

Luton foiled by Johnston

91/92

Everton..... 1, Luton..... 1 **Don Hardisty**

MAURICE JOHNSTON'S second-half goal deprived Luton of their first away win for more than a year but failed to salvage much respect for Everton before their smallest League crowd of the season.

Luton led for half the game and although Stein's second goal of the season was presented to him by an Everton defensive gaffe, David Pleat's team were entitled to feel luck had once again deserted them in their battle against relegation for the third successive year.

They have drawn five and lost 16 matches on their travels since they won at Aston Villa last March but made the most of a hesitant Everton start and looked to have more appetite for the game.

When Pembridge drove a 30-yard free-kick against the crossbar after seven minutes, Watson looked to have the situation under control but the ball spun away from his toe and trickled to Stein, who could not believe his good fortune as he tapped it home.

Day, on loan from Leeds, held on confidently to Keown's shot as the Everton defender launched a solo attack but Luton swung the ball about and might have increased their lead had Harford done better with a header from Rees' cross.

Ebbrell wasted a chance which Ward supplied but Harford, back in Luton's side after suspension, had another header saved before Day pulled off a brilliant stop, diving to block a shot from Beagrie with his legs.

Beardsley was guilty of a rare lapse, blazing the ball over the crossbar after Ward and Harper had sent him through soon after the interval.

Everton manager Howard Kendall's half-time decision to send on substitute Hinchcliffe ended Jackson's game against his former club but the switch paid dividends only six minutes later.

Beagrie had the ball on the left wing but instead of crossing the ball decided to push it back to Hinchcliffe. His cross found Johnston lurking in the penalty area and the Scot beat Day with a fine header.

Luton refused to give up hope, with Kamara working hard to inspire them in mid-field. Pembridge hit a free-kick over the crossbar, Harford mishit another chance wide and then headed a third opportunity over the top.

Everton still had enough chances to clinch the points. Beagrie provided the first with his best centre of the afternoon but Ward shot wide. Ebbrell sent another cross from Beagrie over the crossbar before Johnston limped off to make way for Warzycha.

The Polish winger failed to make the necessary impact but Beardsley kept plugging away. Pembridge ended one of the England striker's runs with a fierce challenge which earned him a booking.

Luton substitute Hughes tested Southall with a long shot but Hinchcliffe wasted the best chance of snatching victory in the final minute when Hughes dispossessed him as he was about to shoot.