

'Someone has to be the leader and it comes naturally to me'

SKIPPER Dave Winfield says what you see on the pitch on a matchday is the same as what you'll see on the Wanderers' training ground.

Manager Gareth Ainsworth has installed an all-action style of play and Winfield said that's led to the players busting a gut to win every ball in training sessions.

And the 24-year-old, who's been given the captain's armband with club skipper Gary Doherty injured, said that's key to the development of the Blues' younger players.

He said: "We train as we play and that's important for the young players to come in and play like that. It's like a competitive game for them and it's making them really kick on."

"I hope there will be a few senior players who will help them. We've got to give them that confidence to go out and do it."

The tough tackling centre half said his leadership style is a combination of leading by example and being chief rabble rouser to fire up the troops.

Winfield said: "Somebody's got to be the leader and to me it's something that comes quite naturally. I've been doing the same things for years - it's part of my make up."

"I'm not a massive ranter and raver but you can see on the pitch I'm quite vocal. I try to lead by example."

"It's a great honour to have the armband. I can't see why it won't be beneficial to myself and the team."

Ainsworth has been full of praise for the big man's

performances in recent weeks and has backed him to be the man to lead the side.

He said: "It's probably the right time in his career he's given the armband. In the last couple of years he's matured."

"I think he's a leader. Around the place he's a proper pro, does everything right and the best thing about him is if you tell him to do anything, he'll do it to the letter."

"He's taken the armband on and doesn't want to let it go. It's great to have him like that."

This is the start of something special

It's not quite the Crazy Gang yet, but Ainsworth says his players are mad for it

By Andy Carswell

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BLUES boss Gareth Ainsworth says Wanderers are on the verge of something big - with the players wondering who's next to get turned over.

A former member of the Wimbledon Crazy Gang, Ainsworth said the spirit in the camp at Adams Park is similar to what he experienced when he tasted success earlier in his career.

He said the players at Adams Park have formed a tight-knit group and want to create their own identity.

Ainsworth said: "I can feel the start of something. The success of teams I've been in was great, promotion and higher leagues - that's way off but I can see the start of something. More importantly it's not just seeing it, I can feel the buzz."

"I see these lads every day at the training ground having great banter. Sometimes they are still in at two or three o'clock in the afternoon playing head tennis, or something like that, having a laugh."

"When we are training it's

serious but they are really good friends off the pitch and I think that helps."

"Without comparing it to the Crazy Gang, we want to have our own identity and I think we are carving that out at the moment."

He added: "The Crazy Gang was fantastic. We lived off team spirit in the Premier League. We didn't have as much talent as some of the other teams but we really made our spirit count."

"Some of the days under John Beck when I was at Lincoln City and Preston in the lower leagues, I probably take more comparison with that because we're in the lower leagues and the spirit we have is definitely comparable to

that."

"That means everybody involved with Wycombe, fans included. They stayed behind and got involved with clapping and high-fiving the players after the Yeovil game."

"I didn't have to encourage the players to do it, they wanted to go over and see the fans. The buzz is something special at the moment."

"As a group, and me especially as the manager, I'm confident we can beat anybody in this division and I really mean that."

"The confidence has built to a level now where we're consistently thinking, 'Who's next? Let's go and take these on'."

"We don't look at the table and

think 'We're playing these', we are confident we can beat anyone as a team."

Ainsworth added he has been impressed with the attitude of the players when they've either stepped into or dropped out of the starting XI.

He said: "When I change the team, the ones who've been left out have been superb. Matt McClure the other night, he just came on and was normal Matt McClure, not sulking or anything."

"To be able to rotate the team with 25 men rather than 25 people who might sulk or might worry, it's been great. The lads have made that easy for me."



FLAT OUT: Gareth Ainsworth celebrates with his posse after scoring against Bristol Rovers