

Ferguson enjoys overdue success

By William Johnson

89/90

Manchester United..... 4 Luton Town..... 1

AN indication of how far once-mighty Manchester United have fallen came from Alex Ferguson, their manager, after a rare Old Trafford day of joy when he noted with some concern that Crystal Palace had won at Tottenham.

It used to be a case of United wanting to know how Liverpool had fared. On Saturday, their interest in the Anfield proceedings was to ensure that Millwall stayed only one point above bottom club Charlton. Liverpool's title challenge has long since been of only academic value to United.

"It was a good day for us," admitted a delighted Mr Ferguson after an encouraging four-goal romp against one of United's principal relegation rivals. "But it could have been better. Palace's win keeps them two points above us and we want to be above them."

It was United's first home win since November and, despite Luton carving out the first scoring opportunity which Dowie squandered, the three points looked assured from the early exchanges.

Luton, a young side under

new management, looked naive, despite winning praise from the opposing camp for their adventurous style of football. Entertainment, regretfully, has to take a back seat in a struggle for survival.

United look safe enough to be able to concentrate on the matches that could now make a traumatic season a triumphant one through an FA Cup odyssey which resumes at Sheffield United or Barnsley on Saturday.

Morale will be lifted because McClair, playing behind the front two, and Hughes scored in the same match for the first time since the opening day of the season. Robins also chipped in with his first Old Trafford goal with the other coming from Wallace shortly before he limped off with an ankle injury. Black scored Luton's consolation goal.

Scorers.—Manchester United: McClair (23), Hughes (33), Wallace (44), Robins (64).
Luton: Black (79).

Manchester United: Leighton; Anderson, Martin, Bruce, Phelan, Pallister, Robins, Ince, McClair, Hughes, Wallace (Beardsmore 45).

Luton Town: Chamberlain; Breacker, Harvey, Rees, James, Dreyer, Wilson, Nogan, Dowie, Preece (Cook 70), Black.

Referee: K Redfern (Whitley Bay).