

Old Trafford reserve is a man on a mission

MANCHESTER United reserve keeper Tom Heaton says he has joined Wanderers on loan with one intention – to keep the Blues in League One.

The 23-year-old glovesman, who was part of United's 24-man winning squad for the 2008 Champions League Final in Moscow, made his debut in Saturday's 1-1 draw at Brentford after joining on loan until the end of the season.



And he says he had no hesitation swapping Old Trafford for a relegation scrap.

He said: "I have come down here to try and keep Wycombe in League One."

And, after trying to keep out Wayne Rooney every day in training, facing up to League One strikers holds no fear for the England U21 international.

He said: "It's nice to have that in the back of your head, that you've been facing people like Rooney in training and it gives you a bit of confidence."

The keeper exuded confidence on his Blues debut but could do nothing about Myles Weston's 75th minute equaliser.

And afterwards the keeper tipped Blues to beat the drop.

He said: "If I am honest I expected to be busier. When you join a team that's second from bottom you think you are going to have a lot to do."

"But the defence was brilliant. I think we've got a real chance of staying in the division and I want to help them do that."

Watford rule out Lee switch to Blues

BLUES had a bid to sign Watford's out of favour keeper Richard Lee turned down by the Championship club.

Wanderers made their move before wrapping up the loan transfer of number one target Manchester United reserve Tom Heaton until the end of the season.

Lee has made just two appearances for the Hornets this season and has become frustrated at his lack of opportunities at Vicarage Road.

But Wycombe were given a flat no by Watford before anything started.

Watford are believed to have been reluctant to let him out because Spurs were chasing their number one Scott Loach hard during January and they didn't want to be caught short.

Lee is out of contract in the summer and Wanderers could revive their interest then.

Injury setback for Leon

LEON Johnson has suffered a setback on his road to recovery and could be facing another six weeks on the sidelines.

The 28-year-old defender, who has been out with a hip injury since November, damaged the cartilage in his knee after a training ground clash last Saturday morning.

He has now had an operation to repair the damage and manager Gary Waddock is hoping the centre half can cut two weeks off the date the medics have given him to return.

He said: "It's a frustrating one because he wasn't far off. He was way ahead of schedule in his return from his original injury but then he picked up this one on a Saturday morning in a nothing challenge."

Waddock puts all contract talks on hold

WANDERERS boss Gary Waddock has told his players to forget any contract talks until they have kept the club in League One.

That means more than three quarters of his squad are playing for their futures and Waddock is hoping that living on a knife edge will bring the best out of them.

He told the *Free Press*: "Contracts are not going to

Wanderers by Dave Peters

happen until we know what division we are in next season. I don't want any distractions at all.

"The only thing that matters at the moment is staying in this division."

"One or two players have

knocked on my door and been asking and I have told them they won't get an answer until we know where we are."

Fifteen of Waddock's 24-man squad are out of contract in the summer with five more only at Adams Park on loan.

The only players whose contracts are secure until the summer of 2011 are: Gareth Ainsworth, Ian Westlake, Stuart Green, Jon-Paul

Pittman, Lewis Montrose, Matt Phillips, Chris Westwood, Stuart Beavon and Kadeem Harris.

And he has warned the rest that squad numbers and wages will depend on survival.

He said: "Players' demands will probably be different from League One to League Two and we need to see where we are, it's as simple as that."

I can't wait to join the fight – Bennett

Wanderers by Dave Peters

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DEFENDER Alan Bennett has warned Wanderers' next group of opponents "I am going to take my frustrations out on you."

The 28-year-old two-times Republic of Ireland international centre back joined Blues on a month's loan this week with a mission to get his career back on track.

Last season he captained Brentford to the League Two title – but he hasn't started a Bees match for three months now after losing his place because of injury.

He knocked on Bees boss Andy Scott's door asking for a loan and the former Reading and Southampton defender jumped at the chance of coming to Wycombe to kickstart his career after making just 16 appearances for Brentford this term.

He said: "It would have happened a week earlier but Brentford didn't want me playing against them last week so it had to wait a few days."

Ironically his last game for Brentford was in a 2-2 draw against Millwall and now he is hoping to kick off his Blues career against the South London side tomorrow.

He said: "Some people have asked me what am I doing coming to Wycombe to join a relegation fight but I am happy to fight away."

"It's been a massively frustrating year for me and I am ready to take my frustrations out on the pitch."

"Wycombe have offered me an



FIRE IN HIS BELLY: Alan Bennett is relishing his new challenge at Adams Park

outlet here to vent my frustration and I'm hoping to grab it with both hands.

"I have got so much energy and frustration in me that I can't wait to get out there and join the fight."

"I'm here for a month at the moment and all going well I can put in some solid performances and extend it."

Bennett, who has a year left on his Griffin Park pay deal, rejected a few League Two clubs to join Wanderers in their hour of need

and he hinted that it could become a permanent move.

He said: "What I think and what Brentford think could be completely different. I will take this one month first and see what Wycombe, Gary Waddock and Brentford think."

"I feel like I have been going backwards at Brentford and I want to go forward again."

"I hope the Brentford fans understand my position. I always had a good relationship with

them but I was going a bit crazy there because being the player I am I need to be involved and I need to be playing."

"I am really looking forward to this month. I can't wait for Saturday. I feel as though I am starting all over again and that I need to prove myself again."

"I have seen Wycombe twice this season, both times against Brentford. They won one and should have won the other so my impression is very encouraging."



LEWIS Hunt has been warned he's got a real fight on his hands to retain the right back jersey following the arrival of Reading's Julian Kelly on a month's loan deal.

The 19-year-old new recruit has made 11 appearances in the Championship for the Royals and Waddock hasn't brought him in just to warm the bench.

He said: "He is a player I have been monitoring for two years now and I want it to be a real scrap between him and Lewis for the shirt."

"Lewis probably was surprised when Julian

turned up for training on Monday, but that's the way I like it."

"We didn't have competition at right back but now we have."

● Boss Gary Waddock has backed new signing Kevin McLeod to build on his impressive debut in last week's 1-1 draw at Brentford where the left winger laid on Kevin Betsy's goal.

He said of the former Everton, QPR and Swansea winger: "Kevin McLeod will only get better with fitness. He played extremely well for an hour last week and his fitness levels will improve. Last week will have given his

confidence a big boost and he needed that."

"You can't talk about potential any more with him because he's past that age, but he's got ability and he needs to show it consistently."

"I enjoyed working with him at QPR and I am hoping I can bring the best out of him again."

● Matt Bloomfield is back on the training field six weeks after his knee operation.

Boss Gary Waddock said: "He's done well and he's looking very sharp."

Ian Westlake, meanwhile is back on the running machines after his operation on his ankle.