

FIVE-GOAL HATTERS DEMOLISH SWANSEA

Luton 5 Swansea 0

DAVID PLEAT is not the kind of manager to get carried away by one good performance, but even the Luton boss permitted himself a few superlatives on Saturday evening . . . and who could blame him?

For Pleat had just seen his side smash Swansea's 17-match unbeaten league record with a five-goal performance, two of which would have graced a football pitch anywhere in the world.

Pleat said delightedly: "The second goal was as good a goal as you will see in your life."

And of Dave Moss, who took his tally to seven goals in seven games, the Hatters' chief raved: "I don't think there is any winger in this country who can make and score goals like David Moss. He is the best I have seen at free kicks."

Moss had just grabbed two more goals, one from a penalty and the other from a direct free kick, to further increase his growing reputation as a dead-ball expert.

The penalty, awarded for a foul on Brian Stein after 10 minutes, provided Luton with just the early breakthrough which Pleat had demanded from his men beforehand, and Swansea were never to recover in spite of all the experience in their side. Men like Tommy Craig and John Mahony had matches which they will want to forget as quickly as possible.

But those who witnessed Luton's second goal in the 17th minute will remember it for months to come. When Mal Donaghy found Alan West after breaking up a Swansea attack, the Welshmen were suddenly short at the back, and West's raking pass from near his own area set Moss away down the left wing. He in turn clipped a low cross into the path of Bob Hatton, and Kenilworth Road erupted as Hatton's shot found the corner of the net.

By KEVIN REDSULL

Soon after Swansea's plight worsened when striker Alan Waddle limped off with a knee injury, forcing John Toshack to introduce substitute defender Nigel Stevenson into a side already overladen with negative ideas.

Luton were the exact opposite. They wanted to win badly, and their play was so much more purposeful in the first half the only surprise was that they didn't score again until the break.

Toshack pushed Jeremy Charles into the attack in the second half, but the 19-year-old wasn't going to have anymore to celebrate on the day it was announced he was the first BBC "Young Player of the Month".

Instead Luton effectively ended the match as a contest by banging in two goals in two minutes just before the hour mark, beginning with another superbly-worked effort.

The Welsh defence was left in ruins as Stein, West and Hatton criss-crossed the ball around with one-touch football before Alan West joyously added the final touch.

The ground was still buzzing when Ricky Hill collected the ball on the edge of the area before ramming in a shot at the near post with everyone else expecting a cross.

Memories of Luton's early-season goal rushes of last year came flooding back as the crowd began to chant "we want five", but they had to wait a little while longer for that.

Luton relaxed a little, which Toshack said afterwards was only natural, allowing Swansea to make some impression and Jake Findlay did splendidly well to block a close range header from Rushbury.

But so disappointing were Swansea as a team that they could have no complaints when Moss wrapped it up with a fifth for the Hatters in the dying seconds.

Brought down just outside the box by Rushbury, who was booked for the offence, Moss required a spot of treatment before picking himself up and proceeding to clip a beautiful free kick over the wall and into the top corner.

Afterwards John Toshack still managed to raise a smile but he made no excuses for his side: "If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I would not have believed how bad some of my players were today."

Neither would I, but that said this was Luton's day and the last word should rest with David Pleat: "It is lovely to see things you try in training coming off like today. Some of the moves were right out of soccer textbooks."



● LUTON'S second goal is on its way into the Swansea net from the reliable boot of Bob Hatton, with Jeremy Charles (left) and keeper Geoff Crudgington both left helpless.