

OWLS CAN'T SEE WHICH DAY IT IS!

LIVELY Luton showed confidence, inventiveness and a battling spirit as they knocked woeful Wednesday into the middle of next week.

The confidence came from a side who have now won three games on the trot and moved to a mid-table position.

The inventiveness came from the dynamic duo of brothers Mark and Brian Stein.

They — and fellow front runner Emeka Nwajiobi — tormented Owls' cumbersome defenders by darting anywhere and everywhere at will.

And the battling came from Hatters' superb defence, brilliantly marshalled by Steve Foster and Mal Donaghy.

As pleased Luton boss Ray Harford pointed out: "You have only got to get two or three good results and it makes all the difference.

"Before last week's game against Newcastle we were looking at a bottom three position. But the confidence from the Littlewoods Cup win over Coventry carried over, and now we are 12th."

Of his new look front line — forced upon him because of injuries to Micky Weir and Mick Harford — the manager said: "They worked very hard."

All three played wide and down the middle in turn — maintaining a fluid formation.

And Harford explained: "That meant the two centre halves were looking for someone to mark."

Plus it left the rest of the defence often wondering what was going to come next — notably from the younger Stein.

Harford also praised his defence, especially

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By PAUL SHERWOOD 87/88

Foster and Donaghy.

"They were very good when the ball got in the box and very clean with their challenges."

But with Colin West missing a penalty and then Gary Megson stopping Lee Chapman's goalbound effort woeful Wednesday really made a rod for their own backs, as Luton won their first game at Hillsborough in 17 years and 21 attempts.

The danger signals sounded for the home side as early as the eighth minute when Mark Stein's cross-cum-shot went agonisingly past a gaggle of Hatters.

Darron McDonough hoofed two long range efforts into the seats behind the 100 or so Luton fans as Hatters pressed.

But it was Wednesday who nearly opened the scoring as Megson saw his scorching close range effort brilliantly pushed away by Les Sealey.

The match began to flow as a spate of nine free kicks in 11 minutes was forgotten.

And Nwajiobi was only denied by an

excellent Martin Hodge save after Mark Stein had sent him through with a killer 20 yard pass from the left.

Lee Chapman then nearly caught Sealey out as he deflected Wayne Jacobs' harmless looking shot across the goalmouth.

But once again the 'keeper was equal to it — as he was to the blond striker's 31st minute far post header.

Luton replied through Danny Wilson as the Northern Ireland international whistled a ferocious volley over the bar.

And then the visitors went ahead after 38 minutes. Wilson sent Mark Stein away on the right and his powerfully struck cross screamed past hapless Hodge and into the left corner of the net.

If that was a killer blow to Wednesday's hopes they inflicted the knockout sucker punch on themselves three minutes before half time.

Chapman was sandwiched by Donaghy and Ashley Grimes in the box



● The eyes have it. Luton's defence anxiously watches Lee Chapman's goalbound header — but it posed no problems for supersaver Les Sealey.

and the anxious home fans went wild with happiness when a penalty was given.

But former Watford striker Colin West stemmed the cheers as he somehow contrived to put the spot kick at least six foot over the bar.

Wednesday then totally finished off any hopes of winning after 58 minutes.

The near anonymous Tony Galvin picked out Chapman at the far post and his scrambled shot appeared to be going in. But as Megson tried to finish it off, he could

only squeeze the ball away from the goal.

Luton were left to run the show on the whole after that, although Mark Chamberlain continued to cause some problems.

But Ian Allinson took time off from patrolling Chamberlain to seal Hatters' second away win of the season after 80 minutes.

Tim Breacker, the two Steins, Nwajiobi and Wilson played their own private game on the right side before Breacker darted to the byline.

The full back sent in a gorgeous hard and low cross and in stormed Allinson to rap home his first goal for Luton.

WEDNESDAY: Hodge, Jacobs, Worthington, Pearson, Madden, Proctor, Chamberlain, Megson, Chapman, West, Galvin. Subs: Marwood (for Galvin, 75), Fee.

LUTON: Sealey, Breacker, Grimes, McDonough, Foster, Donaghy, Wilson, B. Stein, Nwajiobi, M. Stein, Allinson. Subs: Johnson, Harvey.