

Ex-Soldier bids to fire Blues up

FORMER Scotland international Gary Holt became Wanderers' ninth summer signing yesterday and said I've come to win automatic promotion.

The ex-English and Scottish Premier League midfielder turned down clubs in the SPL and higher up the ladder in England to join Paul Lambert's revolution on a two-year deal.

He said: "As soon as I heard Paul Lambert wanted to talk to me I was interested and when I came down here and saw the place and the quality of the squad I just had that buzz of excitement running through me. I knew I wanted to move my wife and three kids down here."

Boss Lambert is delighted with his latest capture, who links up with his new teammates for next week's training camp in Germany.

He said: "He's a player with a terrific pedigree. He played a lot of games with Norwich in the Premiership and a lot at the top level in Scotland.

"He will bring a bit of steel to the middle of the park which is something we need."

The 34-year-old ex-soldier won 11 Scotland caps after only breaking into the game as a 21-year-old.

He joined the Army as a 16-year-old after being told he was too small to make it as a footballer.

It took him six years to prove his critics wrong but he has done

that with a bang since being spotted in an Army cup final.

He was picked up by Kilmarnock and quickly gained a fearsome reputation as a tough-tackling midfielder where he played against Lambert.

He said: "It's flattering to be remembered by him. When I was called into the Scotland squad Paul was one of the top players and sitting down with him at meal times I was in awe - now I've got the chance to play for him."

And Holt believes the gaffer can be the one to help him erase his play-off nightmare after twice being a loser with Nottingham Forest and with Norwich on penalties.

Last year's failure with Forest cost him his contract at The City Ground.

He was offered a deal in January but it was withdrawn when Forest missed out despite making 53 appearances for the Reds.

He said: "I've come here to win automatic promotion. I don't like the play-offs. They are horrendous. It's automatic or nowhere and when you look around the club and the players that should be achievable."

Holt consulted with former Forest teammate and Wycombe old boy Nathan Tyson about the move before making the switch.

Johnson's own goal: Page 174
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On parade: New signing Gary Holt at Adams Park yesterday

Picture by Wycombe Wanderers