

Stewart gets sums right to clear up mess

Tottenham 2, Luton Town 1 **Ian Ridley**

TOTTENHAM won a spiteful match and its accompanying sending-off count by the same score. Paul Stewart netted twice as nine-man Spurs, for whom Nayim and Van den Hauwe were dismissed, came from behind to defeat Luton, who lost Hughes.

It was a mess of a match in which reckless tackles abounded, ranging from the pre-meditated to the mistimed. There were also bookings for Sedgley of Spurs and McDonough and Dowie of Luton.

Seasonal goodwill was in short supply, surprising considering the festive atmosphere before the match. Queues waited patiently to part with their money in the souvenir shop and Gary Lineker was presented with a player-of-the-year award from the New Zealand branch of the Spurs supporters club.

White Hart Lane settled down to enjoy the afternoon, the appearance of normally passive and acquiescent visitors ensuring their first win in four matches.

That was the theory, but within a minute Williams had clattered Howells, within 11 McDonough had been booked for checking Lineker and within 12 Luton had taken the lead with a neat goal, Black picking out Dowie to sidefoot home on the half volley.

The atmosphere became polluted. Sedgley was cautioned for a tackle on Dowie, who was booked for his reaction. Nayim suffered the same fate after fouling Harvey. Then, after 28 minutes, the Spaniard became the first to be ordered off, appearing to refuse to retreat 10-yards at a free kick.

Hackles rising, Tottenham equalised after 35 minutes thanks to a piece of pure Gas-

coignery. He beat Williams, Hughes and Black on the left before crossing perfectly for Stewart to head home.

Hackles rose further three minutes later when Van den Hauwe suffered the only possible punishment for a comprehensive combine-harvesting of Dowie and Tottenham were down to nine men.

It seemed only a matter of time before Luton made Tottenham pay in goals, with Spurs having to absorb pressure and rely on Lineker on the break. He duly won a corner after 58 minutes and from it Tottenham surprised by scoring the winning goal.

Gascoigne was again the provider and Stewart, timing a powerful run well to head home, again the scorer.

Luton were now the frustrated party — "we were stupid", their manager Jim Ryan was later to say — and when Hughes, who had earlier impressed with his handling of Gascoigne, mistackled Lineker, provoking an uncharacteristic flash of anger from the England captain, he became the third man to be sent-off.

It was, perhaps, the most debatable decision by referee David Elleray, hitherto harassed but handling himself well amid it all.

"I've no comment about the first sending off although I'd like to say a lot but no complaints about the second," said Spurs manager Terry Venables. "It was a sensational victory for us. If I could give the players more than 10 out of 10 today I would."

Tottenham Hotspur: Thorstvedt, Thomas, Van Den Hauwe, Sedgley, Howells, Mabbutt, Stewart, Gascoigne, Nayim, Lineker (Samways 74), Walsh (Allen 68).

Luton Town: Chamberlain, Johnson, Harvey, Williams, McDonough (Beaumont 84), Dreyer, Elstrup (Farrell 63), Preece, Dowie, Hughes, Black.

Referee: D Elleray (Harrow).