

Blues under the 'Spot' light after showing signs of life

TOMORROW'S game at Rochdale is more important than the two previous ones against the division's high fliers, believes Blues boss Gary Waddock.

Wanderers ended their losing streak with a 1-0 win over Sheffield United and were desperately unlucky not to get anything from their midweek match with Preston.

Waddock has challenged his players to reproduce that in an early season six-pointer against a side in the relegation zone that sit behind Wanderers on goal difference only.

He said: "That's the type of performances that we want

Rochdale v Wanderers
League One
Tomorrow, 3pm

and we've been able to do that against two very good sides. We now have to maintain that standard and it gives us a chance to get some points.

"It's not a must-win game. We'd like to win it for sure. It's an important game, more important than the last two games that we've played.

"If the players work as hard as they have done in the last two games, we'll be OK.

"Both games were high tempo, which was pleasing,

but we've got to do it again and again. That's the way we want to play. The tempo of the game the other evening was fantastic. If we can maintain that for large periods of the game, we're going to put teams under pressure."

Club captain Gareth Ainsworth said after the defeat at Tranmere – the fifth in a row – that the team owed Waddock and the supporters a performance.

The manager felt they had turned a corner against Sheffield United but they need to back that up at Spotland tomorrow.

He said: "They've played well in two games but it's a

long season. We can't be judged on two games. We have to be consistent with performances.

"The players are a fantastic bunch and if Gaz has said that on behalf of the team, that's great.

"The most important thing is for the fans – they have got right behind the team. Their support has been vital."

Waddock was proud of the display against Preston and said: "It would have been even better if we had picked up a point or three but we backed up a very, very good performance against Sheffield United with another good one."

Rowlands back at the club that snubbed him



LOAN RANGER: Martin Rowlands has joined on a three-month deal

NEW signing Martin Rowlands is hoping to put two years of frustration behind him after linking up with his former QPR manager Gary Waddock on a three-month loan deal.

The 32-year-old went straight into the side to play Preston on Tuesday after joining the day before, having watched his future team-mates beat Sheffield United.

He's made just eleven league appearances in the last two seasons and had no hesitation in making the move to Wanderers – the club who rejected him as a youngster.

The London-born Ireland international said: "It's been very frustrating, the last two years. I was injured for a year, then last year I was fit for more or less the whole season.

"I just want to look forward now and look at the positives that can come from being here for three months, and get my fitness built up and hopefully doing well.

"It was a good introduction. We're not happy with the result but I thought that we performed well, especially as we went 2-0 down very and we bounced straight back.

"It's been a bit of a barren spell in the last two years hardly playing any football. I was delighted to play and I felt all right. I hope to be involved on Saturday and hopefully we can get the right result this time.

"I want to play week-in week-out, build my fitness up and go

By Andy Carswell
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somewhere where hopefully I can be a good influence and help improve the team."

As well as linking up with Waddock once more, Rowlands said his friendship with Blues skipper Gareth Ainsworth – another former QPR man – helped make his mind up.

He said: "It was an easy decision once I spoke to the manager. I spoke to Gaz as well and everyone was pretty positive, so I hope the next few months can go well.

"Me and Gaz have been friends for a long time. It was good to get back out with Gaz. He's very experienced and has got a good knowledge of the game and he's still got that hunger and desire to do well."

Waddock said he was delighted to get his man, saying he is a player his new team-mates can learn from.

He said: "He's a good signing for us. His performances will improve the more games he plays. I thought his contribution the other night was very good.

"He's been unfortunate over the last season or two with injuries and not being able to get into the starting eleven. He wants to play games, he wants to prove that he's a good player and we're fortunate we've got him."

No reserve goalkeeper

GARY Waddock won't be putting a reserve goalkeeper on the bench at Rochdale on Saturday after Nikki Bull picked up a knock against Preston.

With the number of substitutes reduced from seven to five this season the Blues boss hasn't put a back-up keeper in his squad for League One matches.

Teenager Matt Ingram has been included for cup matches, where the number of replacements is still seven, but Waddock says he won't be involved at the weekend as Bull's injury isn't that serious.

He said: "I won't be doing that, I'll go with Bull. He'll be fine. It was a heavy knock to the shoulder and neck area. That blow is always sore but he'll be fine."

Winno back in the mix

DAVE Winfield could be back in full training with the rest of the Wycombe Wanderers squad next week.

The big defender has been out of action for more than a month with knee and groin problems but is moving closer to a return to first team action.

Manager Gary Waddock said: "Dave will be back next week. We are hoping he comes straight back into the group. He's worked hard with Stuart Ayles to get fit."

Striker Matt McClure is now off crutches as he steps up his recovery from a dislocated ankle.

Waddock said: "It's another step forward for him but he's got a long way to go yet."

No deal for trialist

WANDERERS have said no to a trialist defender who played in two practice matches for the club.

He played against AFC Wimbledon last week and featured again in another friendly against Luton on Wednesday but Blues have ended their interest.

Gary Waddock remained tight lipped on the player's identity but said: "He was no better than what we've got. He's a young lad we wanted to have a look at, and we've decided to let him go.

Blues won the match 1-0 thanks to a goal from youth team captain Max Kretzschmar, with first team players Kevin Betsy, Scott Rendell, Elliot Benyon, Marvin McCoy and Matt Bloomfield all featuring.

Waddock said: "We needed that. We've got a few senior lads there that need to tick over in case they are called upon. It was a very good exercise."

LEAGUE ONE TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Charlton Athletic	10	7	3	0	21	9	12	24
Preston North End	9	7	1	1	21	13	8	22
Sheffield United	10	6	2	2	17	8	9	20
Hartlepool United	9	5	4	0	17	8	9	19
MK Dons	10	5	4	1	18	10	8	19
Notts County	10	6	1	3	18	11	7	19
Brentford	10	6	1	3	15	9	6	19
Sheffield Wednesday	10	6	1	3	19	16	3	19
Huddersfield Town	10	4	6	0	18	9	9	18
Carlisle United	10	5	1	4	12	15	-3	16
Tranmere Rovers	10	4	2	4	11	10	1	14
Oldham Athletic	10	4	2	4	12	15	-3	14
Stevenage	10	3	4	3	16	12	4	13
Colchester United	10	3	4	3	15	15	0	13
Chesterfield	10	3	2	5	13	16	-3	11
Scunthorpe	10	1	6	3	13	15	-2	9
Walsall	10	2	3	5	10	12	-2	9
Bournemouth	10	3	0	7	11	19	-8	9
Yeovil Town	10	2	2	6	11	15	-4	8
Wanderers	10	2	2	6	9	16	-7	8
Rochdale	10	2	2	6	12	20	-8	8
Bury	10	2	2	6	8	18	-10	8
Exeter City	10	1	2	7	4	16	-12	5
Leyton Orient	10	0	3	7	7	21	-14	3

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