

GREAT! FUTCHER IS BACK

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By BERNARD JOY

Charlton 0 Luton 0

LUTON defender Paul Futchter who narrowly escaped death in a car crash just 11 weeks ago, made a triumphant comeback to League football and has now set his sights on playing for England Under-21s against Italy in March.

He told me: "Luton play against Italy Under-21 on Wednesday so it is a good opportunity to measure myself. I have played in all the six internationals so far and the match against Italy is not until March so I have six weeks to run into full fitness."

"I never doubted I could return to League football. Three months may seem a short time after the injuries I received but it seemed a lifetime to me. The pitch was heavy today and I was pleased the way I went. I have no ill-effects beyond a bit of stitch."

Used head

Stitch! The crash gave him a collapsed lung, six broken ribs and a broken shoulder. Specialists regard his return to fitness as near miraculous. But he shirked nothing and rode the match comfortably, using his head to save his legs.

It was the first goalless draw at the Valley for four years but Charlton manager Andy Nelson was delighted. "It's the best we've played for six games," he said.