

Cooper is spot-on to deny Luton

By William Johnson ^{89/90}

Man City 3 Luton Town 1

PAUL COOPER, for so long a fixture at Ipswich, brought to 56 the number of penalties he has saved when he dived to his right to stop Roy Wegerle's spot kick for Luton at Maine Road on Saturday.

Cooper, 35, who made his name as a penalty-saving expert during his 500-plus games for Ipswich, added: "I think my reputation puts off a lot of players. I never practise, I just concentrate 100 per cent."

The goalkeeper was bought from Leicester reserves for £20,000 towards the end of last season and has already notched up 15 "bonus" appearances as deputy for Andy Dibble.

City, who had begun as though they were going to destroy Luton in the same way as they had Manchester United a week earlier, were rocking when Brightwell tripped Wilson in the 39th minute of an eventful match.

Luton had been outplayed for the first half-hour, during which City scored once — through Luton old boy Oldfield — and threatened to score several more, but the visitors were showing signs of weathering the storm.

Cooper's penalty save kept City in front and came shortly after a superb reaction stop from Luton's Danish international Elstrup. Though Black eventually equalised, Bishop quickly regained the initiative for City before half-time with his second headed goal in successive matches.

A simple tap-in from Brightwell on the hour ensured that City took the points and left Luton with only one point from their four trips away from their plastic Kenilworth Road pitch.

Scorers.— Manchester City: Oldfield (11), Bishop (45), Brightwell (60). Luton: Black (43).

Manchester City: Cooper, Fleming, Hinchcliffe, Bishop, Gayle, Redmond, White, Morley, Oldfield, Brightwell, Lake (McNab 60).

Luton Town: Chamberlain; Breacker, Dreyer, Wilson, Harvey, Beaumont, Kennedy (Johnson 81), Wegerle, Elstrup (Cooke 68), Preece, Black.

Referee: R Milford (Bristol).