

Birchall turns provider for Wales after snubbing England



Welsh wizard: Adam Birchall in action for Wycombe

WYCOMBE'S double goal hero Adam Birchall linked up with the Welsh U21 squad this weekend after passing up the chance to play for England.

The 5ft 7ins striker, who grabbed a brace of headers as Wanderers' defeated Grimsby 2-0 on Saturday, turned out for England U18s before switching international allegiance.

Birchall, on loan from Arsenal, was persuaded to make the change by Gunners reserve boss Eddie Niedzwiecki, who is

also assistant to Wales coach Mark Hughes.

Birchall said: "I played for England when I was 17 but my dad Steve is Welsh and he wanted me to play for Wales. The set-up there is brilliant, especially since Mark Hughes came in."

Birchall scored on his Welsh U21 debut but turned provider against Azerbaijan when he set up the winner for Matt Crowell late on.

But Birchall was surprised with his two-goal haul against the Mariners.

He said: "I haven't scored with my head for two years but I couldn't really miss from two yards out. After a scrappy first 15 minutes we're just delighted to get a win at home."

The 19-year-old believes that his game has benefited from being around some of the best players in the world.

He said: "You learn a lot from watching players like Thierry Henry and Ryan Giggs. You get to know your own strengths and what works for you."

Birchall, who is on loan at Wanderers for one month, is just happy to be playing again after missing eight months last season with a foot injury.

And boss Tony Adams is delighted with the progress he is making.

He said: "In the first game he must have thought 'what's going on?' against a big Rochdale side but we've got better as a squad since then."

"I wouldn't have brought him here if he wasn't a good player."