



Lynch ready to play if he's called upon for Rovers tie

By Dave Peters

ALEX Lynch says he will be ready and raring to go if he is called upon to don the gloves in Tuesday's JPT tie at Bristol Rovers.

His last act in a Wycombe shirt was at Wembley in the play-off final where he saved one of Southend's penalties.

Since then, he has been bench-warming for Wanderers, waiting for his turn behind Matt Ingram, who is widely regarded as the best keeper in League Two.

But clubs often rest some players in the JPT and that could afford Lynch his chance.

He said: "If I get my chance I will be ready. I will never be chucked into a game where I was as nervous as I was for that play-off semi-final first leg at Plymouth in front of 15,000 fans. Even if I was to go on and play for Man United I don't think I would ever feel as fearful as I did before that game. But by the time I had done the warm up, I felt fine.

"I gained so much confidence from that and felt a million dollars after those two Plymouth games and when it came to Wembley I just felt this is what I do now and treated it like another game."

Since then he has returned to his position as understudy to Ingram.

Lynch said: "I knew I would have to stay patient. Matt is number one and it is my job to work hard and be ready when my chance comes like it did last season. I couldn't have much harder competition for that shirt. Matt is such a good goalkeeper, the best I have seen at this level. He is so consistent, he performs week in,



Alex Lynch has vowed to be ready if he makes his first outing of the season for Wycombe in next week's JPT trip to Bristol Rovers. Picture: ANITA ROSS MARSHALL

week out and he is always working on stuff to improve."

Lynch is the only squad member who has not played a minute for Wanderers so far this season.

He said: "I want to get some game time and hopefully grab my chance. Last season was mad. I had been on loan at Burnham and finished the season at Wembley. It was totally crazy."

He got his chance when Ingram was crocked in the final league game at Northampton and played in both legs of the play-off semi-final and the final.

He said: "Barry Richardson (goal-keeping coach) said 'this is why I brought you to the club. I trust you' and that was a massive lift.

"Playing at Wembley was amazing. Everyone was gutted when

Southend scored in the last minute and so was I. But then I had a little smile and thought this might be my chance to be a hero.

"When I saved one, I remember looking at my mum and dad and thinking 'I've just saved a penalty at Wembley'. I said to myself 'do it again, do it again' but unfortunately it didn't happen. Hopefully, I will get other chances in my career."

Hard yards pay off

JACOBSON REVEALS BLUES HAVE SET-PIECE STRENGTH IN DEPTH

PRACTICE made perfect for Joe Jacobson as his second-half free-kick set Wanderers en route to victory at Exeter City on Saturday.

The left back steered his shot over the wall and past Bobby Olejnik for the opener in the 2-0 win after Wanderers had been under incessant pressure.

And he revealed the training ground trick which helped turn him into a dead ball king.

He said: "There's a few of us who stay out after training most days practising free-kicks.

"We put the mannequins out and practice against a wall that is only eight yards away [two yards closer] than normal. That really helps us to get it right on the day.

"There's a good few of us who can really take a good free-kick and thankfully it was my turn to get one and it paid off.

"We'd had a good session a couple of days before, there was five or six of us at it and there was a great standard between all of us."

He added: "Sido ran over wanting it but I said 'no this one is mine'.

"If I could take one anywhere that's one position where I'd like to put it down."

WANDERERS: Wycombe hold firm to beat City Blues' classic smash and grab

IT'S not the done thing in these parts to talk about promotion – but Wanderers' away form is making it hard to ignore.

They are unbeaten on the road this season and haven't lost on their travels since an Easter Monday defeat at last season's champions Burton.

A fortnight ago they became the first team to score at the home of the then league leaders Leyton Orient. Then on Saturday, they stuck another two past Exeter City who, like Orient, prior to Wycombe's visit had not conceded a home goal either.

Manager Gareth Ainsworth, chairman Andrew Howard and the players are steadfastly sticking to their '61 points is our target' mantra. It is the line that rebounds off the tongue of anyone connected to the club whenever they are asked about the 'P' word. But the facts paint a different picture. Wycombe are the

real deal, their away form makes them promotion candidates whether they want to admit it or not, and no team will look forward to putting the welcome mat out for them.

Wycombe, by their own admission, were relatively poor at Exeter. They were under the cosh for the majority of the first half and the first five minutes of the second suggested little better was to come.

But they never caved in, and aided by some poor Exeter finishing, particularly from former Wanderer Joel Grant, they defended stubbornly. They fearlessly threw their bodies in the way of shots and repeatedly got their heads or boots in first to deal with a succession of crosses into their box. They kept working for each other and waited for their chance.

And when that chance did come, boy, did they take it.

Joe Jacobson waved his wand of a

left foot at a 51st-minute free-kick on the edge of the penalty area to put the Blues one up with Wycombe's first shot on target.

Their second attempt on target, six minutes later, also ended up in the back of the net as Michael Harriman benefited from another Grant mistake to launch a rare incursion into the Exeter half to present Garry Thompson with a one-on-one.

That was it. Job done. Wycombe retreated back into their defensive shell which never looked like cracking. Exeter made three substitutions, hammered in shots, fired in crosses but there was no way through and despite all their pressure they knew it and looked a beaten bunch long before the finish.

The hosts will point to the big decisions going against them. Marcus Bean could have seen red for an ill-advised lunge on David Wheeler and

they had a penalty claim turned down when Jordan Moore-Taylor appeared to be hauled back while shooting – decisions which Ainsworth admitted could have gone against his team.

But all promotion teams have luck, Wycombe had that, but they have got so much more about them as well as a manager who knows how to get the best out of limited resources.

At St James Park he could have blown his top and made a raft of half-time substitutions, but he kept faith, delivered his instructions in a no holds barred manner, and then looked on as his team snatched all three points with a classic smash and grab raid.

Ainsworth said: "There were a few choice words at half time.

"I gave the boys a rocket and got a reaction.

"If Exeter had taken their chances it would have been a different story."