

HATTERS HALTED BY DREARY DRAW

84/87

THE euphoria of victory over Spurs was put firmly into perspective for Hatters in a dreary goalless eyesore against Wimbledon.

Luton remain third in the First Division table, despite Saturday's malfunction at Kenilworth Road, but their title hopes are all but over.

And it was left to stand-in visiting manager Alan Gillett to give a reminder of

what a success story Luton's recent history has been, regardless of their final league placing.

With boss Dave Bassett busy elsewhere for the day, his assistant Gillett took charge of the team whose meteoric rise from non-league to top-flight football is the example par-excellence of the small club come good.

Yet Gillett insisted: "We're breaking new ground and we've just got to keep striving for it."

"Luton are the example. They're a small club and we've just got to try and copy them."

The words, though, were a poor return on Luton's investment in an important game. Their best efforts went unrewarded as the visitors slogged, niggled

**LUTON 0
WIMBLEDON 0**

**By DOMINIC
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and, overall, spoiled their way to a point.

Their offside ploy, relentless harrying, and ultimately their giant goalkeeper Dave Beasant proved too difficult for the Hatters to overcome.

There were three outstanding moments in the game, all of which might have produced goals.

In the 23rd minute promising Town full-back Richard Harvey, 17, started a move helped on by McDonough and Stein, which ended with 6ft 4in Beasant flying to tip away a thunderous drive from Ricky Hill.

And three minutes later Newell chased a through ball which fell perfectly to Mick Harford, when defender Andy Thorn slipped. Harford should really have done better than to allow the keeper to improvise by sitting on the shot.

The other clearcut chance fell to Wimbledon striker Alan Cork in the 68th minute and could have cost Town the match. But Sealey made a superb reflex save to parry the effort over the bar.

There was little else to admire for the crowd of



9,729 — which was probably swelled by one thousand thanks to Luton's high league placing and another by Wimbledon's stunning victory at Anfield the previous week.

Some of the second half action should have carried a censor's certificate, being watched as it was by coachloads of Cubs near the Oak Road end.

Certainly, Cork's mastery of the ability to punch his marker in the face and land a back-heel to the body, while appearing to challenge for a high ball, is something the youngsters would do well not learn.

He tried it once too often and was booked for assaulting Mal Donaghy, but then McDonough's challenge on Gage was robust to say the least and it ended with the Wimbledon full-back smashing headlong into advertising hoardings and the Hatters' hero of a week before having his name taken.

Sanchez, earlier booked for a foul on Hill, was led from the

field with a cut face, to be replaced by sub Francis Joseph, near the finish.

And Sayer was booked in the final moments, for a challenge on Sealey, before the game ended to a chorus of boos.

LUTON — Sealey, Breaker, Harvey, Nicholas, North, Donaghy, Hill. B. Stein, Newell, Harford, McDonough. Sub: M. Stein.

WIMBLEDON — Beasant, Gage, Winterburn, Jones, Morris, Thorn, Fairweather,

● Brian Stein and Mick Harford begin to put the Dons under pressure but their efforts didn't pay off.

Sayer, Cork, Sanchez, Hodges. Sub: Joseph.