



'I do get upset when it gets belittled by people playing totally different squads, because it's The FA Cup. The FA Cup means a lot to people in this country.'

Wanderers begin their FA Cup campaign at Barnet tomorrow. Despite a smallish squad and flying high at the top of League Two, they have vowed to field their strongest team in the competition.

Concentrate on the league? Rubbish, this is the FA Cup

GARETH Ainsworth has vowed to play his strongest possible team as Wanderers begin their FA Cup quest at Conference leaders Barnet tomorrow.

The Blues boss said he won't be using the break from their League Two campaign as a chance to rest players or experiment – saying instead he's targeting a place in the third round and a possible shot at one of the big boys.

And with money tight at Adams Park, Ainsworth sees a long cup run as a useful way of adding to the club coffers and giving their promotion push a boost.

He said: "It's The FA Cup, which

by **ANDY CARSWELL**
acarswell@london.newsquest.co.uk

is something I have always treated with the utmost respect.

"Growing up I was a big advocate of The FA Cup. It means a lot to me; it means a lot to the big teams, never mind the smaller teams.

"I do get upset when it gets belittled by people playing totally different squads, because it's The FA Cup. The FA Cup means a lot to people in this country.

"I'll be putting out the strongest team that I possibly can because I want to win the FA Cup games."

He added: "For smaller clubs, finances are tight. The prize money is good in the FA Cup for the later rounds if you can get a few wins under your belt in the earlier rounds.

"Not just that, you can get a plum draw of one of the top teams when the Premier League and Championship teams come into it in round three.

"The aim will be getting in the hat for round three. To do that you have to win round one, and that's Barnet on Saturday."

Ainsworth admits however his side have a tough challenge on their hands as they face the runaway

Conference leaders – who this week added former Wanderers manager Gary Waddock to their coaching staff – in their own back yard.

The Bees are nine points clear at the top and have already scored 43 goals in just 19 matches.

Wanderers won 1-0 at The Hive in a pre-season friendly in August but Ainsworth said their hosts will be a completely different proposition tomorrow.

He said: "It'll be a very tough game. They are flying, they're big spenders in the Conference and have got some names who could still play in the Football League with ease.

"They'll be organised and we'll have to be at our best to get anything from Barnet. They are top of the Conference and they are top for a reason."

**See pages 124/125
for more Blues news.**

