

Luton seeking striker

By Clive Ellis

Luton Town 2 Wimbledon 2

THE INDOMITABLE Wimbledon spirit threatens to confound critics' suggestions that they are prime candidates for relegation at the end of the season.

Match details

LUTON TOWN.....2
WIMBLEDON.....2
(Half-time: 1-1)

TOWN: Sealey; Rob Johnson, Foster, Donaghy, Grimes; Wilson, Williams, Preece, Black; Harford, Oldfield. Subs: Dreyer, Wegerle, not used.

WIMBLEDON: Green; Joseph, Young, Scales, Phelan; Ryan, Fairweather, Sanchez (Brooke, 47 mins); Gibson (Turner, 58 mins), Fashanu, Wise.

THE GOALS: John Fashanu, penalty, 42 mins, after Steve Foster unwittingly tripped Dennis Wise; Vaughan Ryan own goal, 44 mins, hitting an attempted clearance into the net from Mick Harford's low cross; Kingsley Black for the Town, 56 mins smart header to complete the best passing move of the match; Carlton Fairweather for Wimbledon, 73 mins, after the Town failed to clear a corner.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town four saved and six wide; Wimbledon five saved and four wide. Corners: 7-6 to the Town.

REFEREE: Brian Stevens, Gloucester — well in control.

ATTENDANCE: 8,067, an increase of 1,000 on Wimbledon's visit last season.

ENTERTAINMENT: Too inconsistent to give top quality delight.

Shrugging off a host of personnel and positional changes, they did well to stay afloat as an increasingly fluent Luton surged forward at 2-1 in the second half and Fairweather scored a simple equaliser 17 minutes from time.

Things are looking up for Bobby Gould, the Wimbledon manager. A point in the bag and tomorrow Don Howe, the coach, returns after heart surgery.

Mr Gould likened his absence to the sudden lack of a wife to share the domestic load.

Williams, the £300,000 signing from Arsenal, was the only one of Luton's summer captures to appear, but he prompted intelligently amid a sea of misplaced Luton passes in the first half.

Foster brought down Wise in the 42nd minute, Fashanu scoring for Wimbledon from the penalty, but Ryan's 44th-minute own goal made it 1-1.

Black's first goal for Luton gave Town a 2-1 lead after 56 minutes, but they then failed to shut the door on Wimbledon and their manager, Ray Harford, will make further efforts this week to find a reliable striking partner for Mick Harford.

Luton Town: Sealey; Johnson, Grimes, Williams, Foster, Donaghy, Wilson, Preece, Harford, Oldfield, Black.

Wimbledon: Green; Joseph, Phelan, Ryan, Young, Scales, Gibson (Turner 59), Fairweather, Fashanu, Sanchez (Brooke 47), Wise.

Gould blast angers fans

Luton 2 Wimbledon 2: by PHILIP OSBORN

WIMBLEDON manager Bobby Gould apologised to the Luton crowd after an angry exchange on a day that did little to enhance his club's image.

Gould rushed to the touchline eight minutes from time to shout instructions to his players, the fans behind the dug-out expressed their anger. Gould responded by turning and pointing at his barrackers.

Emerged

"I was apologising," he explained later. "I had tried to shout at one of my players and swore. I just got carried away so I held up my hand and apologised to the crowd. They appreciated it."

There was little in the match to get excited over and Wimbledon goal-

keeper Ron Green derived more satisfaction than most. He emerged as a remarkable First Division debut man at the age of 31 when he dived magnificently to push away Danny Wilson's close-range header.

John Fashanu put Wimbledon ahead with a 42nd-minute penalty after Steve Foster had tripped Dennis Wise, but a Vaughan Ryan own goal brought Luton level.

Kingsley Black gave Luton the lead in the 57th minute, but Wimbledon's unrelenting spirit was rewarded when Carlton Fairweather scrambled a 74-minute equaliser.

There was good news for Wimbledon afterwards when Gould reported that Don Howe will be resuming his duties as coach on Tuesday.