

Thompson back and in the hunt for Blues

STRIKER believes he did enough to stay in side

By Harry Gray

IT HAS been a difficult month for Garry Thompson as suspension and the form of others had seen him slip down the pecking order of strikers at Adams Park.

Nevertheless the 35-year-old remains the Blues' top scorer this term with seven goals, and has been a hugely committed figure throughout the campaign.

This willingness to work has made a six-game absence from the starting XI difficult for Thompson to take, and his return to the fold in Saturday's 1-0 win over Stevenage all the sweeter.

Thompson's time away from the limelight was, of course, partly self-inflicted after he picked up a red card against Dagenham and Redbridge.

He said: "In my eyes I was unfortunate to get sent off and I think it has probably been a month since I last started a match, so I was pleased to get out there and be involved in a win.

"We have a small squad and you know everyone will get utilised. I was under no illusions and didn't expect to come straight back into the team. Like anything you have to work hard, do well in training and hope that you get the chance to play. I got that chance today and I like to think I did enough to stay in the team."

Thompson's return coincided with a departure



Garry Thompson returned to the Blues' starting line-up against Stevenage.

Picture: ANITA ROSS MARSHALL

from the two-man attack which Gareth Ainsworth has employed more often than not this season. The former Notts County man was joined by Paul Hayes and Rowan Liburd up front as the Chairboys put together a more potent performance, which featured 14 shots on goal.

Reading loanee Liburd has undoubtedly added a fresh spark to the Wanderers' front line and Ainsworth was pleased with

what he saw from his new-look attack.

"They complement each other well and I think Paul Hayes has hit a real vein of form. He's had a stop-start season but is back playing some top stuff now," Ainsworth explained. "Thommo works well in a two or a three and I can't see Rowan Liburd having two better players either side of him than those two"

Despite the positivity surrounding Wycombe's new-

look attacking triumvirate, goal scoring remains the club's main issue.

Thompson has not found the net since Boxing Day – a run of 12 games – and no Wycombe striker has scored since the 2-1 win at Dagenham and Redbridge in February. Thompson does, however, echo his manager's sentiments with regard to the new formation and also believes Liburd can have a big impact.

"Rowan is a good focal

point and takes one or two players out of the game, so it is enjoyable for us to work around him," Thompson said. "He was a threat all game with his size and aerial presence. He has a great touch and is a typical target man. He is pacey and can run in behind. I think he would be the first to say he is disappointed not to have come out of the game with a goal.

"Hopefully he will score soon and go on a good run."

More than just a paycheck for Wanderers

THE financial trappings of a footballer's lifestyle are well documented but Gareth Ainsworth says his players are motivated by much more than money.

The Wycombe Wanderers manager feels the motivation to play comes from enjoyment rather than financial reward, particularly in the case of Saturday's match winner Luke O'Nien.

The 21-year-old scored in

the 70th minute to secure a 1-0 win over Stevenage and Ainsworth highlighted the pleasure the former Watford academy man takes from simply playing.

He said: "Luke epitomises what Wycombe are about with his work ethic and his happiness around the place.

"Not only can he go out and play in front of fans and score goals, but he gets paid for that as well and

that is what I want to get across to people.

"The players love playing for Wycombe and playing football and to boot they get paid to do it. Money is secondary to Luke though, and he just loves being out there playing football.

"He is one of the hardest working pros I have come across and he will be a part of my plans for as long as he keeps that work ethic."

For evidence of this en-

joyment you need look no further than the joyous celebrations which followed O'Nien's strike.

The goal earned Wycombe all three points in what was a one-sided match, and the midfielder spoke of the pleasure he took from a match-winning moment which was a product of hours of work on the training ground.

"I don't really know what I was doing for the celebra-

tion but I really enjoyed it. (Michael) Harriman jumped at a funny angle and sort of rugby tackled me," he explained.

"We work on repetition in training and I get hundreds and hundreds of those sort of balls fed into me so when the moment comes I am ready for it.

"It is brilliant to come away with the three points. Everyone ran and ran and it is great to get the goal."