself a lot of good out there. He knows where the goal is and his movement is good."

Bell, who scored 12 goals in 13 starts for the Premiership Blackburn's youth team before his release last season, helped haul Wanderers back into the match after they had looked down and out at 2-0 down against a classy Reading side whose pace ripped Wycombe apart.

Jamaican international Omar Daley put the visitors ahead inside five minutes with a blistering shot beyond Frank Talia after a deft back heel saw him beat his defender.

Nathan Tyson then made it two on 16 minutes clipping the ball over the onrushing Talia as the Division One side threatened to run up a cricket score.

But Gavin Holligan, on as a substitute for the crooked Jonny Dixon, pulled one back from close range after a horrible mix-up in the Reading defence before Bell levelled things up.



Goaldeen boy: Andy Bell takes the plaudits from Blues' other scorer Gavin Holligan

Reading re-asserted their supremacy in the second half with two goals in ten minutes from Andre Fashanu.

He netted his first with a thunderous shot on the turn which shrugged off Andy Thomson and then got his second after collecting a crossfield pass from Ahmet Rifat and

steering the ball past Talia.

Cawley said: "When we were 2-0 down I was pleased to see the positive response of our team but after that we became ragged all over the pitch and made too many poor decisions."

"The team needs to be mentally tougher and we've got to become hard to beat."

Wycombe: Talia, Senda, Warner, Simpember, Thomson, McClurg, Cook, Dixon (Holligan 15), Bell, Roberts, Brown. Not used: Paul Palmer, Harding, Gott

● Wanderers reserves will travel to Southend United on Wednesday for their opening Pontins Combination fixture. The match has been brought forward from February.