

IT'S A KNOCKOUT

One-off game to decide who plays at Wembley

PAUL Lambert has backed his team to brush off the disappointment of conceding a late equaliser in Sunday's fiery play-off semi-final first leg at Adams Park.

The Blues were seven minutes away from having a lead to take to Stockport and even though Stephen Gleeson's late equaliser means the second-leg starts all square, Lambert is confident his men can finish the job and book their place at Wembley.

Lambert said: "Stockport's goal changes nothing. If someone has a four or five goal lead that changes the game but that equaliser doesn't change it a jot.

"It is all to play for. It is a one-off affair now and you won't get a better game in the league this year than the one that's coming up on Saturday."

Wanderers have lost just one of their last nine matches and even though they were whacked 6-0 in the league at Stockport, Lambert says it will be different his time.

He said: "We will be ready for it.

"I love going away when everything is against you. There will be a vibrant Stockport crowd. It will be brilliant. I have seen our lads play some unbelievable games away from home and Saturday won't be any different.

WANDERERS
by Dave Peters

"Sometimes it's harder to be the home team because the onus is on you to make the running and that can be really difficult."

Sunday's first leg was an ill-tempered affair and Edgeley Park will be no place for the faint-hearted.

Wycombe led through Delroy Facey's goal until Gleeson struck back for County.

But that only tells half the story. Twice managers Lambert and Jim Gannon were involved in ugly slanging matches and Gannon continued the verbal mind games afterwards telling some of Blues' young reserves that they had no chance of playing under Lambert.

But former Champions League winner Lambert won't be intimidated by anything Gannon or the Stockport crowd can chuck at him.

He said: "I don't mind if there is a bit of credence behind it. I don't mind if it's Alex Ferguson or Jose Mourinho saying we were really crap or whatever the case may be.

"But it doesn't matter to me. Maybe he was misquoted, maybe he wasn't but we will be ready."



Seconds out, round two: The referee has to intervene to separate managers Paul Lambert and Jim Gannon during a heated and bad-tempered first leg clash at Adams Park on Sunday

Picture by ANITA ROSS-MARSHALL