

Luton 2, Manchester C 1

85/86
NO doubt Luton will be content with the two goals by Brian Stein that brought them their fourth League victory in five games. Yet they must feel frustrated that their superiority was not further rewarded, writes **Simon Jones**.

In fact, a late rally by Manchester City might well have cost them more than a penalty scored by Lillis, seven minutes from time, after Breacker had up-ended Power.

City, however, never showed the kind of imagination which is Luton's trade mark, and they were hampered just before the interval when their most creative player, Wilson, was taken off on a stretcher suffering from concussion.

Oddly, despite the flowing moves with which Luton often threatened to overwhelm City, both the home side's goals were the result of free kicks by Preece.

They took the lead after only three minutes when Stein was first to reach the ball at the near post and his volley was, like almost everything he did, both accurate and economical.

Almost immediately City had hit the post at the other end when Wilson stabbed at Davies' cross and Sealey somehow palmed the ball onto the woodwork. Luton, too, had cause to feel cheated when later in the first half, Thomas' fierce drive cannoned upwards off the bar.

It was obvious, however, that City could not continue to defy the odds. Stein's enviable ability to find space and Hill's flamboyant skill made that inevitable.

What proved to be the decisive goal came after 63 minutes. Harford headed Preece's free kick back across goal and a chaotic scramble ended with Stein poking the ball into the net.

With 20 minutes remaining, Nwajiobi had to leave the field with a toe injury. But though City tried to take advantage of the more conservative approach which had been forced on the Luton side, they attacked rather as they had defended — with determination, but without authority.