

■ GREAT Dane equalises as Hatters drive Lions mad in the Cold Blow Lane wind

Lars's last laugh

MILLWALL will be kicking themselves for not winning this one on Saturday after overpowering the Hatters for most of the first half.

However, when you look at the match statistics you realise where they went wrong.

Luton had three chances. They scored with one, hit the post with another and brought the best out of Brian Horne with the third.

Millwall on the other hand created many opportunities. They only managed to take one, went close with a couple and squandered the rest.

In the end a draw was about the right result in a game that was reduced to mediocrity by the windy conditions.

Luton defended valiantly to gain only their second away point of the season but the Lions were guilty of

Millwall 1 Luton 1 STEVE WAGGOTT at the Den

throwing away a strong and commanding position by allowing the visitors to score from their first attacking movement of any real merit.

Millwall began in determined mood, still smarting over their shock cup defeat, and quickly established superiority by closing down the ball and not allowing their opponents to play.

Their swashbuckling style reaped reward in the 12th minute when Ian Dawes, well forward, was on hand to knock the ball home from ten yards after sustained Lions pressure.

As often happens, an innocuous incident had a profound effect on the match.

Roy Wegerle withdrew with an

ankle injury, to be replaced by Ian Dowie, recently included in the Northern Ireland squad, who totally changed the whole complexion of the game.

Tremendous

He made a tremendous impact with his very first involvement, when, four minutes from half-time, his blind-side run took him to the byeline.

His whipped-in cross was powerfully headed home by the unmarked Dane, Lars Elstrup. It was the former Odense player's first League goal and it sent his team into the dressing room with huge smiles on their faces.

Dowie began the second half in the same vein and his strong and aggressive running was disturbing the Lions' defence and, at the same time, visibly lifting the spirit and morale of his own side.

One of his typical forceful runs got him to the ball before Steve Wood and the supporting Kingsley Black should have tucked away his intelligent squared pass. Fortunately for Millwall his shot hit the post and they survived the resulting goalmouth scramble.

It was only in the last ten minutes that the Lions awoke from their second-half slumber and they got at the reshuffled Luton back four. This was due to centre-half Darren McDonough dislocating his left shoulder in the 76th minute.

Gary Waddock hit the bar when his attempted cross was caught on the wind and looped over the stranded Luton 'keeper.

Tony Cascarino should have buried a header from six yards after great work by Teddy Sheringham had opened up the target for him.

The Hatters twice kicked the ball out of the ground in an attempt to quell this late flurry. The tactic worked and a defeat was averted.

Although Millwall failed to win they were more composed at the back, with fit-again Alan McLeary settling things down nicely.

Once they start tucking away their chances they will get back to winning ways.

Manager John Docherty said: "It was disappointing to drop points at home but the wind and Luton's tactics made it difficult for us."

Millwall: Horne, Stevens, Dawes, Hurlock, Wood, McLeary, Carter, Waddock, Sheringham, Cascarino, Anthrobus (Sparham 66). Other sub: Torpey.

Luton: Chamberlain, Breacker, Dreyer, Wilson, McDonough (Harvey 76), Beaumont, Williamns, Wegerle (Dowie 39), Elstrup, Kennedy, Black.

Ref: D Elleray. Att: 11,140.



■ Dawes opener: Ian sweeps the Lions ahead at a windswept Den



■ Dawes gets a hug for his effort. Pictures: MIKE AUSTEN