

## Zaki Earns Comparisons With Shearer

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As Wigan manager Steve Bruce's calculated gamble on Egyptian striker Amr Zaki continues to pay dividends, the player is beginning to attract comparisons with Premier League goal machine Alan Shearer

Amr Zaki has already scored four Premier League goals - five in all competitions from as many matches - to suggest Wigan Athletic boss Steve Bruce pulled off a major transfer coup in the summer when he took the Egypt international on loan for the season from Zamalek.

Wigan chairman, Dave Whelan, is also excited about the striker's obvious potential.

"Zaki has been sensational already," Whelan told the Manchester Evening News. "He does remind me of Shearer. He's a natural striker too who is so hungry and so determined."

Shearer, of course, was a goalscoring legend on Tyneside and given the turmoil at St James's Park at the moment, it is ironic that Zaki is just the sort of player to excite the Toon Army. No doubt Bruce, himself a Geordie, is well aware of that too as he allows himself a pat on the back for bringing such a talent to the JJB.

The MEN understands that Zaki was also recommended to whoever at Newcastle is responsible for player transfers, but Bruce beat them to the punch.

He watched Zaki play in the African Cup of Nations, travelled to Cairo and then left Wigan general manager John Benson to complete the loan signing.

Zaki has made a dream start to Premier League life, and told the MEN: "I have felt comfortable here very quickly.

"The manager says to me I should play my natural game and not be frightened to be myself. That is fine by me. The Premier League is a very good standard, but to me every defender and every goalkeeper is the same. They are there to be beaten.

"The best way for me to help Wigan is to score. That's what I'm paid to do and that's what I want to keep doing today, tomorrow and for the rest of the season."

Bruce says he has just told Zaki to play to his strengths, which include power and tenacity.

"I'm a person who never gives up," said Zaki. "I'm like a bouncing ball. I keep coming back and I keep looking to score.

"I've already scored a few goals and it has gone well for me, but I was disappointed we lost the first two games because I felt we deserved to win them both. We just have to keep going.

"When I'm on the pitch the only thing I think about is winning"

Zaki also used the medium of Wigan's match day programme on Saturday to thank the fans for the helping him and his

family settle in.

He said: "The fans have been chanting my name. That's great for any footballer. It gives you confidence and makes you want to put on a show for them.

"The fans have been brilliant and I hope I can keep repaying them by scoring lots of goals."

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