

# Wasps extend the groundshare deal

WYCOMBE Wanderers and Wasps have signed a new two-year groundshare agreement with a view to a 20-year deal.

The partnership was announced in a joint statement released by the clubs yesterday and paves the way for a long-term agreement, subject to Wasps getting planning permission to increase the stadium's capacity to 15,000.

If that doesn't happen within 12 months, Wasps have a get-out clause enabling them to walk away.

Wasps chief executive David Davies said: "The only thing that will stop that long-term arrangement coming to pass is the planning issue.

"There could be some resistance to

**by Dave Peters  
and Joe Slade**

any change. All both parties are doing is reserving the position against some sort of planning block."

Delighted Wanderers managing director Steve Hayes said: "It's great news for Wycombe Wanderers. The club's ambition is to be debt free in six years and to win promotion next season and everything we are doing is working towards this."

Meanwhile Blues director Brian Kane hailed the deal as a win, win situation.

He said: "It's great for the town,

great for the football club and great for Wasps, who are already beginning to see Wycombe as their home.

"I am hoping that we are at the start of something that will last for generations."

Under the terms of the agreement Wanderers will still own the stadium and rent it out to the rugby club.

Kane said: "We are not giving up the birthright of Wycombe Wanderers. It's a lease deal, there's no liquidation of our assets. We're renting the stadium out at a good rate and they are going to make upgrades to the ground."

Wasps, who play in their third successive Zurich Premiership Grand Final at Twickenham tomorrow, had

hoped to be able to announce the full 20-year deal last weekend.

But they had to scrap their plans because of a last-minute hitch caused by their former landlords QPR, who had a long-term agreement with Wasps and were thought to have some issues with the severance package offered to them.

The hitch has now been dealt with, leaving Davies a relieved man.

He said: "The agreement we've announced today has been done with the blessing of the QPR board. There will always be a spiritual tie between the two but the agreement has been set aside and we are now free to make this announcement."

"This agreement represents the

beginning of what we hope will be an exciting period for the club.

"We are looking forward with great enthusiasm to agreeing further terms that will enable us to establish ourselves more permanently in Wycombe."

Wasps have spent the last three seasons in Wycombe and it has coincided with the most successful period in the club's history.

Skipper Lawrence Dallaglio said: "Having a fantastic stadium to play in is of huge importance.

"We've won four trophies in two years at Wycombe and that says everything you would want to say. We're delighted."

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