



Picture: PETER ROBINSON

THE VICTOR . . . Ken Hibbitt raises his arm in triumph after beating Luton's defence on his way to a hat-trick.

Hibbitt hat-trick puts Luton deeper in relegation trouble

By IAN WILLIAMS

Wolves 5, Luton 2

Kenny Hibbitt scored a hat-trick in 25 minutes at Molineux yesterday to give Wolves their second Easter victory and bring Second Division football a little closer for Luton.

It was Hibbitt's second hat-trick of the season — the first was against Newcastle last August — and confirmed him as Wolves top scorer in the League with 14 goals.

Luton, who had five goals put past them by Roger Davies for Derby County on Saturday, look doomed for relegation.

But they were surprisingly in a 2-1 lead after 29 minutes with goals from 19-year-old John Seaman, making his League debut, and winger Jim Ryan. Then injury-hit Wolves went to work with a vengeance.

Straight in

Willie Carr had opened the scoring after seven minutes direct from a left-wing corner his kick going over full-back John Ryan's head into the net before goalkeeper Eric Barber could react.

At that stage, Wolves could have been three-up for Hibbitt had shot wide with only Barber to beat after 90 seconds and Steve Daley hit the upright.

It was a reflection of Wolves' inconsistent form that they allowed Luton to come back momentarily into

the picture mainly due to their defensive frailties.

But, after Hibbitt had scored his eighth penalty of the season in the 32nd minute after Alan West had handled, there was no further danger.

Hibbitt collected his second goal after 41 minutes as Luton's slow-moving defence were caught napping by a

quick throw-in by Daley and a back-header from Peter Withe.

His hat-trick was completed in the 57th minute when he intercepted a poor pass from full-back Steve Buckley — the younger brother of Walsall's Alan Buckley — before beating Barber with a 30-yard drive.

It was all over for Luton

after this and Withe completed their agony three minutes later when he pounced on a back-pass from John Faulkner and chipped the ball over Barber's head into the roof of the net.

Wolves, who had been handicapped by a back injury to Steve Kindon, decided to bring on Donald Gardner after this goal for his first

taste of big-time soccer and the 19-year-old Jamaican made full use of the experience.

Apart from Hibbitt's goal-scoring exploits, Wolves, who were again without skipper Mike Bailey and centre-forward John Richards, were well served by Daley and Carr in midfield.

Booked

They had Derek Jefferson booked along with Luton's Ron Futchter by FA Cup final referee Pat Patridge. John Ryan also receiving a caution for a heavy tackle on Daley, but this was never an over-aggressive contest.

Bill McGarry, Wolves' manager, said afterwards: "In view of our injuries, I was well pleased with this result. We could have scored many more goals but I thought Hibbitt took his hat-trick marvellously."

Harry Haslam, Luton's genial manager, who refuses to believe that Luton are down yet, said: "We will have to work a lot harder than that. We made Wolves look good because we made so many silly mistakes in defence."

Wolves: Pierce; Williams, Parkin, Jefferson, Munro, McAlle, Hibbitt, Carr, Withe, Kindon, Daley, Sub: Gardner (for Kindon, 61min.).
Luton: Barber; John Ryan, Buckley, Anderson, Faulkner, P. Futchter, Jim Ryan, Seaman, R. Futchter, West, Aston, Sub: Spiring (for R. Futchter, 70min.).