

Luton owe it to Dane's deft touch

Luton 1
Charlton 0

Martin Smith

LARS ELSTRUP, Luton's most expensive signing, took the pre-match salute from the fans with his new team-mates, then promptly turned away from them as they headed for the kick-in.

It was not until the 60th minute that debutant Elstrup, bought for £900,000 from OB Odense, was back in harmony with his colleagues.

After an hour in which the Danish striker never had the ball under his control, he suddenly produced the subtle touch that turned an otherwise sterile match in Luton's favour.

Elstrup's return pass allowed Wegerle to burst into the Charlton area where, his legs were taken from under him by Reid. Wilson converted the penalty.

"It was all a bit harum-scarum and I feel Lars needs to get used to the pace of the English game," said Terry Mancini, Luton's assistant manager. "But he is willing to learn and we are pleased with him."

That touch settled Elstrup and he looked more confident in the later stages. Otherwise it was left to Wegerle to take on a resolute Charlton defence almost single-handed.

The defeat ended Charlton's unbeaten start to the season, a far cry from their traditional role as first division strugglers. Walsh and Peake prompted busily from midfield but Williams and Jones ran in vain, apart from isolated incidents.

In one of these, a minute before half-time, Williams found himself chasing a loose ball when Chamberlain charged out of his area and sent him crashing to the ground. A scuffle involving a dozen players ensued before Chamberlain was booked.

Luton: Chamberlain; Brecker, Dreyer, Wilson, McDonough, Beaumont, Kennedy, Wegerle, Elstrup, Preece, Black. Subs: Harvey, Farrell.

Charlton: Bolder; Humphrey, Reid, Peake, McLaughlin, Pates, Lee, Williams, Jones (Macken-