

Simpemba eyes first team

IAN Simpemba plans to make up for the disappointment of being left out of the Republic of Ireland team for the World Youth Championships by cementing his place in Blues' first team.

The 20-year-old was gutted to be left out of the Irish squad for the tournament which is currently going on in Dubai, but the blow has been softened by his progress at Wanderers.

He made his debut in the 0-0 draw at Wrexham a fortnight ago and held his place for Saturday's 2-1 defeat against Peterborough which kept Blues bottom of Division Two.

Simpemba said: "I was gutted to be left out of the World Cup. I'd played in all the qualifying games and then when the tournament came around the manager left me and a couple of the other regulars out and went for some of the U21 players.

"I was really down for a couple of days but now I think it could be a blessing in disguise and if I had to make a choice, I would have

chosen to make my league debut."

Simpemba has also been encouraged by a phone call from Republic boss Brian Kerr who used to be his youth coach.

Kerr, is now in charge of the Republic's senior side and didn't have a hand in picking the World Youth Squad, but he phoned Simpemba after his omission and told him to keep plugging away.

Simpemba said: "It was a big boost getting a call from him because he didn't have to do that. He told me that not going to the World Cup was not the end for me and that the U21 manager is keen on me."

Now he is just glad to be involved in Blues' first team.

He said: "I've waited a long time for this. People kept saying my turn would come but I was beginning to wonder if any manager fancied me.

"Now I've had a taste of the first team, I want more of it."

But the utility player, who was farmed out on loan to Woking earlier this season, isn't taking



Ian Simpemba

anything for granted with skipper Michael Simpson due back soon after his ankle injury.

He said: "I know what football is like. The important thing is Wycombe staying up. I hope I can stay in the side but football is all about how many times you pick yourself up after setbacks."

Blues set for international clash

WYCOMBE Wanderers are taking on St. Vincent and Grenadines at 7.45pm on Tuesday, December 16 providing their FA Cup match at home against Mansfield Town tonight does not require a replay which would be played on the same night.

● Wanderers have cut admission prices for Tuesday's LDV Vans Trophy third round match at home to old rivals Colchester United.

The advanced seat prices are adults £10, senior citizens and students £5 and U16 £2. Advanced standing prices are

set at adults £5, seniors and students £3 and U16 £1.

The club is even offering fans the option of an adjacent free kids ticket with every £10 advanced adult seat ticket purchased.

On the day prices range from £8 standing for adults.