

Rampant Luton put Charlton in relegation zone

By John Ley

Luton..... 5 Charlton 2

LUTON TOWN moved out of the bottom three of the First Division for the first time in a month, with an emphatic victory at Kenilworth Road last night.

While Luton — unbeaten since their Littlewoods Cup final defeat — moved into 16th position, ahead of Sheffield Wednesday on goal difference, Charlton dropped into the relegation zone.

On this performance, they will struggle to avoid the drop to the Second Division after three years battling to stay in the First Division.

Charlton's fate was decided in the first half, as Luton, inspired by the towering Harford, forced a four-goal lead. Only after Jones's arrival did Charlton look like scoring.

Charlton face Wimbledon and Derby at home and Nottingham Forest away, knowing their future is as insecure as at this stage in the last two years.

Lennie Lawrence, their manager, used a five-man defence with Shirliff sweeping in front of the back four trying to halt Harford's aerial threat.

Mr Lawrence said: "We are walking a tightrope and there is no safety net. I will call on them to show some pride. If not, then it is through the trap door, playing in front of crowds of 3,000 on somebody else's ground."

Luton's destruction began in the 11th minute, Wilson prodding in Harford's header. In the 24th minute, Walsh headed past his own goalkeeper and in the 42nd minute, Wilson scored his 11th goal of the season despite pleas for offside.

Shell-shocked Charlton could do little three minutes later as Wegerle's cross dropped low and Harford scored.

HOW THEY STAND

	HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F A	P	W	D	L	F A	Pts
Arsenal	34	10	5	2	32 15	10	4	3	3	35 17	69
Liverpool	32	8	5	2	25 8	10	4	3	3	30 16	63
Norwich	35	7	7	4	22 20	9	3	5	2	23 22	58
Nottm For	33	6	7	3	22 13	9	5	3	3	31 24	57
Tottenham	37	8	6	5	31 24	7	6	5	2	29 21	57
Coventry	36	9	3	6	26 21	5	8	5	1	18 18	53
Derby	34	8	3	7	21 17	7	4	5	1	15 15	52
Millwall	35	10	2	6	26 20	4	7	6	1	18 26	51
Wimbledon	35	10	3	5	29 17	4	5	8	1	18 24	50
Man U	34	9	5	3	24 11	3	7	7	1	15 17	48
QPR	35	7	5	5	19 14	5	6	7	2	20 19	47
Everton	33	8	6	2	29 17	3	5	9	1	15 25	44
Southampton	36	5	7	6	23 25	4	7	7	2	26 39	41
Aston Villa	36	7	5	6	24 21	2	7	9	1	19 32	39
Middlesbro	36	6	7	5	28 29	3	5	10	1	16 30	39
Luton	36	7	6	5	31 21	2	5	11	1	10 30	38
Sheff W	35	5	5	6	18 21	4	6	9	1	13 26	38
Charlton	35	4	7	6	21 24	4	5	9	1	19 30	36
Newcastle	35	3	5	9	17 25	4	4	10	1	13 33	30
West Ham	32	2	6	10	18 30	4	2	8	1	10 22	26

Jones had been on the pitch for only 10 minutes when he converted Humphreys' 71st minute cross and, after Wegerle had added Luton's fifth, Jones replied again in the 83rd minute from another Humphrey pass.

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

Charlton Athletic (4-1-2-3): Bolder; Humphrey, Pates, Caton (Williams 45), Reid; Shirliff; Mackenzie, Walsh; Lee, Crooks (Jones 61), Mortimer.

Referee: T Holbrook (Walsall).

● Sheffield Wednesday will play West Ham at Hillsborough next Tuesday in the first Football League match to be held at the stadium since the FA Cup semi-final disaster. Wednesday were originally due to play Norwich but the League ordered the switch to avoid West Ham falling behind with their fixtures.



Charlton defender Colin Pates challenges Luton's Ricky Hill (right) for possession