

FULL STEAM

**Ryan's Express
right on track**

89/90

AHEAD

IT was a dream start in more ways than one – for a new manager, a new striker, and a new Luton Town.

For Jim Ryan, a draw at Anfield was surely more than he could have hoped for, and for three minutes the impossible looked on the cards as Luton led 2-1.

It has been suggested that Liverpool are not the invincible force of old, but Crystal Palace and Swansea would beg to differ, and Ryan's team deserve every credit.

"I'm obviously very pleased because it's so difficult to come here and take anything away," said Ryan. "Liverpool have tremendously talented players so I felt it was important that we kept the ball and played a bit ourselves.

"But I do not profess to take the credit for it; the team played for me in a way, and they did it on the field."

For 19-year-old Kurt Nogan thrust into the Anfield cauldron there was another dream beginning.

His 73rd minute goal in front of the famous Kop, gave Luton that lead and briefly silenced the fans whose vociferous support is usually worth a goal in itself.

The Welsh-born striker had been left out of the reserves in mid-week, with Ryan planning to push his claims for a first-team place whoever was in charge.

"It must be a lovely feeling for Kurt, something you dream about as a kid," said the manager. "I wasn't worried

LIVERPOOL 2 LUTON 2 by Simon Oxley

about putting him in the team, because he has a good temperament."

Nogan himself, with his parents proudly watching in the stand, aptly described it as a "dream debut". "I just got in the right position, and hit the target," he said.

And it could be a new beginning for Luton Town after two weeks they would wish to forget both on and off the field.

Last week I suggested that the since departed Terry Mancini could win back friends for the club with his cheery nature putting a smile back into football.

We will never know – but if Ryan's Luton can keep producing Anfield-style performances then they will be doing their talking on the field and at the same time putting smiles back on faces.

The crowd had started the match by singing for 10 goals, and in the first 10 minutes

few could argue, as the red wave swept forward, Chamberlain denying Beardsley and Whelan with a fine double save.

Harvey's head blocked a Barnes effort, before the England winger curled a delightful free kick beyond Chamberlain, with such ease it may as well have been a penalty.

Liverpool's possession yielded further chances, but on a rare attack Harvey's cross found Harford, whose header was only cleared to Black who rifled in a cracker.

Black had been anonymous for much of the previous 71 minutes, but just a minute later left Venison for dead on a spell binding run before crossing for Nogan to score.

The reply was swift with a classic header from Nicol, and in a frantic finale the Luton defence, with Dreyer quite outstanding, held firm.