

Lennie praises battling Hatters

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LUTON manager Lennie Lawrence couldn't have been more pleased with his Hatters' first day league win for five years.

"I'm a relieved manager," he said. "We controlled the game on the such a blindingly hot day. I'm highly pleased with the way that we worked so hard."

Luton snatched the win at Adams Park thanks to a glorious 20-yard free-kick from captain Steve Davis.

The powerfully built defender drilled a screamer of a free kick past Wycombe goalkeeper Martin Taylor after the lively Matthew Spring had been unceremoniously upended by Wycombe defender Steve Brown.

Lawrence added: "This club has had enough misfortune over the years. We earnt

Wycombe W 0 Luton Town 1

By Stephen Smith

our luck today." That luck summed up a great escape after a terrible miss from Wycombe striker Keith Scott. Sent through after an accurate pass from midfielder David Carroll, Scott, from just four yards and with only goalkeeper Kelvin Davis to beat, hammered the ball against the Luton post.

Luton were pleased to give a debut to Frenchman Herve Bacque after the former Monaco striker had received last-minute international clearance.

But Bacque should have notched Luton's second just after the re-start.

Goalscorer Davis and winger Dwight Marshall set

up the opportunity, but the 22-year-old Frenchman drove wildly over from three yards after Wycombe defender McCarthy had played the ball into his path.

Wycombe's new manager Neil Smillie tried to sharpen his lacklustre forward line with the introduction of substitutes John Cornforth and Paul Reid and it was the former Arsenal striker Reid who did give heart to the home supporters with two late stinging drives that were held well by Davis.

But it was Luton who continually looked able to increase the lead.

Substitute Liam George, who had amazingly gone into

referee Tony Bates book within 28 seconds of his appearance, should have wrapped the game up on 78 minutes. Irishman Phil Gray had worked the room before delivering a powerful cross that evaded Wycombe goalkeeper Taylor only for George to head tamely with an open goal beckoning.

Wycombe's manager Smillie said: "It wasn't good enough."

Wycombe: Taylor, Kavanagh, Vinnicombe, Ryan, Cousins, McCarthy, Carroll, Scott, Stallard, Harkin, Brown. Subs: Beeton, Cornforth, Read.

Luton: K. Davis, Alexander, Thomas, Spring, S. Davis, Johnson, McKinnion, Evers, Bacque, Gray, Marshall. Subs: White, McGowan, George.

Referee: A Bates (Stoke).



TRICKY CUSTOMER: Luton's new signing Herve Bacque outmanoeuvres Wycombe's Paul McCarthy in a London derby clash.