

Spurs' late brace leaves Luton in danger of drop

By John Ley

Luton Town..... 1 Tottenham Hotspur 3

LUTON, just 11 days away from their second successive Littlewoods Cup final, edged closer to the Second Division last night when they failed to end a dismal run which has brought one League point from a possible 21.

Luton are now a point from the relegation zone but have played two more games than Southampton, who are in the third relegation place.

Spurs, enjoying their best run — one defeat in nine games — under Terry Venables, went behind to a late first-half goal from Foster before replying in the second period through Howells, Walsh and Gascoigne.

Spurs are now seventh in the First Division — the highest they have been during Mr Venables's 15-month reign at White Hart Lane.

Ray Harford, Luton's manager, would not fault his side's attitude, but said: "The euphoria of reaching Wembley has long since gone. The players are now fighting for their lives and every game is a big one for us."

Luton had the incentive of a 42nd-minute opening goal when, from a Preece corner, Foster headed downwards past Thorstvedt for their third goal of the season and only Luton's third in seven League games.

However, Spurs replied in the 55th minute when Howells, the young striker, converted Waddle's cross.

Luton, aware of the impor-

tance of a victory, threw everything into attack but a rare goal from Walsh put Spurs in charge.

The former Luton striker, with only two previous goals this season and without a goal this year, slid in to finish from close range in the 84th minute.

Gascoigne added a third when he ran half the length of the pitch before skipping the attentions of Foster and Beaumont and coolly slipping the ball past Sealey.

Luton Town: (4-3-3) Sealey; Breacker, Foster, Beaumont, Grimes; Hill, McDonough, Preece, Dowie (Cooke 80), Harford, Black. **Tottenham Hotspur** (4-4-2): Thorstvedt; Fenwick, Mabbutt, Butters, Hughton; Walsh, Allen, Gascoigne, Howells; Stewart, Waddle.

Referee: D Elleray (Harrow).

THE MATCH DETAILS

LUTON TOWN: Sealey; Breacker, Foster, Beaumont, Grimes; Hill, McDonough, Preece; Harford, Dowie (Cooke, 80 mins), Black. Other sub: Rob Johnson.

SPURS: Thorstvedt; Fenwick, Butters, Mabbutt, Hughton; Gascoigne, Howells, Allen; Walsh, Waddle, Stewart. Subs: Polston and Samways, not used.

THE GOALS: Steve Foster header for the Town, 42 minutes; David Howells for Spurs, 55 minutes; Paul Walsh, 82 minutes; Paul Gascoigne 90th minute.

OTHER STRIKES: Town five saved, nine wide, one netted and disallowed. Spurs six saved, five wide, one hit a post and led to a goal. Corners: 6-5 to the Town.

ATTENDANCE: 11,146 — only Liverpool have attracted more for a league match this season, and Tuesday's gate was 1,000 better than last time Spurs came.

REFEREE: David Elleray, Harrow. Not on top of his game, and too quick with the book. Cautions — Paul Stewart and Terry Fenwick of Spurs, Mick Harford and Steve Foster of the Town, with Harford now due for his second suspension of the season.

ENTERTAINMENT: It would have been a great night out if the result hadn't made home fans feel so miserable. Spurs were flattered by the score-line, but that hardly matters when you want a result more than a performance.