

"I would have been carted off to the Tower"

STEVE Brown says if he was playing today, he would be carted off to the Tower of London to be beheaded.

The ex-midfield hardman says he would not last five minutes under today's referees.

The Wanderers assistant manager blew his top after seeing Will Antwi become the third Wanderer in four matches to be sent off during Saturday's 0-0 draw at Shrewsbury Town.

Antwi saw red for two bookable offences which were harsh to say the least. Antwi was done for bringing down Michael Symes in a tangle as he was falling himself and then sent off for a routine aerial challenge with Dave Edwards.

Brown said: "We've had three sending offs in the last four games and, in my opinion, not one of them should have been a sending off."

"If those had been sending off offences when I was playing then I'd have been beheaded in The Tower of London for some of my red cards."

The red card – the first of Antwi's professional career – ruled the centre half out of Tuesday's Carling Cup last-16 clash at Notts County and left Antwi fuming.

He said: "I don't know where the ref got those decisions

from. There was no malice at all. It was ridiculous and I can't fathom it. It is a joke.

"On the first one I tripped and caught the guy as I was going down. He wasn't bearing down on goal or anything like that and the second one was just an everyday challenge.

"I would hope that when the referee sees it on video, he will be embarrassed because I am embarrassed for him."

Carling heroes to miss the next cup adventure



Scott Golbourne: Reading don't want him cup-tied



Jermaine Easter: Suspended

THE goalscorer, the goalkeeper and the goal provider who helped Wanderers reach the quarter-finals of the Carling Cup on Tuesday will miss the first stage of the club's latest cup adventure when the FA Cup begins at home to Oxford United tomorrow.

Jermaine Easter, whose goal saw off Notts County, is suspended for the derby clash against the unbeaten Conference leaders.

In-form keeper Ricardo Batista, who then produced a string of saves to keep Wycombe ahead at Meadow Lane, is also ruled out because his parent club, Fulham, don't want him cup-tied.

Boss Paul Lambert is still hoping Fulham might have a last-minute change of heart but if he can't persuade them, Jamie Young is standing by to play.

And Reading won't allow on-loan Scott Golbourne to play either.

Golbourne was the man whose cross led to Easter's match-winning goal on Tuesday. He is also ruled out of Blues' Carling Cup quarter-final clash because his three-month loan expires after next week's home clash against Grimsby.

Lambert said: "It's a killer for him and a killer for me because he's been excellent."

Blues have further problems ahead of

Wanderers by Dave Peters

dpeters@london.newsquest.co.uk

tomorrow's game. Midfielder Tommy Doherty is still suspended and Aston Villa are refusing on-loan left back Steven O'Halloran permission to play.

But Russell Martin can play despite picking up his fifth booking of the season on Tuesday. His one-match suspension doesn't take effect until the following weekend.

Defender Will Antwi also returns after missing Tuesday's win through suspension.

Blues did not even celebrate that triumph with a bottle of beer on the journey home as they turned their attention to Oxford instead.

Lambert said: "We can't rest on the euphoria of Tuesday. We have got to try and get past Oxford now in this competition."

He is acutely aware of the importance of the game to the fans. Both clubs' internet message boards have been in overdrive in the build up.

But it's also of supreme importance to the players particularly Tommy Mooney, a former Oxford player who was pelted with coins when he scored against them in the last meeting.

Triallists help a Blues side batter Gregory's Rangers

A TEAM of triallists and juniors beat QPR 5-2 in a behind-closed-doors game on Wednesday.

Trinidad international centre back Duane Jack, who was in the squad against Panama last week, joined countrymen Kevin Adams (midfielder) and striker Gareth Woodley.

Chesham United striker Liam George also played along with ex-Blackburn trainee Robbie Doyle.

Boss Paul Lambert said: "It was good to have a look at a few people. There was one lad there that wasn't too bad but you can't judge someone on that but apart from him there was nothing that really hit me in the face."

Some of the triallists – one of whom is on the periphery of the Trinidad national team – will continue to train with Wanderers. ● Lambert will have contract talks

with five of his stars next week.

He will meet Kevin Betsy, Will Antwi, Tommy Mooney, Mike Williamson and Stefan Oakes and Lambert is hoping agreements will be reached before the end of the month.

He said: "I really hope they stay. They are all big players for us."

● Lambert was a spectator as Blues' kids beat Redbridge 3-0 in the FA Youth Cup on Wednesday.

He said: "It was a shocking pitch and it seemed that any tackle below waist height was let go but the boys stood up to it and did excellently. There are one or two useful players in that side."

He said: "It's important for a club of this size to get one or two kids coming through. This club hasn't had that for some time. It will take time, Rome was not built in a day."

CUP VICTORY IN QUOTES

Midfielder Anthony Grant: "When I joined the club on loan from Chelsea, Steve Clarke [assistant manager at Stamford Bridge] was telling me a lot of good things about Paul Lambert so I thought that maybe I could end the season with a promotion medal. This cup run is a bonus.

"There is something special about the boss and his backroom staff."

Mike Williamson who was up against his best mate in former Wanderer Gary Silk: "It is a brilliant feeling to get through. It was a fast and furious end-to-end game. There was no time on the ball.

"It would have been a massive disappointment if we had not got through because we knew when we got drawn against a team from our division that we had a great chance of going through."

Midfielder Matt Bloomfield: "This one was for the supporters and all my family and friends. It was payback to them for spending their hard earned money coming to support us.

"It finished 1-0 but it could have been 5-4. All our lads were focused on blocking everything and Ricardo made some great saves. We have got a great team spirit and work ethic which stems from the manager downwards.

"It is brilliant for the lads who were suspended tonight because it is squad game and they have now got the chance to play in the next round."

Beaten Notts manager Steve Thompson: "We've knocked out Middlesbrough of the Premiership and two Championship sides to get this far but Wycombe have given us the toughest game we've had.

"Good luck to them. They are the best team in the league.

"I wish them all the best in the next round and hope that they get embroiled in it and lose a few league games – not that I am bitter and twisted."

Blues' Chairman Ivor Beeks: "It feels like deja vu. It feels very similar to when we got to the semi-finals of the FA Cup."

Manager Paul Lambert on his on-loan Fulham keeper, Portugal U21 international Ricardo Batista: "He's only 19 and, if he keeps learning, Fulham might not need to buy another goalkeeper. He's got all the ability to make an international goalkeeper. I can't understand a word he says but as long as he keeps the ball out of the net, I don't care."

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