SAINTS

RORY DELAP



Was uneasy with a few crosses, but still kept a clean sheet.



Had a decent game until his late sending off.



DARREN KENTON

Very composed and assured. Read the game well.



DARREN POWELL

As always, does what he does best – is big and strong and wins the balls in the air.



DANNY HIGGINBOTHAM

Turning into a real leader for the team on the pitch. Another strong display.



KAMIL KOSOWSKI

Got about a bit. No killer passes, but still a useful perform-



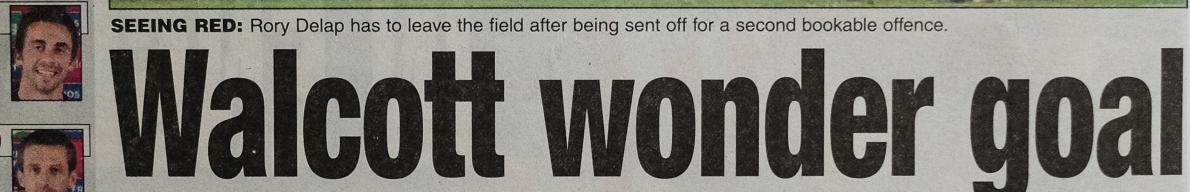
MATT OAKLEY

In Quashie's absence, he and Prutton are forming a good partnership in the centre of midfield.



DAVID PRUTTON

Really adds drive to the team as well as more purpose as he gets fitter.



NEIL McCANN

Did so much good work but gave the ball away a few times.



THEO WALCOTT

What a finish!



KENWYNE JONES

Was big, strong and his presence gave Saints some balance up front.



SUBSTITUTES

Defended manfully on his long-awaited return to Saints league action.

Leon Best (Walcott 85)

Martin Cranie (Jones 90)

Unused: Paul Smith, Brett Ormerod.

COMEBACK: Chris Baird in his first

league outing since May 2004.

THE said the result would make no difference.

SEEING RED: Rory Delap has to leave the field after being sent off for a second bookable offence.

New-look Saints team gets the

But everybody at St Mary's yesterday knew a Saints win would give caretaker management duo Dave Bassett and Dennis Wise a great shout to be appointed Harry Redknapp's successors on a permanent basis.

And the pair, who first began working together at Wimbledon back in the mid-1980s after Wise didn't get taken on as a player at The Dell, delivered three points in a battling display that underlined everything the two of them can

There was a terrific spirit about the Saints side.

Many of Bassett's best teams have been built on such a spirit and unity, instilling that underdog mentality and using it to get

Wise, likewise, has displayed that throughout his playing career and his short time in management with Millwall where, against all the odds, he guided them to an FA Cup final in 2004.

After just a full week in charge, in which some of the players have raved over their training, the Saints camp seemed happy.

And when it came to heads going in where it hurts out on the field to ensure the win was theirs, they defended like marines.

Not only was there a spirit about the team, but an organisation and purpose as well.

Bassett is also well known for making his teams well drilled, for ensuring every individual knows

what is expected of them.
And Saints looked just that.
Bassett and Wise bring a fresh perspective to the job while also needing no settling-in period.

Although the likes of Djamel Belmadi and Ricardo Fuller will still have a part to play this season, the temporary management team have their own ideas. Hence Kenwyne Jones was given

his first start since late September while some of the young blood – Martin Cranie, Chris Baird and

Leon Best – were back on the bench in a new-look squad.

Baird hadn't played a league match for Saints since May 2004 and Best since October 30, 2004, while Cranie's last game before injury was at Millwall in October.

The advantage Bassett and Wise

The advantage Bassett and Wise have when it comes to choosing a new boss is they don't need time to assess the squad, to get to know the

They already know them inside

out and vice-versa. That means everybody can get cracking straight away.

That is a massive advantage with the important Christmas schedule coming up.

If Saints are to strengthen their claim for a play-off place, they need points over this period.

It can't wait much longer while a new man finds his feet.

Yesterday's game was hardly the greatest spectacle in the world.

The lowest ever league crowd at St Mary's – some 19,086 – weren't massively entertained but went home having seen a win, the opposite of what it's been like recently.

. There was, however, one magic

It came from Theo Walcott.

On 23 minutes he sprinted after a long punt down the field. His pace allowed him to catch defender Chris Coyne but it was hard to see what he would do next as he was level with the edge of the area but on the left touchline.

Totally out of the blue, he tried an outrageous left-footed lob shot on the half-volley.

What was even more outrageous was the fact that it worked.

Keeper Dean Brill was left stranded as the ball sailed over his head and into the far corner.

The first half was otherwise

GOALS

SAINTS alcott 23



ATMOSPHERE

The fans who came made plenty of noise for their team.

ENTERTAINMENT

Not the greatest game, not the worst. But a win is all that matters.

ATTENDANCE

19,086

It seems if you're over 50 you're a dinosaur, you need your pension book. But it doesn't work that way in my opinion



job done for Bassett and Wise



BATTLING DISPLAY: Darren Powell goes up with Luton's Steve Howard for a high ball.

Daily Echo picture by Paul Collins

lights up St Mary's

rather forgettable. Neil McCann had a decent penalty shout turned down, Brill saved direct from Matt Oakley's left-wing free kick, while in stoppage time Rory Delap headed off the

line from Coyne's overhead kick.
The second half didn't improve

Walcott got a couple of one-on-one openings but was denied by a good tackle and a good save.

Luton, who have now lost six away games in a row, failing to score in the last five of them, tried hard but couldn't produce a killer edge to equalise.

As the game developed into a scrap, Delap was sent off for a second bookable foul – the fourth dismissal of his professional career

and the first since seeing red at home to Bolton in February 2002.

And, when Saints needed to show some backbone and determination they did in and held out nation, they dug in and held out for the win – only their sixth in 22 league matches this season.

The jubilation at the final whistle summed it up.
Perhaps this is the start of a new

Bassett-Wise era for Saints.

They have certainly converted a few more fans after yesterday.

And there was no better covering note for the job application than three much-needed points.



MAKING HIMSELF HEARD: Dennis Wise.

VERDICT:

Dave Bassett and Dennis Wise showed a glimpse of what they have to offer as an organised and determined Saints side earned a deserved win. They should deservedly and have proved their worth.



STAT ATTACK

Shots off target: Saints 5 Luton 7 Corners: Saints 4 Luton 10 Offsides: Saints 10 Luton 6

HIGHLIGHT

Walcott's goal. A touch of class worthy of winning the match.



LOWLIGHT

No more goals for Saints - but that's being picky!

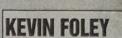


23 Crewe

24 Millwall

LUTON







CHRIS COYNE



MARCUS HEIKKINEN



PAUL UNDERWOOD



AHMET BRKOVIC



KEVIN NICHOLLS



STEVE ROBINSON



CARLOS EDWARDS



ENOCH SHOWUNMI



SUBSTITUTES

STEVE HOWARD

Peter Holmes (Edwards 69)6 Unused: Rob Beckwith, Leon Barnett, Warren Feeney.

BAD BOYS

SAINTS

Booked: Delap, Niemi. Sent off: Delap.



Booked: Heikkinen, Nicholls, Howard.

REFEREE

LEE PROBERT Loved the sound of his whistle. Is probably still blowing it now.





incredible

goal to win the match.

Southampton get promoted Pompey get relegated

Exclusive to

bet24.com

CHAMPIONSHIP INFORMATION PANEL

COCA COLA CHAMPIONSHIP											
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts				
1 Reading	23	17	5	1	46	12	56				
2 Sheff Utd	23	16	4	3	46	21	52				
3 Watford	23	10	9	4	38	27	39				
4 Leeds	22	11	6	5	28	20	39				
5 Cardiff	23	9	7	7	33	26	34				
6 Luton	23	10	4	9		32					
7 Stoke	23	11	1	11	29	32					
8 Preston	23		12	4		21					
9 Crystal Palace	21	9	5	7		24					
10 Wolves	23		11	5		20					
11 Burnley	23		5			29					
12 SAINTS	22		13		25						
13 QPR	23		8	8		33					
14 Derby	23	111111111111111111111111111111111111111	11	7		33					
15 Hull	23	6		9		25					
16 Norwich	23	7	5	11	23	30	26				
17 Ipswich	23	6	8	9		36	26				
18 Coventry	23	5	10	8	28	34	25				
19 Leicester	22	5	9		25						
20 Plymouth	22	4	9		18						
21 Sheff Wed	23	4	8	11	17		20				
22 Brighton	23	2	13	8	22	35	19				

FORTHCOMING CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES

Friday, December 16 Brighton v Hull, Preston v Sheff Utd.

Saturday, December 17

Burnley v Watford, Cardiff v Derby, Leicester v Crewe, Luton v Stoke, Millwall v Reading, Norwich v SAINTS, Plymouth v Crystal Palace, Sheff Wed v Ipswich, Wolverhampton v Leeds.

TOP SCORERS

23	6 8	9	26	36	26		LI	C	T	Bangoura (Stoke)	8	0	8
23	5 10	8	28	34	25	Akinbiyi (Burnley)	11	2	13	Doyle (Reading)	8	0	8
22	5 9	8	25	28	24	Kitson (Reading)	8	4	12	Healy (Leeds)	8	0	8
22	4 9	9	18	29	21	Jerome (Cardiff)	10	1	11	Hulse (Leeds)	8	0	8
	4 8					King (Watford)	11	0	11	Koumas (Cardiff)	7	1	8
	2 13					Young (Watford)	9	1	10	McSheffrey (Cov)	7	1	8
	4 7					Cort (Wolves)	9	0	9	Shipperley (S Utd)	8	0	8
	3 8					Kabba (Sheff Utd)	9	0	9	de Vries (Leicester)	6	2	8