

I thought call-up was a wind-up

WANDERERS Ian Simpemba thought it was wind up when he was called into the Republic of Ireland U21 squad to play in Poland on Tuesday.

He thought U21 boss Don Givens was Irish team-mate Wayne Henderson playing a joke on him.

Simpemba said: "I was sure it was Hendo winding me up.

"The voice said, 'Hello, Ian, this is Don' and I said 'Yeah right.' I was sure it was someone having a laugh."

But it soon sunk in that the call was genuine and that it was Givens on the end of the line.

The U21 boss had seen Simpemba playing at right back for Wanderers at Brentford during the day and wanted him to join the squad to cover for late withdrawals.

The next morning Simpemba flew out to Dublin before being on the bench for the 2-2 draw in the Polish city of Grudianz in a match in which Blues on-loan Aston Villa goalkeeper Wayne Henderson was between the posts.

Simpemba has now been called upon to represent his country at U17, U18, U19 level, U20 level and now U21 level.

He said: "There is only one more to go and I would love to do that at some time."

Simpemba admitted he was disappointed not to come on during the game but said the whole experience

had been a thrill.

The U21s travelled with the senior side and stayed and ate in the same hotel.

And the young Wanderer is now hoping to get another call-up for the U21s when they play Scotland next month.

He said: "I would love to be involved in that particularly if Andy Reilly [Wanderers reserve who has had one Scottish U21 call-up] is called up for Scotland."



Ian Simpemba