

Same side different agendas

With the season just two weeks away opinion in the Blues camp is divided

MATT Bloomfield says the current Wanderers squad is the best he has ever seen – but team-mate Nikki Bull has played down talk of a second successive promotion, saying Blues are in a mini-league for survival.

Bloomfield has played alongside the likes of Roger Johnson, Mike Williamson and Nathan Tyson during his eight years at Adams Park, but thinks his present team-mates can do what they couldn't – help Blues challenge for promotion from the third tier.

Bloomfield pointed to the example of other smaller clubs who punched above their weight in League One last season.

He said: "Last year Rochdale, Bournemouth and Exeter, clubs of a similar size to us, have gone on and

By Andy Carswell

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done really well and there's no reason why we can't follow suit.

"With the ability and the talent we've got in the squad, and equally the togetherness, team spirit, camaraderie and competitiveness of the lads, I do honestly believe this is the best squad since I have been here at the club."

But Bull has tempered those expectations and believes finishing fifth from bottom of League One will spell success this time.

The Blues goalkeeper said: "I'm realistic and I believe there are only eight sides that could go down. We are in a mini-league for survival – anything else is a bonus."

"Wycombe have been a bit of a yo-

yo club and we've got to put an end to that. I'm not getting carried away, I've said from the day we went up that fifth from bottom would be a success. People will say that's a lack of ambition, but we're going to have one of the smallest budgets. Survival will be a good achievement."

Manager Gary Waddock has made six signings in the summer, but hasn't opened the chequebook in bringing those new faces to Adams Park.

Bull – who played with Scott Donnelly, Joel Grant and John Halls earlier in his career at Aldershot Town – thinks they are all canny acquisitions who will fit in well with the players already at the club however.

He said: "Fans would have liked

to have seen us sign your Clayton Donaldsons, your Ashley Grimes and Cody McDonalds, but there are 20 other clubs out there in the same division who want to sign them and have bigger budgets."

"I think the gaffer's been really clever in the summer. He knew the players would give their all and fit in with the group already here, and I'm sure he'll be rewarded."

"They'll bring a bit of continuity from last season. We didn't have the best team, but we had a fantastic team spirit, a good will to win and a team that went out and gave their all. If we're going to stay up, we have to have that spirit."

Bloomfield added: "I don't think there's anybody who's come into our dressing room this year who didn't already know someone,

except maybe Turners [James Tunnicliffe].

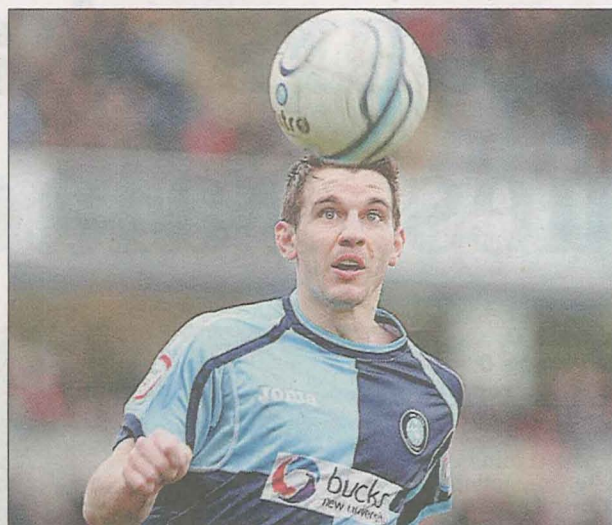
"It's helped them settle in quicker. Sometimes it can take a new player a couple of weeks to settle in and feel part of the squad. From day one the lads who've come in have felt part of it."

"Last year our team spirit and togetherness helped us get promoted and we are going to need every bit of that this year to achieve what we want to do."

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MATT BLOOMFIELD: "Last year Rochdale, Bournemouth [made play-offs] and Exeter, clubs of a similar size to us have gone on and done really well. There's no reason why we can't follow suit."



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Scott's ready to come in from the cold and hammer at England keeper's door

SCOTT Rendell could be back for Wanderers tomorrow and walk straight into a shootout with England keeper Rob Green when the Blues take on West Ham United at Adams Park (ko 3pm).

Last season's top scorer sat out Saturday's defeat at non-league Braintree and Tuesday's draw with Championship outfit Crystal Palace with a cold.

He has been kept away from pre-season training, but sources say he is now ready to come back into the squad and build on his two 45-minute outings so far this summer.

Centre half Dave Winfield is less likely to make it though after picking up a knee injury in a collision with Palace striker Glenn Murray in midweek.

That knock forced him off at half time.

A scan has revealed no serious damage and he could be fit to play, but with the season set to kick-off in two weeks' time he might not be risked against the Hammers.

The match will be a big test for Wanderers. West Ham were relegated from the Premiership last year and this will be their first game on English soil under new boss Sam Allardyce.

And they could come up against last year's Football Writers' Player of the Year Scott Parker, who is expected to be in the visitors' squad.

Meanwhile Wanderers boss Waddock says he is getting closer to knowing his first choice XI which will kick off the



ARMED AND DANGEROUS: Scott Rendell is ready to fire his bullets again

season at home to Scunthorpe on August 6.

He said: "Now it's a case of getting players closer to 70, 80, 90 minutes. Once that final week of pre-season comes around, everyone's got to stake a claim and obviously one or two have in the couple of games we've had."

After tomorrow's clash, Wycombe go to Wealdstone on Tuesday as part of the deal which took Marvin McCoy to Adams Park, before completing pre-season with a trip to

Northampton Town next Saturday.

Waddock says there are no plans to introduce another friendly into the schedule after a planned trip to Wolverton was called off as their new ground is not ready yet.

The Blues boss said: "It would have been more of a younger team with one or two trialists in there."

"Now the game's off I'm not going to put another game in."

Benyon won't fall down on fitness while out injured

INJURY won't stop Elliot Benyon from being able to take his place in the Wanderers team once he's recovered from his broken hand, believes manager Gary Waddock.

The striker underwent surgery last week to assess the problem after he fell awkwardly during a training session and broke his hand.

But Waddock says the High Wycombe-born forward, who has joined on a season-long loan from Swindon Town, will be fit and raring to go when the injury has healed thanks to a recovery programme from physio Stuart Ayles.

He said: "The positive thing about it is he'll be with Stuart Ayles and he'll definitely get him fit."

"Losing him is a blow. He's taken it in the right way. It could have been a lot worse, we could have lost him for a lot longer if it was another type of injury."

The Blues boss pointed to the example of fellow frontman Matt McClure as an example of the difference Ayles' influence can have on the Wanderers players.

Waddock said: "He's filled out a little bit with the programme Stuart's put him on over the summer. He'll benefit from it."

He added: "We've got some really decent strikers at the football club. Matt is a very good player and I like him. He's staking a claim [for a starting place]."

"We have to make sure our strikers score goals and between the five of them, when Benyon gets back, there's competition up there and there is."