

Lennie: Best team won it

LENNIE LAWRENCE admitted his promotion-chasing Cardiff City side were soundly beaten on a disappointing Boxing Day return to Kenilworth Road for the former Hatters boss.

Home supporters booed Lawrence on his return to Luton and belted out derisory songs at his expense.

But the experienced manager was magnanimous enough to concede that the best team won on the day after late goals by Tony Thorpe and Steve Howard secured maximum points for the Hatters.

Lawrence said: "We have never conceded so many chances to another side for as long as I've been involved with Cardiff. They had three off the line and missed two or three gilt-edged chances.

"Then the ball fell to the one person you don't want it to on their team – Thorpey. No matter how you dress it up Luton deserved it.

"They pushed three up front and we could not cope. They also had two of their best four players missing."

Lawrence was clearly disappointed by his reception from the home crowd

but not really surprised by the abuse levelled at him. He said: "That's life. I would not expect it at any of the other clubs I have managed at and I would not get it. People pay their money and that's the way they feel.

"I had to sell a lot of players out of financial necessity while I was here but people form an opinion and that's the way of it. That's the way they are and you have to get on with it."

Thorpe fired the Hatters in front on 80 minutes after former Premiership defender Spencer Prior failed to cut out Dean Crowe's pass. Top scorer Howard then volleyed in his 12th goal of the season after the Cardiff defence had failed to clear an Ahmet Brkovic corner.

Hatters boss Joe Kinnear, in stark contrast to Lawrence, was the subject of fervent adulation at the final whistle and said afterwards: "I thoroughly enjoyed it and we thoroughly deserved to win the game. It was a great atmosphere and I'm pleased to give the fans a decent Christmas."

The three points were also the perfect birthday present for Kinnear who turned 56 on Friday.



WE'VE DONE IT! Steve Howard soaks up the atmosphere after the win over Cardiff.