

USHER PLAYS THE STARRING ROLE

Ex-cinema worker scores twice to keep Wanderers in the League Two title race

THIS time last year John Akinde was working in a cinema – on Saturday he was Wanderers' real-life hero in their top-of-the-table blockbuster against Brentford.

The 19-year-old debutant played the starring role with two goals as Blues kept their title challenge alive in a 3-3 thriller with leaders Brentford at Griffin Park.

Akinde, on-loan from Bristol City, was working as an usher for Showcase Cinemas last year as well as having another part-time job at McDonalds while playing for Ebbsfleet in the Blue Square Premier League.

He said: "It was pretty hard at the time but I had to do it to get by.

"I wasn't making a lot of money playing football so I had to work as well.

"But I enjoyed working in the cinema because I love films and sometimes I got to watch them for free."

Wanderers fans would have clubbed together to give him a cinema ticket for life on Saturday after his action-hero display breathed new life into the club's promotion push.

He headed Blues back onto level terms after they had fallen behind to Jordan Rhodes' goal after just 90 seconds.

Then when the defence went AWOL to allow David Hunt to restore the Bees' lead seven minutes later, Akinde came to Wanderers' rescue again with his second equaliser of the afternoon.

Wanderers by Dave Peters

He robbed Brett Johnson on the halfway line and then shrugged off Alan Bennett before drilling in a stunning equaliser.

He said: "During the game I was thinking I might go on and get a hat-trick but I would've more than settled for two on my debut."

Scriptwriters could write their own film about the teenager's career.

Last season he became the first footballer to be sold after a vote among his own club's supporters.

Ebbsfleet, who are owned by 50,000 people who answered an internet advert to own a share in a football club for £35, decided to accept a £140,000 from Bristol City for Akinde last year.

Akinde said: "It was a bit weird really being sold by the fans but it was a great move for me going straight into the Championship.

"It's disappointing that I've had to take a bit of a backward step going out on loan because I want to be playing in the Championship week in and week out, but I understand it's part of my development."

"I'm only 19. I've got a lot of years ahead of me and it is great to come to a side that's chasing for the title."



LEAD ROLE: John Akinde scored twice on his Wycombe debut