

Luton display class

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Luton's pitch may be plastic but there is nothing artificial about their deft one-touch football or their high placing in the first division. Manchester United, despite a spirited recovery in the second half, were the latest in a long list of teams to leave Kenilworth Road empty-handed.

Saturday's victory enabled Luton to climb above Nottingham Forest and Tottenham Hotspur into fourth position, one point behind Arsenal.

United, who suffered their first League defeat this year, might have salvaged something from an open, entertaining match if their substitute, Davenport, had been brought on earlier. His arrival midway through the second half heralded a spell of pressure which led to the scrambled goal by Robson three minutes from time.

From the fourth minute, when they conceded a bad goal,

United were fighting an uphill battle. Duxbury, on the edge of the penalty area, was dispossessed by Brian Stein who laid the ball back to Nicholas. His lofted, diagonal centre should have been gathered by Bailey but was flicked in by Harford, Luton's acting captain.

Bailey redeemed himself with fine saves from Grimes, Breacker, Stein and Harford as United struggled to stay in contention. Harford led Luton's line superbly, whereas at the other end Whiteside and Terry Gibson were mastered by North and Donaghy, who never seems to have a poor game.

Luton increased their lead after 41 minutes with an extraordinary goal. Hill, receiving a pass on the half-way line, shook off four tackles before threading a perfect ball through for Stein, whose shot Bailey touched but could not stop.

LUTON TOWN: L Sealey; T Breacker, R Johnson, P Nicholas, S North, M Donaghy, R Hill, B Stein, M Newell, M Harford, A Grimes.

MANCHESTER UNITED: G Bailey; J Sivebaek, C Gibson (sub, P Davenport), M Duxbury, P McGrath, K Moran, B Robson, G Strachan, N Whiteside, T Gibson, L O'Brien.

Referee: K Baker.