

DEAN JONES reports on Wycombe Wanderers' league campaign

AS inevitable as it was, the departure of Keith Scott looked to be coming back to haunt Football League new boys Wycombe Wanderers.

Wycombe's promotion campaign had begun to look a little short of firepower after Scott moved to FA Carling Premiership Swindon Town for £300,000 last year.

The situation, with only two wins from their last five league and cup games, had reached crisis point for Saturday's game at mid-table Lincoln City after it emerged last week that Tony Hemmings, Wycombe's £25,000 buy from Northwich Victoria, may need surgery for a knee injury.

That crisis may have been eased after Tim Langford came up trumps in a 3-1 win over Lincoln in the Endsleigh Division 3.

Langford was dropped for the team's 3-2 victory over Hereford United at the start of January — his form had gone down the pan.

But manager Martin O'Neill is an astute judge of character and may have felt that his leading scorer needed a good kick up the backside to help him regain his appetite for the game.

Langford was only substitute for Saturday's game. But when Steve Thompson was forced to leave the field injured after only seven minutes, Langford seized his chance.

The diminutive striker weighed in with two superb goals and could easily have scored a hat-trick had he not missed a golden chance in the dying minutes.

It must have acted as a gentle reminder to O'Neill that he still has a goalscorer of some repute in his ranks after the Wycombe boss had reportedly been eager to sign a centre forward last week to boost his side's ailing promotion chances.

Langford told Wycombe's clubcall line that his return to goalscoring form was just the tonic he needed.

"The first was a bit lucky but I was pleased with the second," he said. "I think it is just what I needed and I hope I can go on from there."

But at half time during the Lincoln match the omens did not look good for such a happy ending after the home side had taken the lead and Wycombe were far below their best.

Langford said the gaffer went spare at them during the interval. It must have helped to concentrate the Wycombe team's minds in the second half as Langford and Terry Evans ran in three goals in a 20 minute spell.

Said Langford: "Martin was justified to come in at half time and really lay into us. We didn't compete — that's the be all and end all.

"In the second half we wanted to win and, at the end of the day, Lincoln can't have too many qualms about the result."