

Bruce's forays up front put United in overdrive

LUTON'S HOPES of ending a run of 16 successive defeats at Old Trafford could never be rated better than remote, but United needed the inspiration of two goals from central defender Steve Bruce before they approached their best form.

Recent cup exploits at home and abroad have perhaps disguised the fact that United had gone 10 weeks without a League win, but they might have gone ahead here after only 30 seconds.

Beaumont launched a back-pass into space, unaware of the speeding Sharpe, but the United winger failed to control the ball.

Sharpe continued a lively duel with Johnson throughout the game. He won a corner after seven minutes and,

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Manchester U	4
Luton	1

Don Hardisty

though Luton blocked Pallister's header, they were unable to prevent Bruce from forcing the ball over the line.

Elstrup beat Irwin in Luton's first effective attack, but there was no one to take advantage of his centre. Then Pembridge, one of six youth team products in Luton's side, shot wide from 30 yards after a solo run.

Preece's equaliser — his first goal of the season — was by any standards remarkable. Sealey went to save his low 30-yard drive but the ball hit the turf in front of him and bounced almost vertically into the net.

Sharpe, Robson and McClair all went close as United countered furiously but they had to wait until the 47th minute before Bruce headed his 14th goal of the season from Sharpe's corner.

United remained in control, though Elstrup sent Farrell in to shoot wide, and Sharpe again supplied the opening for United's third with a brilliant 70th-minute run.

Robins' volley hit Chamberlain and floated over the line as Hughes tried a header to help it on its way.

Bruce and Robins combined to split Luton's demoralised defence again with seven minutes to go and though Johnson managed to stop Hughes, McClair snapped up the loose ball to score his 18th goal of the season.