

Luton display evidence of ability to survive

By Bill Meredith

Luton Town..... 3 Derby County..... 0

CAN Luton survive? They are still in the bottom three after this first victory in 11 games, but they have matches against fellow-strugglers Charlton and West Ham in the next five days and these could prove crucial.

On the evidence of this hectic affair they have the ability to stay in the First Division. Wegerle and Harford were always too skilful and strong for Derby, while Breacker, Foster and young goalkeeper Chamberlain were prominent in a dependable defence.

The match started and finished with a penalty. Within two minutes Wilson had scored from the spot after Shilton brought down Preece.

Then, with a couple of minutes left, Forsyth floored Wegerle who had brushed past Shilton, but this time the Eng-

land goalkeeper made a fine save from Harford.

This second penalty award by referee John Carter brought a furious reponse from Derby, especially from Shilton and the captain, Wright, who was sent off and heavily fined by the club

Derby have had a good season after their struggles of last year, but they never got to grips with the plastic surface.

Shilton was by far the busier goalkeeper. He allowed Harford to rob him of the ball for Luton's second in the 63rd minute, but had no chance with the third when a poor back pass by Williams was pounced upon by Black in the 82nd minute.

Luton Town (4-4-2): Chamberlain; Breacker, Foster, Beaumont, Dreyer, Wilson (Cooke 76), Hill, Preece, Black; Wegerle, Harford.

Derby County (4-4-2): Shilton; Blades, Wright, Hindmarch, Forsyth; McMinn, Williams, Hebberd (Cross 75), Micklewhite, Goddard (Gee 75), Saunders.

Referee: J Carter (Christchurch).

Luton..... 3
Derby..... 0

Steve McGill

LUTON gave themselves a First Division lifeline with their first win in 10 games, but this match was too hectic for comfort and saw Mark Wright, the Derby captain, sent off in the 88th minute.

After his Wednesday night rest against Albania, Shilton found too much action for comfort. In the first minute he conceded a penalty by bringing down Preece, and Wilson put Luton ahead from the spot.

He had to face another penalty in the final minutes after Wegerle had been floored by Forsyth - but this time he made a splendid save from Harford. In the argument which followed the penalty award, Shilton was lectured by referee Carter, and Wright dismissed.

Luton deserved their rare victory. For the first 25 minutes they had Derby hanging on for dear life, Shilton having to pull off a class save from Breacker's shot and Harford twice put sizzling headers just over the bar.

So it was hardly a surprise when Harford rose to head Luton's second from Wegerle's cross in the 63rd minute. The third was a giveaway when, with eight minutes left, Williams tried a suicidal back-pass which was pounced upon by Black.

Luton have a crucial home game against fellow strugglers Charlton on Tuesday night. A win then, and another at West Ham on Saturday, could see them steer clear of trouble.

Luton: Chamberlain; Breacker, Dreyer, Preece, Foster, Beaumont, Wilson (Cooke 76), Wegerle, Harford, Hill, Black.

Derby County: Shilton; Blades, Forsyth, Williams, Wright, Hindmarch, McMinn, Saunders, Goddard (Cross 75), Hebberd (Gee 75), Micklewhite.

Referee: J. Carter (Christchurch).

Luton land in penalty row

Luton 3 Derby 0

LUTON'S best performance of the year won them a lifeline in their relegation fight - but the game was marred by ugly scenes at the end when Derby's Mark Wright was sent off for arguing with referee John Carter.

Luton were cruising when striker Mick Harford was brought down two minutes from time and Carter gave Luton their second penalty. Wright led the furious protests and as he left the field he was still shouting at the referee. Harford took the kick but it was brilliantly saved by Peter Shilton.

Luton's first penalty after only 65 seconds gave them a flying start, Danny Wilson giving Shilton no chance after the England goalkeeper had brought down David Preece.

Harford added the second goal after 63 minutes when he outjumped Shilton to head in, and Luton completed their first League victory since February 18 after 82 minutes when Kingsley Black seized on a bad back-pass.