

Spurs light brigade dazzles sad Luton

SCOTT HOUGHTON, signed by Luton manager David Pleat when he was in charge at White Hart Lane, turned what could have been a triumphant first return to the ground by his former boss in four years into heavy defeat and misery.

After 58 minutes, with Luton leading 1-0 and playing with style against a Spurs team that manager Peter Shreeves admitted were "struggling for life", 20-year-old Houghton and Nayim were sent on as substitutes.

Seconds later the floodlights on the West Stand failed and caused a 16-minute hold-up.

Luton stayed on the pitch eager to play on — Spurs' skipper Gary Mabbutt led his team, except for Gary Lineker and Pat Van Den Hauwe, back to the dressing room only to find the lights out there, too, so they returned outside.

Seven minutes after play resumed Houghton scored his first ever League goal for Spurs after a fine Paul Walsh run and cross.

Two minutes later Lineker, who had managed only one shot up to the break, scored his 18th goal of the season in typical style when he pounced on to a Vinny Samways centre.

Luton, who never recovered their rhythm, were further demoralised after 75 minutes when the crowd-pleasing pacy Houghton

Spurs 4 Luton 1

by Dennis Signy

beat goalkeeper Alec Chamberlain with a 40-yard shot from the right touchline. Lineker rubbed salt in with another with seven minutes to go.

"What a lovely place to come," said Pleat. "That's football. If it had finished 3-3 I'd have gone home happy."

"I take credit for Scott Houghton. I signed him for Tottenham. The irony is that I persuaded him to come even though his mother was an Arsenal supporter."

Outstanding

Luton, who have not won away since March, had the consolation of their second away League goal of the season after 44 minutes. Brian Stein chased an ill-judged Gudni Bergsson back-pass and gave Mick Harford the chance to score.

Until the lights went out Pleat's side played with style, with Welsh international Mark Pembridge, a Spurs target, outstanding and young Scott Oakes and Harford continually worrying Spurs.

Lowly Luton might have been two up in the first two minutes but for Erik Thorstvedt going down at the feet of Harford and Paul Telfer to make saves — the second after a poor back-pass by Van Den Hauwe.

And Harford missed the chance of a goal after 20 minutes when Oakes and

Pembridge set him up — he screwed his left shot wide.

Harford led the Luton line well and was unlucky to collect an early booking

"I think we've got a chance if I am brave enough to play the youngsters," said Pleat. "Mind you, it's very painful on the way."

He said, tongue-in-cheek, that he had offered to come back and replay the game when it was stopped at 1-0 in his favour — provided Luton got the gate receipts!

Spurs, after three home defeats in four games, were completely flattered by the result. When the break came a wag said: "That is the first time bad play has stopped light!"

Shreeves had this end-of-match message for Spurs fans about Lineker, who has been linked with a move to Japan: "I want to make it clear he is here until the end of the season. What transpires then is up for discussion."

Shreeves had more good news for the punters — the result of Paul Gascoigne's inspection earlier in the day by the surgeon who operated on him.

He said Gascoigne was on course for recovery and had received clearance to step up his rehabilitation exercises and to go swimming.

TOTTENHAM: Thorstvedt, Edinburgh, Van Den Hauwe, Sedgley, Howells (w'drn 58, sub Nayim), Mabbutt, Bergsson, Walsh, Samways, Lineker, Allen (w'drn 58, sub Houghton).

LUTON: Chamberlain, Linton (w'drn 80, sub Nogan), Harvey, Kamara, Dreyer, Peake, Telfer, Stein, Harford, Pembridge, Oakes.

REFEREE: D. Frampton (Dorset).