

Nevin pulls point out from the hat

90/91

Luton	1
Everton	1

Timothy Collings

AFTER dominating the first half but missing chances, Luton allowed struggling Everton to fight back, claim a point and go close to snatching a rare victory.

A 24th-minute goal from Elstrup had put Luton in charge and, with Williams dominating midfield, they looked poised for a comfortable victory as they stretched the Everton defence in the first half. But the Merseysiders responded vigorously after the interval, levelled through Nevin after 50 minutes and then went close to claiming their first victory on the Bedfordshire club's synthetic pitch.

The opening period belonged entirely to Luton. From the kick-off they had Southall in action as Preece fired in a low shot which had the Welsh goalkeeper scrambling to concede a corner within 15 seconds and from then on it was one-way traffic.

Williams volleyed wide and Ebbrell impeded a shot by Black with his elbow as Luton

exerted sustained pressure without reward until the 24th minute, when Elstrup headed in a Harvey cross for his seventh goal of the season.

Remarkably, it was the Danish international striker's first at home for the club in the First Division.

For a spell, Luton looked capable of scoring again and enjoying a handsome victory as Williams sprayed forward a series of inviting passes.

But the veteran former England player Williams spoiled his midfield display by constantly bickering with the referee and was cautioned after 14 minutes before gradually declining in influence. It was his second booking in consecutive matches.

Southall had his name taken after the second of two bizarre rushes from goal in the 28th minute, when he was beaten by Black and leapt to handle outside his area. Everton showed signs of recovery before the interval when McDonald twice fired in long-range shots which flew over, but their revival was really launched afterwards when Nevin levelled the scores. A long speculative cross by Ebbrell eluded the Luton defence and the little Scottish winger squirmed past Harvey, who was earlier cautioned for obstruction, and forced the ball in from a narrow angle.

The goal lifted Everton, but it was Luton who created the two clearest late chances which were headed over by Dowie and then volleyed over by Rees before the whistle.

Luton: Chamberlain; Johnson, Harvey, Williams, Beaumont, Dreyer, Elstrup (Rees, 61), Preece, Dowie, Hughes, Black.

Everton: Southall; Atteveld, Keown, Ratcliffe, Watson, McDonald, Nevin, McCall, Sharp, Cottee, Ebbrell.

Referee: S Bell (Huddersfield).