

90 MINUTES FROM GLORY

■ Blues just one game away from a Wembley final

By Frank Smith

FANS of Wycombe Wanderers will be on the edge of their seats this weekend as their heroes try to secure a play-off final place at Wembley.

The Blues go into the semi-final second leg against Stockport all square after a 1-1 draw at Adams Park.

By 7.50pm on Saturday, we should know whether Paul Lambert's men have cemented their spot in the final on May 26.

This would leave them just 90 minutes away from promotion to League One.

But it could have been much better going into the second leg at Edgeley Park.

Last Sunday, Wanderers took the lead through Delroy Facey in the first-half and were just seven minutes away from going into the return leg with a one goal advantage.

But Stockport's Stephen Gleeson scored a spectacular 25-yard strike to level the tie.

It was a fiery game which spilled over to the touch line, with both Lambert and Stockport boss Jim Gannon squaring-up on more than one occasion.

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."

Wasps also have a season-defining weekend.

Ian McGeechan's team have a play-off semi-final against Bath on Sunday, which if they win, would set up a Premiership decider at Twickenham on May 31.

Wasps finished the regular season in second place, which gives them the advantage of a home tie.

The omens are good for the current European champions. No one has ever won an away play-off semi-final since the Premiership began in 1997.

● **Catch up with the Wasps and Wanderers match reports soon after the final whistle at www.bucksfreepress.co.uk**

● **Ten things you never knew about Stockport, See page 9**



Coming out on top: Action from the first leg match at Adams Park last Sunday

Picture by ANITA ROSS-MARSHALL 08-821 P09

It's a one-off knockout now

WYCOMBE Wanderers travel to Stockport County tomorrow knowing victory will take them to the play-off final at Wembley Stadium.

The two teams meet again all-square after Sunday's first leg at Adams Park finished 1-1.

And with away goals not counting double, it means it is all to play for when they go head-to-head again in Stockport.

Whoever comes out on top will meet either Darlington or Rochdale in the final at Wembley Stadium on Bank Holiday Monday, May 26.

On-loan striker Delroy Facey gave Wycombe the lead in Sunday's first leg but their advantage was wiped out with just seven minutes remaining when Stephen Gleeson pulled out the goal of his life.

There was nothing on at all when, 25 yards from goal, Russell Martin's clearance landed at his feet.

But the on-loan Wolves player, who had only come into the game as a substitute, made something out of nothing when he belted an unstoppable shot which swerved and sped its way past Frank Fielding in the Wycombe goal.

County's vociferous travelling army of supporters celebrated as though they had won the play-off final itself and it might have got

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even better for them in injury time.

Fielding had to make a match-saving late stop at the base of his post to deny Anthony Pilkington a dramatic winner.

Fielding turned out to be Pilkington's nemesis.

In the first half he also produced heroics, pulling off a point blank save to push a header from the County dangerman over his cross-bar.

But that, and a low Liam Dickinson cross which Tommy Rowe miskicked, was about it as far as clear-cut chances went for Stockport, while Wycombe were left to rue a couple of missed chances themselves.

Gary Holt went for precision instead of power with a second half shot, while Leon Johnson and Mike Williamson both headed wide and leading scorer Scott McGleish saw the ball whipped away from him just as he was about to head home.

Saturday's second leg kicks off in Stockport at 6pm and if the scores are level after 90 minutes and extra time the match will be decided on penalties.



Flashpoint: Wycombe manager Paul Lambert and the Stockport bench clash during Sunday's first leg