

Coventry win puts Norwich on spot

Coventry 1
Luton 0

By RAY MATTS

COVENTRY must beat League champions Everton to stay in the First Division. That was the sudden-death situation facing them after last night's late win over Luton at Highfield Road.

And they will almost certainly know their fate by Sunday lunchtime, despite pleas by England manager Bobby Robson to postpone Coventry's final match of the season until next Thursday to release players for tomorrow's international at Hampden Park.

Victory over Luton in a match charged with high tension provided the Sky Blues with a final escape route and left Milk Cup-holders Norwich waiting anxiously to find out whether they will drop into the Second Division instead of the Midlands club.

Hero

Brian Kilcline, Coventry's towering centre-half, proved to be their hero. He lashed an 83rd-minute shot past goalkeeper Les Sealey after the beleaguered Luton defence had failed to clear a left-wing cross by Trevor Peake.

The timing of the goal was in keeping with the lateness of Coventry's League form which, until a fortnight ago, made them virtual certain relegation candidates. But the determination which manager Don Mackay has injected into his side was maintained against Luton as they overcame a faltering first half performance.

Norwich, stunned by this latest setback for them, remained optimistic that Everton would not let them down. 'They have only pride at stake but I don't think they will just be going through the motions,' said midfield player Peter Mendham. 'I can't see them losing it but I expect a lot of us will be praying hard in church on Sunday morning.'

Hopeful

After watching his side earn another lifeline, Mackay said: 'I wasn't too nervous but the team were in the first half. We have not achieved anything yet — merely come closer to it.'

He added hopefully: 'Everton are a good team, the team of the season. But it has been a long one for them and maybe a couple of their players will be feeling it. Our task is clear-cut but far from simple: we must beat them to stay up.'