

Theo-logy lesson for boss Bassett

WALCOTT STRIKE WOWS SAINTS

DAVE BASSETT is hoping Southampton's teenage sensation Theo Walcott has earned him the chance to become the permanent successor to Harry Redknapp.

Whizzkid Walcott earned Bassett his first victory as caretaker boss with a first-half wonder goal.

The veteran manager now plans to sit down with Saints chairman Rupert Lowe to discuss a long-term deal.

And the former Sheffield United, Wimbledon and Nottingham Forest boss said: "I spoke to the chairman last Sunday and we agreed we would have another chat after this game.

"I've made no secret of the fact that I would like the job and we will be speaking again at some point in the next few days.

"I believe I have the right credentials and I think we have the players here to achieve something this season."

Other contenders for the job include Watford chief Adrian Boothroyd and Derby counterpart Phil Brown. Lowe has also been inundated with applications from the continent.

Bassett is hoping his 10 previous promotions will give him the edge. He added: "It seems the fashionable thing in this country is to have younger managers in place.

"If you look on the continent, in places like Italy and Spain, the managers are always older. I have been working now with Dennis Wise for a couple of weeks and we have made a formal

Southampton 1 Luton 0

By JIM O'BRIEN

application for the job. I knew Dennis as a player and worked with him at Millwall and we think we have the right combination."

The day began badly for Saints supremo Lowe, with fans staging a protest outside the ground calling for his resignation in the wake of Harry Redknapp's shock return to Portsmouth.

Walcott put a smile back on the fans' faces in the 23rd minute with

into the top right hand corner.

Walcott jettied off to the prestigious BBC Sports Personality of the Year awards following the game after being nominated in the top three for the Young Sportsman of the Year.

The £8million-rated striker could have been making the trip to London with a couple more goals tucked away in his locker but for some bad luck in front of the net.

Brill produced a superb one-on-one save to keep out Walcott's close-range pile-driver after a storming 30-yard run in the 56th minute.

Saints huffed and puffed their way through in the second half but never looked like finishing Luton off.

Defender Chris Coyne and captain Kevin Nicholls both had shots cleared off the line as the visitors pressed for an equaliser.

Saints defender Rory Delap did his best to give Mike Newell's men a helping hand when he was sent off for a second booking a minute from time.

Delap, booked for a 63rd minute foul on Kevin Foley, scythed down Luton substitute Rowan Vine on the halfway line, giving referee Lee Probert no option.

Deflated Newell failed to appreciate Walcott's heroics, saying: "It was not a special goal from our point of view.

"It was one ball over the top and their player lobbed the goalkeeper.

"People will have bad games and will make mistakes because if they didn't it would be 0-0 every week."



BASSETT: Keen to be the new boss

arguably the best goal of his fledgling career.

Goalkeeper Antti Niemi put a hopeful punt up-field and there seemed no danger when Walcott picked up the ball on the left corner of the penalty area.

The 16-year-old produced a stunning lob to chip the ball over Luton keeper Dean Brill and



HOW'S THAT BOSS? Saints wonder boy Theo Walcott after his lobbed goal