

Reilly quits Blues to go back to school

WANDERERS defender Andy Reilly has quit the game less than 12 months after being called up to play for Scotland U21s.

He has decided to swap his shinpads for schoolbooks after becoming disillusioned with his lack of first team opportunities and the scrapping of the club's reserve side.

He is now planning to return to college and finish off his two maths A levels in a bid to win a place at a top university next year.

He said: "It was a very hard decision to make. I thought about it a lot and I am happy with my decision. Football wasn't working for me at Wycombe and I wasn't enjoying going to work any more."

The 18-year-old left back looked set for a bright future in the game last season when he broke into the side at Christmas.

He then went on to make his Scotland U21 debut against Hungary and also played for the Blues in front of almost 20,000 fans against Sheffield Wednesday in front of the live television cameras.

And the success story looked set to roll on and on when he was handed the number three shirt at the start of the season in place of departing former Glasgow Rangers player Chris Vinnicombe.

But his only game this season came in the LDV Vans Trophy win at Aldershot, and, with the club pulling out of the reserve league on the eve of the season, Reilly decided enough was enough.

He said: "I'm sorry to be going in lots of ways. Things haven't been going too well this year and I haven't been getting a chance with no reserve side.

"The boss has always said to me that I needed a year in the reserves and I was ready for that, but unfortunately that wasn't going to happen without the reserves.



Footballer turned scholar: Andy Reilly in pre-season action against Millwall

"I can understand why the club have done it, they cannot afford to carry a reserve team but it hasn't helped me. But it is not the sole reason for me going.

"I wanted to have a big push this year to see if I could be a professional footballer but I didn't think I was going to be able to do it to the level I wanted and I didn't see a future for myself at Wycombe Wanderers."

Reilly, who has been with Wanderers since he was 13, did not

ask to be loaned out and jacked it in without talking any of the senior pros at the club or his Under 21 Scotland boss.

He said: "I've discussed it with my family and they are behind me."

Blues boss Tony Adams said: "It wasn't a shock. His intention was to give it a year but I think he was getting signs that maybe football at this club wasn't for him. He asked me what I thought and I gave it to him straight that he could play at this level or

Conference level for ten or 15 years.

"That would be good enough for a lot of lads. But Andy has got the chance of going to Oxford University and getting a fantastic education and playing amateur football perhaps in the Conference.

"When I was his age I didn't have a choice. If I didn't make it as a footballer I'd have been a roofer but Andy has got those opportunities.

"I think he has made the right decision for Andy Reilly."