

SKIPPER STEVE Foster has issued a "get behind us" plea as stuttering Hatters struggle against relegation.

The no-nonsense defender — whose mistake cost the points against Sheffield Wednesday — said Hatters were hurt by the chorus of boos that greeted their half-time exit.

Foster was welcomed back from suspension for the vital six-pointer.

But his return turned sour in the 49th minute when his poorly-hit cross-field pass struck David Hirst on the back and the striker turned and volleyed past helpless Les Sealey.

Rap

Once the dust had settled on Hatters' third defeat on the trot, Foster took the rap, and said: "The crowd must think we don't start playing 'til the other side have scored, but we've found it hard to get going in the last two home games.

"There's nothing to get us going before the game starts.

**LUTON 0
SHEFF WED 1
BY MICHAEL
WEINSTEIN**

88/89

"I think the crowd have been spoilt over the years — they want something to happen before they get going — whereas at other clubs they get behind their team before the game starts."

Foster was honest in defeat. "I take the blame for the goal — but it was a cruel reflection on the game.



• Steve Foster.

"Les never had a save to make — we could have played all night and the only way they would have scored was from a mistake.

"We said before the game that the only danger would be us having too much of the game and them sneaking a goal — and that's just what happened."

Foster said Wembley was not preying on his mind or the team's, but added: "We struggled after getting to



• Heads up — Kingsley Black tackles the Wednesday defence.

Wembley last year and it looks like it's happening again.

"That's two home games we've lost in succession, and home games are what usually keep us going.

Penalty

"But there's no need to panic — there are 10 games left so it's no use getting depressed — we'll be okay."

After a sterile first-half, the game burst into life three minutes into the second period.

Darron McDonough mis-kicked David Preece's corner but Kingsley Black got a flick on and Wednesday's Nigel Worthington had to clear off the line.

Ricky Hill and Foster both came close with headers before Preece made way for Iain Dowie for the third game on the trot.

Nigel Pearson held

down Mick Harford in the 68th minute but on-the-spot ref Darryl Reeves was unimpressed by the striker's penalty claim.

Dowie brought the best out of Wednesday's Chris Turner and the keeper, who was passed fit just hours before the game, made a magnificent save from Harford's 82nd minute swivel and shot.

Dismay

But Hatters' best chance of an equaliser fell to Black with just three minutes remaining when the youngster ran clear of the defence and slipped his shot under Turner.

The ball rolled across the face of goal — out of the reach of the fast approaching Dowie — and to the dismay of Hatters' lowest league crowd of the season, struck the outside of the post.

THE LINE-UP

LUTON: Sealey, Breacker, Grimes (Harvey 79), Preece (Dowie 65), Foster, Beaumont, Wilson, McDonough, Harford, Hill, Black.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY: Turner, Harper, Worthington, Palmer, Pearson, Madden, Proctor, McCall, Whitton, Hirst, Rostron (Galvin 37)
Other sub: Varadi.

• Attendance: 7,776.