

# Williams sums up Luton slide

NE could feel a touch of sympathy for Jim Ryan, the luckless Luton manager, on Saturday night after he saw his team continue their slide with another unconvincing performance against their relegation rivals.

A goal ahead after 17 minutes, thanks to Black's superbly struck free-kick, they succumbed to a series of fundamental mistakes, virtually gifting Ferdinand his two goals, as they crashed to their seventh defeat in eight League outings.

It is no wonder Mr Ryan felt so disappointed afterwards as he blamed "elementary errors" and a "lack of experience" for his problems.

There is more to Luton's troubles, however. A lack of discipline and an absence of transfer funds have undermined confidence throughout the club.

The sight of Williams, once of Arsenal and England, being booked for the fourth time in

By Timothy Collings

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five games since returning from suspension, and the 10th time in all this season, told its own story.

"He seems to have had this problem throughout his career," said Mr Ryan. "I spoke to him before the game like I do before every game. Now he is past 30, he is not going to change."

Williams' languid performance and third successive booking made a mockery of Luton's collective effort to show the right sort of team spirit and brought into question Mr Ryan's decision to keep him in the team.

A year ago, when he took charge, he left Williams in the reserves because he was seen as a disruptive influence. This year, after the pre-season sales of Wilson and Kennedy, he has had little choice but to select Williams until funds are made

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available for the new blood his team so desperately need.

This remains unlikely, however, as Mr Ryan has spent only £25,000, on former Wokingham forward Paul Holsgrove in the last 12 months and there is little prospect of any improvement in Luton's tightly controlled financial situation.

Rangers, by contrast, are in clover despite a long injury list which was extended when Sinton was carried off with concussion after being accidentally kicked by Beaumont. They had more invention and quality and, with £650,000 of new investments in defence, also showed discipline.