

Defender told there's a deal waiting for him

ON-LOAN Millwall defender Tony Craig has been told there's a season-long contract waiting on the table for him if he maintains the standards he set on his debut against Mansfield Town on Saturday.

The 19-year-old left back starred in Blues' 1-1 draw and Adams has already spoken to Millwall about stretching the month-long deal into a season-long affair.

Craig, who used to clean the boots of Wanderers centre half Stuart Nethercott, when he was an apprentice at Millwall and Nethercott was the Lions captain, is now hoping he can cement the move.

The big Arsenal fan said: "Coming to Wycombe and having the chance to learn off someone like Tony Adams is a great opportunity."

Adams said: "He had an excellent debut. He was very positive and very solid. He headed it and kicked it away and had an exceptional debut. He's set his standard now and if he can do that in the next three weeks then I will extend it to a season-long loan.

"I've made that connection with Dennis Wise and Ray Wilkins at Millwall. I told them that if he comes here and does the business for us that I would want him for the year and maybe beyond.

"I think he is one for the future."

Adams video-taped the back

four last Saturday and was thrilled with what he saw.

He said: "I think they were as solid as we've been. We had three 19-year-olds [Craig, Mike Williamson and Gary Silk] in there alongside Stuart Nethercott but I thought the defensive shape was fantastic."

Adams also wants to keep on-loan Arsenal striker Adam Birchall on a longer-term deal.

The Welsh U21 international striker celebrated signing a third and final month of his loan deal with The Chairboys equaliser on Saturday.

His strike – his second in five days – was his fourth in nine appearances for the club.

Adams said: "I would love to have Adam Birchall at this football club, but that is obviously down to the board and finance. We've got another three weeks before the board have to make a decision on that one.

"I've done my budget of £700,000. It's their call."

Birchall told Tuesday's Free Press Midweek that he is hoping his loan can be made permanent as well.

He said: "I've been at Arsenal since I was ten. There is so much quality ahead of you that there comes a time when you might have to leave."

Birchall trained with the Premiership Champions' first team in the summer when Arsenal's Euro 2004 stars were still away but he has not had a whiff of first team involvement since.