

LARS QUELLS FOREST FIRE

90/91



● LARS Elstrup took his season's tally to 10 league goals, with two excellent strikes. The Danish international is now among the division's leading marksmen.

LUTON manager Jim Ryan said that he feared a backlash after Forest's cup defeat in midweek, but that backlash only materialised after an hour of this entertaining game.

By then though, Luton were 2-1 in front, courtesy of two cracking goals from Lars Elstrup.

Elstrup took his league tally to 10 this season, and remarkably eight of these have been away from home.

The Hatters' boss admitted he was a little disappointed having been in front with just 15 minutes to go, but felt overall that the result was fair.

"There was always likely to be a period when Forest got on top, and to imagine that we could go through the game without pressure would have been naive," said Ryan.

"We knew they would start strongly, but apart from the one goal we survived well.

"In the second half perhaps we got a bit nervous at being 2-1 up, but they stepped up a gear."

Ryan always maintained that Forest's defeat at Coventry was the worst result as far as Luton were concerned.

And his fears seemed well founded as Franz Carr cracked a sixth minute opener.

But that early setback, and Dreyer nearly heading into his own net, apart, it was Luton who looked set to take the three points.

Dreyer composed himself from that close call, to defend in style, with Steve Williams and David Preece picking up where they left off against Aston Villa.

Williams recovered from a painful blow reminiscent of a certain cigar advert, to produce another classy show, while Preece covered every inch of the City Ground turf.

It was Preece who led the Town break out for the equaliser, finding Williams on halfway who in turn delivered an inch-perfect pass to send Elstrup racing through.

NOTTINGHAM FOREST 2 LUTON TOWN 2 by Simon Oxley, at the City Ground.

The Dane not only held off the attentions of England's Des Walker, but outpaced him to slot the ball home in fine style.

If that was well taken, his second less than a minute after half-time was an absolute cracker.

Elstrup collected Dowie's knock down to curl a left foot shot beyond Mark Crossley from some 20 yards, for what the Dane later described as his "best goal ever".

It won Gary Lineker's vote on The Match, for goal of the day, and prompted Ryan to comment: "It was quite exceptional; the keeper did not have a chance."

But the manager had greater praise for Alec Chamberlain's save on 69 minutes as Forest inevitably fought back.

The Luton keeper somehow parried Roy Keane's volley onto the bar, with Ryan mentioning it in the same breath as Banks in Mexico, and adding: "It was one of the best saves I have seen for years."

Equaliser

Chamberlain though was powerless to prevent Nigel Clough's equaliser on 75 minutes, but a minute later was again at his best to deny Keane again, with the bar coming to Luton's rescue from Phil Starbuck's header five minutes from time.

It would have been cruel luck on Luton had Forest snatched the points.

Although it was not a vintage display from the home side that was credit to Luton for some sound defending, with much praise for Elstrup for two goals of truly international quality.

They more than deserved a point, and I imagine there's was the much happier dressing room after that result.