

One year with less cash to go back up

WANDERERS boss Gary Waddock has been given a reduced budget and just one year to get the Blues back into League One.

Owner Steve Hayes set the tough target immediately after The Chairboys were relegated back to the bottom division after just one season of mixing it with the big boys of Leeds, Charlton and Norwich.

Blues' demotion was confirmed on Saturday when they lost 2-0 at Leyton Orient in a match they had to win.

They were undone by former Wycombe star Scott McGleish, who made one and scored the other to send them down, less than a year after he was given away on a free transfer by Blues.

Earlier in the season, McGleish's winning goal cost Peter Taylor his job as Wycombe manager and now he has heaped the pressure on new boss Gary Waddock.

Hayes said: "We have to go up next year. Gary knows it and everyone knows it.

"We don't want to wait around another year in that division, the aim is to go up automatically and we want to do it in a blaze of glory.

"I'm gutted to find ourselves back in League Two.

"It wasn't in our plans to go down. I said at the start of the season that I didn't want to make the numbers up. I wanted to see us in mid-table and maybe getting close to the play-offs.

Wanderers by Dave Peters

dpeters@london.newsquest.co.uk

"But the league table doesn't lie. We were relegated because we were one of the bottom four clubs."

Last time Blues went down it took them five years to climb back up, but Hayes believes Waddock is the man to bring them straight back up at the first attempt.

But he will have to do it with a reduced playing budget.

Hayes confirmed: "The budget has been set for next season and it's a lesser budget than last year. But I'm confident that it's a good budget.

"We don't want to take on expensive players with expensive reputations, we want to take on some assets and have a mix of youth and experience."

Waddock has accepted the budget and the challenge of bringing Blues back at the first attempt.

He said: "I would put the same pressure on myself. I want to bounce back at the first attempt, just like any fan and any owner.

"I want to take this club forward. We've taken a step backward and we want to move forward again."

Owner Hayes pointed the finger of blame for relegation firmly at Taylor, who led the club to promotion just 12 months ago.

He said: "The dye was set in the

summer. We gave him a decent budget but he wanted more. He brought in players that didn't perform.

"We had a bigger budget than some of the teams in the division. The brief was to stay in the division and we fell short."

Taylor said yesterday: "I'm a bit disappointed with the comments. Certain signings worked out and certain ones maybe didn't but there's no manager for whom they all work out and everyone knows that we had a really difficult start to the season."

Hayes sacked Taylor in October and replaced him with Waddock after McGleish's winner for Orient made it one league win in 11 matches.

He then backed his new manager with cash, allowing him to bring in 11 new players during the January transfer window, but it still wasn't enough to stave off relegation with a week of the season still to go.

And going down has forced Blues to tighten the purse strings.

The Blues are set for a big cash shortfall next year from missing away fans now that they have lost the glamour clubs from their fixture list.

Ten clubs brought more than 1,000 supporters to Adams Park with them and three, including tomorrow's opponents Gillingham, will have brought double that.

Hayes said: "We will lose a lot in ticket sales. It's a big shortfall and we've got to make it up."



REALITY BITES: Kevin Betsy comes to terms with relegation following Saturday's 2-0 loss at Leyton Orient