

CHAMPIONS!



'We are the champions,' sing Wycombe's wonders after hearing the great news. Back (l to r): Steve Long, Ken Wilson, Steve Perrin, Howard Kennedy. Front: Bob Dell (half hidden), Jim Jacobs, Gary Lester and Mark Hill. Picture by Jeff Holmes.

Super Wycombe claim back title after 8 years

SALUTE Wycombe Wanderers, champions of the Servowarm Isthmian League.

The Blues clinched their first league title for eight years only minutes after losing 2-1 on aggregate to Sutton in the Hitachi Cup final at Gander Green Lane on Saturday.

Wycombe players trooped disconsolately off the field after that narrow defeat. But in the dramatic next 20 minutes they learned that they had achieved their ultimate goal, after a couple of unlikely results from elsewhere.

The first indication that things might be going their way came when a tremendous cheer rose from their dressing room. They had just heard that main rivals Leytonstone/Ilford had drawn 2-2 at Wokingham.

They could scarcely believe it for the latest word had been that the Londoners were 2-0 ahead at half time. But Berks and Bucks Senior Cup champions stormed back in the second half and one of their goals came from Sean Price, who spent a short time at Wycombe during the Andy Williams era.

Delay

Wycombe then, for the first time, knew they could be champions. But there was still a nagging doubt that a good result for Hayes at bottom club Leatherhead could pose a threat.

After a long delay assistant manager Alan Davies broke the news — Leatherhead 1, Hayes 1 (a most improbable result considering that the Surrey side had won only four games all season).

The place erupted. The players some of them half-dressed went into a quick chorus of "Champions, Champions, Champions," before the real celebrations began in the bar.

Because of the unlikelihood of Wycombe taking the title, nobody had thought of champagne — so instead they celebrated in lager and beer — and in Mark Hill's case — coca-cola.

Even the normally abstemious Mike Keen had a full pint of beer. The Wycombe manager, who must take the credit of restoring the club to the top of the non-league pile, managed a few words.

"I'm so pleased for the players who have been with me for three years. We've been so close before and

now we've got something to show for it."

Mr Keen was not too worried by the Hitachi Cup defeat. "The League is the one we wanted. Who remembers the League Cup winners anyway?"

It is a quite remarkable feat for Wycombe to win the championship, in a season when they have been without the services of talented forwards Steve Long and Terry Glynn for long periods. It was right that they should be there when the title was won.

Astonishing

The signing of Steve Perrin, who came up with some vital goals in the run-in which produced an astonishing number of 28 points from the last ten games. This, ultimately was too much for their rivals.

Indeed Perrin can claim a quite remarkable feat — his third Isthmian title in a row. He was in the Wycombe side that became champions in 1973/74 and 74/75 before going off to play in the Football League.

The manager at that time of course was Brian Lee, now the chairman, who had to return early to Bisham Abbey and so could not join in the celebrations.

The players were hoping for a special game in the next fortnight to mark their winning of the title.

But the Loakes Park pitch is at present out of commission as a strip the length of the ground and as wide as the penalty areas has been dug up for improving drainage. The work should be completed by the end of April.

Flackwell Heath have come to the rescue and will play a special match against the Wanderers next Monday at 7.30pm. Wycombe fans will be able to share in the party atmosphere.

Wycombe's prize for winning the championship is £2,500 which added to their Hitachi Cup runners-up position, makes them more than £3,000 better off.

SERVOWARM ISTHMIAN LEAGUE

PREMIER DIVISION

(Leading positions)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
WYCOMBE	42	26	7	9	79	47	85
Leytonstone	41	24	9	8	70	37	81
Hayes	41	23	8	10	62	40	77
Harrow	40	23	6	11	87	58	75

● Hitachi Cup report and pictures on page 23.