

Another blow as big drop looms for Town

Luton Town 2
Ipswich Town 1

PROBLEMS continue to mount for Ipswich Town and last night's defeat against Luton at Kenilworth Road only went to confirm that Second Division football next season is fast becoming a reality.

Nine defeats in their last ten matches leave them hanging by a bare thread on the edge of the relegation zone and by the weekend they could be in the bottom three for the first time.

Luton, stripped of their regular midfield by injury, were two Trevor Aylott goals ahead by the 53rd minute following mistakes by Paul Cooper and Russell Osman.

Town at least did keep going to the end and Trevor Putney's first goal of the season in the 83rd minute was some consolation for their efforts.

By Neal Manning

It sparked a late rally which was not quite good enough to earn Town their first point since February 4.

But it was really a story

that has become so familiar in recent weeks with chances going begging coupled with defensive lapses.

In many ways last night's match, before Luton's lowest crowd of the season, followed a similar pattern to that of Saturday's 4-1 defeat at Arsenal.

Town played plenty of good football in the first half and their confidence would certainly have been boosted had Alan Sunderland accepted a

good chance after only seven minutes.

Gates headed the ball through to Sunderland, who got goal side of the Luton defensive, but with only Sealey to beat he shot at the advancing keeper's legs.

This costly miss did not deter Town coming forward in search of a goal but their finishing did not match their approach work and Sealey had few anxious moments in the Luton goal.

Barnes was booked in the 16th minute for a foul on Walsh before Putney, with a 22nd minute on target shot, and McCall, playing his 200th senior match, went the closest to giving Town the lead. But out of the blue Luton went into a 39th minute lead with a goal that once again left serious question marks against Cooper.

Walsh played the ball to Aylott on the edge of the penalty and the big striker turned Osman before chipping the ball over Cooper into the roof of the net.

Aylott had spotted Cooper off his line and the keeper seemed surprised that the ball should dip at the last moment just under the bar.

Gates brought Sealey to his knees with a 25 yarder in the 52nd minute as Town sought an equaliser, but a minute later they were plunged into further trouble when Osman brought Bunn down in the penalty area, leaving Aylott to step up and beat Cooper with a perfectly-taken spot kick.

Town introduced Dozzell for Turner in the 61st minute and within

seconds of his arrival Luton missed a gilt-edged chance to put the match well beyond Town's reach.

Stein completely missed from a fine cross by Walsh after Town had been caught on the break and ten minutes later Stein was denied a goal by a reflex save by Cooper.

Luton were almost made to pay for some missed chances when Town reduced the arrears in the 83rd minute.

Sunderland picked out Wark who had run into space in the inside right position and completely fooled the Luton defence. Wark struck the ball low across the area to the far post where Putney arrived to slam the ball high into the net.

Walsh had a chance to

regain Luton's two goal advantage and with almost the last kick of the match Putney picked out Sunderland with a cross from the left but his diving header did not carry enough power to beat Sealey.

So, time is running out for Town in their big battle to stay in the First Division. It will be of little consolation to Bobby Ferguson's side that this was Luton's first home win since mid-December.

With just 11 matches remaining, Town must quickly pick up some points if they are to claw their way to safety.

The teams

Luton: Sealey, Stephens, Thomas, Antic, Elliott, Goodyear, Donaghy, Stein, Walsh, Aylott, Bunn, sub: Moss.



TREVOR PUTNEY
... late consolation

Ipswich Town: Cooper, Burley, Barnes, Putney, Osman, Butcher, Wark, McCall, Turner, (sub: Dozzell 61 minutes), Sunderland, Gates.
Ref. Mr. H. Taylor.
Attendance 8,776.



TREVOR AYLOTT .
... sunk Town with two goals last night

Division One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	pts
Liverpool	31	18	9	4	51	22	63
Man. Utd	31	17	10	4	59	31	61
West Ham	31	16	6	9	50	32	54
Nottm. For	30	16	5	9	54	34	53
Southampton	29	15	7	7	37	25	52
Q.P.R.	31	15	5	11	47	28	50
Tottenham	31	12	8	11	48	48	44
Luton	30	13	5	12	44	44	44
Arsenal	31	12	6	13	50	43	42
Norwich	30	11	9	10	35	34	42
Aston Villa	31	11	9	11	46	49	42
Watford	30	12	5	13	57	58	41
Coventry	31	10	10	11	42	43	40
Birmingham	30	11	6	13	31	34	39
Everton	28	9	10	9	26	32	37
Sunderland	30	9	10	11	31	41	37
Leicester	30	9	8	13	48	52	35
W.B.A.	30	9	6	15	33	49	33
Ipswich	31	9	5	17	38	49	32
Stoke	31	8	8	15	28	50	32
Wolves	30	5	8	17	24	59	23
Notts. Cnty	29	5	7	17	37	59	22