

'I back myself in any game'

■ Is this the man to solve Blues' goal shortage?

REECE Styche has promised Wanderers fans he's the man to get the goals for his new side – just as soon as he's learnt his team mates' names.

The striker has impressed with his performances in his first two games for Blues, having only joined the club on loan from Forest Green Rovers on Friday.

His goals to games ratio with the Gloucestershire outfit was an impressive one in three and the 24-year-old is confident he can replicate that form at Wanderers once he's settled in.

Styche said: "I'm starting to ease my way in with the boys and getting to know them.

"There's a lot more to come from me. It's my third start in a year and as soon as I get my match fitness up and my sharpness, things can only get better for me. I back myself in any game.

"I'm just learning how the boys play at the minute. I'm playing a bit off the cuff. When I settle in a bit more, play a few more games and get to know my team mates, I genuinely believe I'll do well here.

"I'm still learning people's names and calling them mate and stuff. I've only been here four or five days and everything's going to take time, but I genuinely believe as soon as I get that first goal there will be plenty more."

by **ANDY CARSWELL**

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Supporters have been impressed with Styche's ability to hold the ball up and bring others into play, but the former plumber said there's much more to his game than just being a target man.

He said: "I'm a very direct player, I'm not just someone who holds the ball up. I'm someone who turns and gets at people and unsettles people. I like getting in behind and stretching the play.

"I score any type of goal – long rangers, inside the box, I've scored a couple with my head. I'll take them as they come."

Styche scored more than 30 goals for Rovers before a snapped cruciate ligament sidelined him a year ago, and he's now out to make up for lost time.

He said: "There's a lot of people who've come back from the injury I've had.

"Nowadays with the technology and the surgeons I think it's another injury and that's all I treated it as, just another injury.

"It shows my mental strength – nothing will stop me playing unless it's something completely out of my hands. It was a bad one but mentally it's made me even stronger."



Reece Styche has arrived from Forest Green after missing a year through injury.

Wanderers blow two-goal lead

GARETH Ainsworth said Wanderers' defence was punished for failing to react quickly enough as he saw his side give away a two-goal lead in the draw at Mansfield Town.

Blues had been on course for victory as midfield partners Stuart Lewis and Josh Scowen both scored to put them in command.

But five minutes after going 2-0 up Blues switched off to allow Lee Stevenson to pull one back before one-time Wanderers target Ollie Palmer made it home and away goals against the Chairboys as he earned Mansfield a point.

Ainsworth said: "I'm disappointed because the goal that equalised was off the bar and we didn't react as quickly as Ollie Palmer.

"I can't have one of their players reacting quicker than one of

Mansfield 2 Wanderers 2
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our players."

Blues took an early lead as Lewis was left in acres of space just outside the box, with the skipper curled the ball round a statuesque Alan Marriott and into the net.

Goalkeeper Matt Ingram made a jaw dropping reaction save to deny Matt Rhead before Scowen thumped home an emphatic second half volley to seemingly put Blues on top.

But Stevenson scrambled home from close range after the visitors failed to clear their lines, before Palmer tapped home the rebound after Ingram had done superbly to tip Chris Clements' shot onto the crossbar.

Dreadful home run continues

DESPAIRING Wanderers boss Gareth Ainsworth described the penalty awarded against his side in the loss to Portsmouth as the softest he had ever seen.

The match ultimately turned on referee Charles Breakspear's decision to give Pompey a spot kick early in the second half.

It resulted in Ryan Taylor scoring the only goal of the game to condemn Blues to a tenth straight home game without a win.

But Ainsworth was left bemused by the penalty decision, and also claimed a Portsmouth player batted the ball away off the goalline with his hand and insisted Gary Doherty's chalked-off late equaliser should have stood.

He said: "I thought it was the softest penalty I have ever seen. I don't think any Portsmouth player appealed for the penalty, the

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referee just seemed to give it.

"The referee sees what he sees and that was their one shot on goal and they scored it.

"I think it's a soft penalty, Doc thinks it's a soft penalty, but the referee thinks it is a penalty and that's the decision that counts. We did put the ball in the net – and again I question that decision – and there's a handball on the line, but when your luck's out, it's out."

Wanderers were also foiled by a string of first half saves from inspired visiting goalkeeper Trevor Carson, who kept out Josh Scowen's header and Matt McClure twice, before his best stop kept out Reece Styche's powerful close range effort.

Morgan ruled out

DEAN Morgan is definitely out of the Wanderers squad to face Bury tomorrow – but Paris Cowan-Hall could be fit.

Manager Gareth Ainsworth said both men, along with Jon-Paul Pittman, were close to making a return to contention to the Blues first team squad after injury.

Cowan-Hall is the most likely of the trio to be fit in time for the journey to Gigg Lane after being sidelined with a knee ligament problem.

Ainsworth said: "Paris is probably closest. Dean will miss this game, JP as well. They are all close but this game may just come too close for them to make the trip.

"They haven't trained with the team yet. Until they do that we can't really judge them. The reports from Theo [Farley, physio] are they are very close."

New coach joins

BARRY Richardson is Wanderers' new goalkeeping coach, with Gareth Ainsworth's former team mate replacing Lee Harrison.

Ainsworth said Richardson will take over the role vacated by Harrison's departure to West Ham earlier this month until at least the end of the season.

The 44-year-old was a team mate of the Wanderers boss at Lincoln City and Preston North End in the 1990s.

Ainsworth said: "He has a wealth of knowledge. He's a top guy and the lads have already taken to him really well.

"Matt Ingram and Charlie Horlock trust him already, which is really important. I trust him implicitly, which is number one for any football manager.

"He's not like for like because you'll never replace Lee perfectly, but he's as close as we can get."



Max agrees new deal

MAX Kretzschmar has signed a new long-term contract with Wanderers – and manager Gareth Ainsworth hopes more will follow his lead.

The 20-year-old midfielder has put pen to paper on a two-and-a-half-year deal.

Ainsworth said: "Max has proved to us he can handle first team football and we've rewarded him.

"He's got an eye for goal, he's affected a couple of games when he's come off the bench.

"There's definitely more parts for Max Kretzschmar to play this season. He's probably surpassed all his dreams already this season in what he could do. I've got high hopes for Max."

Ainsworth is hopeful more players will commit their future to the club before the summer.

He said: "The young boys you've groomed for football for five or six years are really important for the club. Once you see something in them you reward them and keep them at the club."