Chairboys Chat with Ryland James

What a great effort

WYCOMBE became the Battling Blues after giving First Division West Bromwich Albion a hard fought match before bowing out of the Worthington Cup in extra-time.

Tuesday night's 4-3 defeat at Adams Park was poor reward for a gutsy performance, where Wycombe created some clear chances.

Only their finishing let them down in what was a brilliant game of football.

After drawing 1-1 at Albion's Hawthorns ground in last Tuesday's first leg, Wycombe made a dramatic start, as Sean Devine flipped Jamie Bates' header over his shoulder to give them an early lead after four minutes.

Albion lifted the tempo of the game after falling behind and from a corner, centre-back Paul Raven scored a routine goal on 14 minutes which caught the Blues defence flat-footed.

Wycombe composed themselves and shortly after Steve Brown turned down the best chance to put the Blues back in front, when he shot wide with only the keeper to beat.

Albion's Lee Hughes showed why he is tipped as a Premiership star on 32 minutes, when he fired a 20 yard inch perfect cross to the far post which Fabian De Freitas headed home to give the visitors a 2-1 lead at the break.

Wycombe's chances of going through to the third round took a knock when goal keeper Mark Westhead limped off after the break with a hamstring strain, and 18-year-old Mark Osborn took over.

With their forwards pressurising the Albion defence, Wycombe always looked like getting an equaliser, but former Irish international Andy Townsend, signed from Middlesborough for £50,000 last week, flat-footed Osborn and he crossed the ball to the waiting Lee Hughes in front of an open goal who was dismayed to see the ball bounce off the cross bar.

Man of the Match Dave Carroll put Wycombe back on even terms when he made a run from deep and unleashed a 30 yard right footed shot into the top of the net to make it 2-2, before running to receive the adoration from the Blues supporters.

● *BATTLING: Midfielder Keith Ryan wins the ball past Dutchman Richard Sneekes*

As the game moved into half an hour of extra time Wycombe kept up the pressure, but youngster Osborn suffered the biggest misfortune of the night when he failed to stop an optomistic shot from Northern Ireland International Jimmy Quinn to give Albion a 3-2 lead.

After the goal, the youngster faced a horrendous barrage of abuse by visiting fans, but his side took the pressure off him by pushing for another equaliser.

With only ten minutes of extra time left Hughes hammered the nail into Wycombe's coffin and after beating brave Matt Lawrence, treated at half time for a cut to the head, for the first time, he drove the ball past Osborn to give WBA a 4-2 lead.

On the final whistle, defender Daryl Burgess was sent off for bring down Jermaine McSporran in the penalty area and from the penalty, Steve Brown made the score line 4-3.

After the dramatic match Blues Boss Sanchez was positive about his sides performance describing the team as "magnificent" and "the best team over the two legs."

Blues face keeper crisis

WYCOMBE are facing a goalkeeper crisis after reserve Mark Westhead picked up a hamstring injury in training on Tuesday before limping out of Tuesday night's game, being replaced by youth keeper Mark Osborn.

First choice keeper Martin Taylor is out after pulling a leg muscle in Saturday's game at Bury and Lawrie Sanchez is looking to bring somebody in to fill the gap.

He said he would look at the options of getting a keeper on loan.

Ladies crash in local derby

WYCOMBE Wanderers Ladies failed to maintain their 100 per cent record as they crashed 8-0 away to Chesham United.

Sunday's local derby at Beaconsfield's ground in Maxwell Road, saw Blues put in a performance lacking in confidence and soon found themselves 5-0 down at half-time in the Northern League match.

Wycombe composed themselves in the second half, but despite Anita West and Karyn Atkinson working hard in the heart of midfield, Chesham still managed to add three more goals in the second half.

The Chesham win leaves them unbeaten at the top of the league.

A little thin on top lads

WHILE Wycombe's poor performance in their 2-0 defeat at Bury had boss Lawrie Sanchez tearing his hair out, some of the players were definitely thin on top.

Wycombe arrived at Bury's Gigg Lane sporting crew cuts after striker Paul Emblen took his clippers to the side.

Only Matt Lawrence, Jason Cousins and Dave Carroll have kept their hair, but the streamlined look was not enough to get the win that would have seen Wycombe go sixth in the league.

Despite a string of chances, Wycombe went down to two second half goals and lost their unbeaten away record to an Andy Preece goal on 53 minutes and a 87th minute strike from Darren Bullock.