

Adams: We must have mental toughness

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WANDERERS

WANDERERS boss Tony Adams reckons his team to be mentally tougher in their fight to avoid relegation, starting tomorrow when they take on Barnsley away (ko 3pm).

The basement Blues have been playing well, securing four draws in their last four games and Adams want his team to add mental toughness to their play.

He said: "Physically they look no problem. I've been working a lot on their mental toughness.

"I think it's an area we need to get stronger.

"They seem very confident at the moment and it's important we maintain that. The mental attitude has got to be tougher.

"I've seen an improvement. They're becoming winners and once you believe you can go onto the football field and win, you will do more often than not.

"It's about communication, individually and as a team.

"It's about me as a manager walking round the guys, giving them little incentives, giving them encouragement, putting my arms round some of those who want to

be loved, though for some of them you need a proverbial stick."

Adams has been impressed with the last month.

He said: "Give me the commitment, the concentration and the standard. I told them this four weeks ago and not one of them has stepped out of line since then.

"I've been pleased with the effort this week and we'll hopefully take that into the game with Barnsley.

"To be honest, it's the first time there's been competition for places. That's all I ever want to make my job difficult and they have which is fantastic.

"Do I leave Dannie Bulman out, do I leave Michael Simpson out, do I leave Steve Brown out? They've done absolutely nothing wrong.

"We were by far the superior team against Luton on Saturday and unlucky not to win it, so it would be very difficult to leave someone out.

"I still will if I think it's the

right thing. That's my call as the manager - it's my head on the line.

"All I've ever wanted is a squad that's making me make decisions, ask me questions and fight for their places which is fantastic.

"I've been very encouraged. It's not been frustrating. I'd have loved for the results to have gone right.

"I've taken enormous satisfaction in the way that they've been doing in the last four games.

"I'm really happy in the circumstances that we're in.

"All I ever want is for me to try and get the most out of them.

"I'm going to continue that for the next 15 games. There's things happening on and off the pitch that's encouraging me.

"There's even a shift in training in the way they work and their attitude.

"I want them to continue the standards from now to the end of the season.

"I've been going 'Performance performance performance'. Now I'm starting to shout out 'Result result result'.

"Football is a cruel game and sometimes you don't get your just

rewards but I'm a great believer in life and if you continue to put in this level of performance, you'll start getting the results."

And Adams reckons Wycombe can get their reward tomorrow.

He said: "We're going to get three points. It's a simple as that.

"They're fighting for the play-offs and beat us 2-1. I watched that game on video and the structure of the team was all over the place.

"Now, we've got the structure organised, become very difficult to break down and I can see us scoring goals. That's the recipe for a successful team for me.

"They're a tough team and they've got some good players."

Barnsley will be hoping to get back after last week's disappointment against Wrexham.

They have Kevin Betsy available after a one-match ban, while Craig Rocastle - cousin of Adams' former Arsenal teammate David Rocastle - is likely to feature on the left side of midfield.

Up front, the Tykes have former Grimsby player Michael Boulding, who has scored against Wycombe already this season,

ex-Notts County player Mark Stallard and Daniel Nardiello, on loan from Manchester United.

Wycombe have Ian Simpemma available after he played in the reserves on Wednesday.

Frank Talia is also due to play in goal after Scott Bevan returned to Southampton from his loan spell.

Adams said: "I had a really good look at Scott but Frank Talia's got another chance.

"I was disappointed initially but in the last couple of weeks, his attitude has been spot on.

"He's worked really hard in training, done well in the reserves and so he gets a chance.

"There's no complacency here. We can't allow people to just turn up and play."

But Keith Ryan and Richard Harris are both injured and will not be considered.

● Jonny Dixon scored twice on Wednesday as Blues beat Aldershot 3-1. Trialist Alex Higgins also scored but Adams is not going to sign him.

He said: "Alex isn't good enough so I shook his hand and wished him all the best."