

OFF-COLOUR CITY SLUMP

NORWICH CITY arrived at Kenilworth Road chasing a record — and went home nursing a hiding.

Now City manager Dave Stringer is hoping that the 'kick up the backside' delivered by Luton will shake his side out of their complacency, starting on Wednesday when they go to Maine Road to take on Manchester City in the Littlewoods Cup.

Stringer's side were looking to establish a new record of keeping a clean sheet in each of the first five games of a Division One season.

But that was blasted away in less than four minutes, Kingsley Black shooting Luton ahead with a deflected drive after a sweeping, length-of-the-pitch movement.

Stringer made no complaints about the plastic pitch. 'We were beaten by the better side,' he said.

The City boss had shuffled his midfield to try to compensate for flu victim Andy Townsend. But with Ruel Fox replacing Townsend and David Phillips doing the journeymen's duties in the centre of midfield, the switch didn't really work.

Luton had lost their unbeaten home record to Aston Villa a week earlier and manager Ray Harford had insisted they go for goals from the first minute this time, so he would have been pleased with Black.

Lucky

Said Stringer: 'I heard Luton had a bad performance a week ago. Obviously they reacted to it in the right way. Now it's our turn to do the same. This has been a kick up the backside.'

Norwich were lucky to be only one down at the break, with Bryan Gunn saving well twice when Roy Wegerle danced through a static defence to carve out chances.

But Luton were unstoppable in the second half.

John Dreyer stole in on the blind side to meet a free-kick by Steve Williams with a

Norwich record bid ends

Luton 4 Norwich 1
By DEREK HUNTER

sidefoot shot for Luton's second goal in the 54th minute.

Even the loss of centre half Graham Rodger and sparkling attacker Black through injuries failed to throw Luton out of gear.

Skipper Danny Wilson shot a two-yarder past Gunn in 65 minutes and nine minutes later Williams rifled in his first goal for Luton.

Norwich's consolation came from a penalty awarded by substitute referee Ron Coater, who had replaced ankle injury victim Brian Stevens in the 40th minute.

Dreyer was judged to have fouled Jerry Goss and Malcolm Allen converted the penalty.

LUTON: Chamberlain, Breacker, Dreyer, Wilson, Rodger, Beaumont, Williams, Wegerle, Elstrup, Preece, Black (Dowie, 57).

NORWICH CITY: Gunn, Sherwood, Bowen, Butterworth, Linighan, Fox (Goss, 62), Gordon, Fleck (Allen, 69), Rosario, Crook, Phillips.



RECORD GONE . . . Kingsley Black is hugged by Danny Wilson after Norwich conceded their first away goal

Picture: John O'Reilly