



DEADLY DOUBLE DANE . . . Luton huddle around hero Lars Elstrup against Southampton

Dane shows up Matt finishing

SAINTS boss Chris Nicholl claimed it was all his fault after his side fell to a two-goal burst from Luton's deadly Dane, Lars Elstrup.

The clinical Elstrup struck twice in seven minutes to stun Southampton early on, and England prospect Matthew Le Tissier paid for a succession of misses at the other end.

Indeed, if Le Tissier is to

Southampton 1 Luton 2 By MARK RYAN

break into Graham Taylor's England team he must develop a finishing edge to match his creativity.

Nicholl blamed the hype surrounding Le Tissier's career for a performance which involved six fluffed attempts on goal, despite some customary magic.

He said: 'When Matthew is questioned continually about how it will feel to represent his country, when he hasn't got there yet, it can only harm his performance.'

'But then it is my fault if my players don't perform to the best of their ability. We were poor all round. It was a disappointing show.'

Nicholl might just as easily look towards his defence for the root of his problems. The back four were caught square in the 16th minute and Elstrup was happy to expose their blinkered approach.

Julian James timed his pass perfectly to release the Dane for a clear run on goal and his shot, though half blocked by Saints' keeper Tim Flowers, had just enough power to trickle over the line for Elstrup's third League goal in four days.

Southampton still hadn't recovered seven minutes later when Luton full-back Tim Breacker curled an inch perfect cross for Elstrup to flick past a stranded Flowers.

Don't be surprised if Elstrup improves dramatically on last season's meagre goal tally of nine. He explained: 'I have settled in this country now. I am in a new position playing out wide and I am ready to go.'

One man certainly looking ready to go — away from The Dell that is — is Saints' winger Rodney Wallace, who produced a display of extraordinary anonymity before being hauled off midway through the second half.

A superb snaking run from Le Tissier, during which he left two defenders for dead, set up Southampton's 31st minute reply, a simple close range finish from Paul Rideout.

SOUTHAMPTON: Flowers; Cherednik, Adams, Case, Moore, Osman, Le Tissier, Horne, Rideout, Cockerill, Rod Wallace. Subs: Ruddock, Shearer.

LUTON: Chamberlain; Breacker, James, McDough, Beaumont, Dreyer, Elstrup, Preece, Dowle, Hughes, Rees. Subs: Harvey, Nogan.