

Blues discover the winning knack to see off the Macc



Sunny outlook: Smillie and his dug-out colleagues look on the bright side last Saturday

Picture by MARK SAMMONS Ref: 98-3254BF11

WYCOMBE Wanderers put their worst start for 91 years behind them when they finally won a league game at the 13th time of asking.

The last Nationwide team to win this season, finally buried the hoodoo after 19-and-a-half hours of football, hammering fellow strugglers Macclesfield 3-0.

But they paid a heavy price with Mark Stallard stretchered off after seven minutes with knee ligament damage and strike partner Keith Scott caught up in an ugly spitting row.

Macclesfield's assistant manager Gil Prescott ranted: "Scott spat at John Askey. The linesman saw it and did nothing."

Smillie did not see the alleged incident but said: "I hate people spitting and I've told Scottie that if that's what he's done it's the worst thing you can do in a game."

No-one could condone spitting, but Scott's physical presence and belligerence were vital as Wycombe brushed aside a Macclesfield side who relied on brute force. For once Blues were not a soft touch. They matched the innappropriately nicknamed Silkmen's rough house tactics to triumph through Andy Baird's early opener, Michael Simpson's superb free kick and Scott's second half third.

But it was a success superstitious Smillie might not have expected before the game. He flew into a rage when midfielder Steve Brown plonked his new boots on the table.

Smillie said: "Everyone knows you don't do that, it's bad luck."

Wanderers certainly had their fair share of misfortune. Substitute Andy Baird, who replaced Stallard, lasted just 23 minutes on the

dead leg he received scoring Wycombe's first. And broken nose victim Nicky Mohan had to be substituted when doctors could not stop the bleeding following his collision with team-mate Chris Vinnicombe. Macclesfield were also unlucky having sub Steve Payne sent off after receiving two bookings in the 12 minutes he had.

But nothing could hide Smillie's relief afterwards. He said: "We've started the road to recovery. This is the first step in a long road. We've broken the duck. It was important to get that one result. You don't want to get adrift at the bottom. We can still climb the table."

"It's horrible to get up on a Sunday and you've still not won. It pervades every part of your life, hopefully we've turned the corner. The difference was we took our chances and had Scott and Paul McCarthy's physical presence."