

Gorman nets Villa's Cooke

WANDERERS have signed Aston Villa's Stephen Cooke on a one-month loan deal in time for him to face Notts County tomorrow.

The 21-year-old who can play wide or just off the front two, becomes manager John Gorman's first signing.

Gorman swooped after receiving a tip-off. He then watched him play for Villa reserves on Wednesday before tying up the deal yesterday.

And his mind was made up after a chat with Villa's Colombian international striker Juan Pablo Angel, who rates him as one of the best players at the club.

Gorman enthused: "He is real quality and we need that in our midfield. I feel very

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confident that he can improve us in that department.

"I watched him play against Northampton reserves and he carved them apart.

"He can score goals from dead balls and he is someone who can unlock teams.

"He has maybe suffered a bit because he is a bit lightweight, but we have got men around him."

Cooke joined Villa for a six figure fee from Manchester United and has made three Premiership appearances for the Villans. The former England youth international has also had two loan periods with Bournemouth.

And the new boy will come

face to face with Villa teammate and former Wanderers loanee Wayne Henderson at Meadow Lane tomorrow. The goalkeeper has just signed an extended loan deal with the Magpies.

Gorman has also brought two other new faces into the training ground on trial this week as he bids to strengthen his pack ahead of the busy festive programme.

Plymouth striker Blair Sturrock, the son of Sheffield Wednesday boss Paul Sturrock, trained with the boys this week and could join on a free transfer.

Sturrock was on the bench for Championship side Argyle last week.

Gorman said: "I would like to see a bit more of him but

there could be something happening there."

The busy new chief has also been running the rule over former Manchester United youngster Keith Briggs.

Gorman knows the former Stockport and Norwich defender from his time at Gillingham and will invite him back to wanderers HQ for a second trial next week.

Gorman got his Wanderers career off to a solid start on Tuesday when he banked his first league point from his first league match in the shape of a 2-2 draw at Bury.

He now hopes to build on that when Blues travel to Notts County tomorrow without the suspended Gus Uhlenbeek.

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Stephen Cooke pic Bournemouth Echo