

WELSH

WREXHAM 0 LUTON TOWN 1 31/82

A WEEK AGO, Luton manager David Pleat went on record with the opinion that of this week's two games in Wrexham, Saturday's League match was the one he most wanted to win.

He got his wish — after being full of spirit and determination to take the Second Division points on Saturday, the Town failed to get going on Tuesday night and never looked like earning a place in today's draw for the third round of the Football League Cup.

An 89th minute solo goal by Steve White, his 11th of the season, and his second in four days at Wrexham, came too late to wipe out a two goal deficit from the first leg at Kenilworth Road three weeks ago.

But it just might have been a different story if the Town had converted a penalty awarded two minutes into the second half.

SPORTS EDITOR BRIAN SWAIN REPORTS ON TWO LUTON TOWN SOCCER MATCHES AT WREXHAM

The first half had been less than entertaining, with Wrexham using a 4-4-2 formation, pulling everyone back behind the ball when the Town were in possession, and tackling hard and often.

Ricky Hill beat the off-side trap from a through pass by Brian Horton, but was foiled when Eddie Niedzwiecki raced 10 yards out of his area to make a spreading save.

The goalkeeper was booked for hands, but no doubt thought it worth it.

Dixie McNeil shot over from six yards on one of the rare occasions when the Town defence was caught out, and it looked

like stalemate after David Moss missed a penalty in the 47th minute.

The winger had an unhappy night, with Joey Jones staying close all the time, and dishing out some harsh treatment at times. The penalty was given when a linesman saw Steve Dowman push Moss over. Wrexham disputed the decision, but goalkeeper Niedzwiecki was able to make a fairly easy save because Moss put the penalty too close to him.

Clive Goodyear kept his place in defence, but was taken off in the 55th minute when the Town gambled by sending on Godfrey Ingram as substitute and playing with only



● STEVE WHITE

three men at the back.

It gave them more attacking threat, but they struggled to get through an overcrowded midfield and Wrexham might have gone three up on aggregate in the 67th minute when the Town defence was caught stretched, but Kirk Stephens made a marvellous goal-line save from McNeil's header.

White's winning goal came from sheer determination and if the Town had shown as much of that in the first half as they did in the second the result could have been very different.

But Wrexham played much better on Tuesday than they had done in the league game, and Mr Pleat confessed: "Saturday's result may have made them more wary of us, and more determined. Wrexham seemed to have an attitude of 'they shall not pass' and they fought for every ball."

The manager refused to call the cup defeat a blessing in disguise, but Wrexham boss Mel Sutton commented: "Luton are a very good team. I think they are good enough to win promotion."

LUTON TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Goodyear (Ingram 55), Saxby, Donaghy; Hill, Horton; Fuccillo; White, Stein, Moss.

WREXHAM: Niedzwiecki; Jones (Fox 65), Dowman, Cegielski, Baker; Hunt, Hill, McNeil, Carrodus; Edwards, Vinter.

THE GOAL: Steve White 89 mins, solo run and shot. Other goal attempts: Town five wide, three saved including penalty; Wrexham seven wide, four saved, corners 6-6.

ATTENDANCE: 3,453.

REFEREE: Neil Midgley, Salford.

ENTERTAINMENT: No rousing cup-tie, but a reasonable second half.