



● **TEARAWAY:** Lars Elstrup, a flying right winger at the Baseball Ground.

WINNING PRAISE BUT NOT POINTS IS A REAL CLOAKER

YET ONE MORE day of praise but no points took the shine off another polished performance by Luton Town at the Baseball Ground.

Against a team that had not won at home since last April the Town's football was more than good enough to have gained at least a draw.

SHILTON TO THE RESCUE

But the finishing wasn't, with Peter Shilton twice rescuing Derby when David Preece showed how goal attempts should be struck.

He was one of several Town men who outshone their opponents, and deserved something sweeter than a taste of defeat all the more bitter because it was not deserved on the run of play.

The quality football came mostly from the Town. In Lars Elstrup and Kingsley Black they had the two best wingers on view. In Preece they had the busiest and most creative midfielder.

And Alec Chamberlain was never called on to show how he compares with the former England goalkeeper — he was not extended as much as Shilton.

Yet the result shows the Town were second best where it mattered most.

FIRE D UP

And the fact that Derby's winner was one of those near-flukes of a shot that could have gone anywhere was little consolation.

Nigel Callaghan, on loan from Aston Villa for his second spell as a

Brian Swain reports from Derby

Derby player, was fired up by Luton chants of "Watford reject."

He admitted that his deciding goal was a case of have a pot and hope. "I caught it just right and enjoyed that," he said. "I wouldn't have minded if they had chanted Villa reject, but I thought Watford reject was out of order."

Callaghan's strike was very rough justice on a Town side that had threatened to take Derby apart in the early stages, and then fought back after going behind to a penalty.

SET FREE

The better chance had been created seven minutes earlier. Richard Harvey, calm and assured throughout, and now looking a very good player, set Elstrup free for a run down the left wing.

He left Cross trailing and as the defensive cover was drawn in towards him, Elstrup crossed hard and low beyond them.

Iain Dowie and Ceri Hughes had both timed their runs perfectly but with no defender near the goal, neither was the better placed man, but Hughes did not

hear his shout to go for the goal.

Derby rode their luck and their second came in the 31st minute, headed the tide for them.

Callaghan won a free cross, which Harvey headed behind for them.

The former Watford man hit the corner and England star Mark Wright, Derby's main defender, headed the crowded goalmouth.

PENALTY

Town feet thrashed around in vain effort clear and Mick Forster shot was going in — Preece, still on the line from the corner, headed it with his arm.

Dean Saunders, lonely attacker in the absence of flu victim, the 25-year-old plectrum which wobbled the crossbar.

Get me the rebound with a diving header side of the post while Chamberlain was still grounded.

From the goal kick Dowie cleverly worked the ball to Elstrup on the right wing. He went to the by-line and crossed hard, and Black roared in to sidestep the equaliser at the near post.

That should have set

pictures: Josh Levy

Micklewhite was wasted as the drive was sent the wrong side of the far post.

Winners only once in their first ten league matches, but encouraged by a 6-0 cup thrashing of Sunderland in midweek, Derby looked a more confident team at the start of the second half.

But it was their blood and sweat against a more cultured passing side and on footballing only the Town were the more composed team.

The equaliser came in the 48th minute, after a bit of off.

BETTER

And between them Callaghan produced his virtuoso strike to settle it.

Derby still had to fight after that 64th-minute winner, but neither Dowie nor sub Kurt Nogan could discomfort Forsyth and Wright, and the Town's frantic late attack produced nothing more than a bunch of corners and frustration.

It was a day when a team of losers looked better footballers than the winners.

The trouble is that Derby did not care about that as they enjoyed their first victory over the Town in five years.



● **CONFRONTATION:** Mark Wright passes the time of day with Darren McDonough, who went on as sub in place of Ceri Hughes for the last 14 minutes, to put fresh energy into the chase for a second equaliser.

● **EQUALISER:** Kingsley Black pounces and Peter Shilton is beaten.

The season so far

THE TOWN's results, scorers, attendances and league table position:

August	25 C. Palace (h) 1-1 (Dowie)	9,583	—
28 Arsenal (a) 1-2 (Elstrup)	32,723	—	—
September	1 Southampton (a) 2-1 (Elstrup 2)	14,878	8
4 Man United (h) 0-1	12,576	8	—
8 Leeds Utd (h) 1-0 (Black)	10,185	8	—
15 QPR (h) 1-1 (Hughes)	10,196	11	—
22 Coventry (h) 1-4 (Dowie)	8,336	7	—
29 Norwich (a) 3-1 (Elstrup 3)	12,794	6	—
October	20 Sunderland (a) 0-2	20,025	8
27 Everton (h) 1-1 (Elstrup)	10,047	7	—
November	3 Derby (a) 1-2 (Black)	15,008	8

LEAGUE APPEARANCES, including as sub in brackets: Chamberlain 11, Beaumont 11, Dwyer 11, Hughes 11, Preece 11, Elstrup 11, Dowie 11, Black 10, Breacker 8, Harvey 6, James 6, Rees 4, Williams 4, McDonough 3 (3), Johnson 3 (2), Nogan 4. Number of players used, 11 games: 16.

LEAGUE GOALS: Elstrup 7, Dowie and Black 2 each, Hughes 1.

THE RUMBLEBOWS CUP

September	25 Bradford (h) 1-1 (Harvey)	5,120	—
October	10 Bradford (a) 1-1 (Black) — lost on pens	6,180	—

APPEARANCES: Chamberlain 2, Dwyer 2, Beaumont 2, Hughes 2, Preece 2, Black 2, Dowie 2, Harvey 2, Rees 1, James 1 (1), Nogan 1 (1), Breacker 1, Elstrup 1, Williams 1, Johnson 1.

GOALS: Harvey and Black one each.

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● **TWO MANY COOKS . . .** Iain Dowie and Ceri Hughes are both off with an early chance to put the Town ahead, but neither could control quickly enough, and Derby escaped.

Match details

DERBY COUNTY 2 LUTON TOWN 1

Half-time: 1-0

TOWN: Chamberlain; Johnson, Beaumont, Dwyer, Harvey, Williams, Hughes (McDonough 76 mins), Preece, Elstrup, Dowie (Nogan 70 mins), Black.

DERBY: Shilton; Sage, Forsyth, Wright, Cross; Micklewhite, Williams, Ramsay, Callaghan; Gee, Saunders. Subs not used: Pickering, Francis.

THE GOALS: Dean Saunders penalty, 31st minute, after David Preece headed shot by Mick Forsyth on the line; Kingsley Black, 48th minute, first-time shot at near post from Lars Elstrup run and cross from the right wing; Nigel Callaghan, 64th minute, super-strike from 25 yards — a goal out of nothing.

OTHER STORIES: Town six saved and three wide; Derby six saved, seven wide and one hit the bar. Corners: 7-6 to the Town.

REFEREE: Alf Buxth, Dole Hill — had a good game and Marvin Johnson's rash of blood to the head.

BOOKED: Marvin Johnson for a 50th-minute late tackle on Nigel Callaghan.

ATTENDANCE: 15,000 — a drop of 2,000 on last season's fairly late occasion, with the Town following much smaller this time.

ENTERTAINMENT: Another good contest, with the Town midway to meet a goalkeeper like Peter Shilton, whose two second-half saves from David Preece were brilliant. The regular problem let down some excellent Town football — failure to find the end product.

‘So cruel — you feel cheated’

THERE WAS a sense of deja vu in the Press room at the Baseball Ground as Jim Ryan listened to sports writers' admiration of the Town's football.

He appreciated the plaudits but said, as he has done before this season, that he has no wish to be known as the man who plays good football and loses.

GOOD FOOTBALL

The goals have to be scored to make it worthwhile, and the manager knew that once more his men had been done out of what they deserved.

"We played good fast and efficient football but didn't put our chances away. It's probably the cruellest result of the season for us — we had 75 or 80 per cent of the game on Derby's home pitch and got nothing."

"We accumulated an easy chance early in the first half — five or six yards out, and Ceri Hughes and Iain Dowie got in each other's way. Really that should have been a goal."

Lars Elstrup and Kingsley Black had watched Derby become the boss had watched Derby and thought the Dane could embarrass their left back, Steve Cross, and the change worked beautifully, with Elstrup having a superbly well away from home really something when they want them to have the reward they deserve."

Manager's viewpoint

in the team's performance — the failure to get onto the end of the game and that was no criticism of Dowie, who had to contend with Mark Wright, an exceptional player and Derby's man of the match. "Iain always battles away and he can make things happen for you by sheer effort."

SYMPATHY

And rather than criticise any player the boss was full of sympathy for them: "What affected me most was to see them in the dressing room after the game."

"It's choking for players — they have done so well, worked so hard, and got nothing. They were physically drained and felt they had been cheated — it was absolutely something when they want them to have the reward they deserve."

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