

Negative Luton miss the point

By Don Hardisty

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Everton..... 1 Luton Town 0

LUTON'S players know they can stay in the First Division by beating Derby in their final match on Saturday, but they will need a far more positive attitude than they showed at Goodison Park.

Tony Cottee, whose 22nd goal of the season robbed Luton of the point they had unashamedly set as their target for the day, summed up the crowd's displeasure when he said: "Luton came for a draw and spoiled the game."

Luton manager Jim Ryan's justification for his team's grim display was a training injury to striker Sean Farrell which forced him to adopt a sweeper system.

He even received qualified support from Howard Kendall, the Everton manager, who said: "Jim Ryan is fighting against relegation and plays the way he thinks will get them out of trouble."

"When you do that the question is who will play up front. The answer today was nobody."

Luton's system of a back five and a midfield four acting like double glazing around goalkeeper Alec Chamberlain

made Everton's progress tedious but incessant.

With no-one upfield except the dispirited Elstrup, occasionally, every Luton clearance went straight to an Everton player who gratefully returned it to the siege of Chamberlain's goal.

McCall's persistence finally caused Luton to crack when he charged down a clearance by Dreyer and sent Cottee in to score early in the second half. But what puzzled many was why Luton did not change their approach after falling a goal behind.

Black did reach Southall on two occasions but the Everton goalkeeper was never troubled, while Chamberlain was in constant peril in the last half-hour. He saved well from Newell and Warzycha but Cottee would have had a hat-trick if the woodwork had not intervened.

Cottee duly walked off with the man-of-the-match champagne but not before he paid tribute to the crowd for their support and to Warzycha, whose impact in only nine matches has been considerable.