

Oakes rescues Pleat's boys

Luton 1 Palace 1

by Steve Richards

GRAEME SOUNESS and his chief scout Ron Yeats left well before the end.

They had already done enough homework for Liverpool's coming battle with predictable Palace.

The lesson might be summarised as: "Play possession football, keep the ball down and try to run Palace a little dizzy."

Tense Luton tended to sky the ball more than Souness will surely ever allow, especially in a desperate first half.

Without suspended leading scorer Mick Harford as target man, they rivalled Everton as the First Division's most dwarf-like attack.

Yet still they played the ball mostly in the air to "shortie" Brian Stein, who was towered over by Eric Young and others.

"If Harford had played, he would have frightened Palace more," admitted Luton manager David Pleat.

"But we played well enough and kept our composure. We are fighting to stay up."

Palace's opening headed goal by unmarked Eddie McGoldrick flew past the diving Luton goalkeeper Mervyn Day — beckoned from history and Leeds reserves to help Luton's far from lost cause.

Scott Oakes' equaliser bulleted in off the far post and was described by Palace boss Steve Coppell as: "A great goal for him — not good for us."

LUTON: Day, James, Harvey, Kamara, Dreyer, Peake, Oakes, Stein, (w'drn 85, sub Hughes), Campbell, Pembroke, Preece.

Palace: Martyn, Humphrey, Shaw, (w'drn 65, sub Sinnett), Mortimer, (w'drn 72, sub Whyte), Young, Thorn, Rodger, Southgate, Bright, Coleman, McGoldrick.

REFEREE. D. Elleray (Harrow).