

Luton's hopes are fading

TWO GOALS in the space of three minutes from Les Ferdinand steered Queens Park Rangers to a 2-1 victory over Luton Town and plunged David Pleat's side into deep relegation trouble, after a Mark Pembridge penalty had temporarily threatened to breathe even more life into Luton's perennial escape act.

Luton, without an away win in the First Division since March 1991, when they beat Aston Villa, had taken a surprise and undeserved lead in the 64th minute, when Welsh international Pembridge beat Stejskal from the penalty spot after the referee, David Axcell, ruled that McDonald had climbed illegally on Harford.

At that stage, Luton's abrasive resistance seemed to have set the stage for yet another miraculous relegation escape, as the home side failed to take advantage of

By Sue Thearle

QPR 2
Luton 1

their chances. But Rangers, who had dominated for prolonged spells and could easily have repeated the 6-1 home win over Luton last season, finally equalised in the 80th minute when Sinton, the architect of so many of their best moves, slipped the ball to Penrice, who crossed for Ferdinand to tap home.

Three minutes later Ferdinand, who had been guilty of a poor miss in the second minute, collected Holloway's through ball and held off the challenge of Dreyer to plant a precise shot past Chamberlain for his 10th goal of the season.

"We need to win our last two games," concluded the Luton manager. "The odds

are against us and if we stay up it would be remarkable. We're very disappointed to have lost in the last 10 minutes."

In truth it was a match that Luton never deserved to win. Rangers displayed by far the greater enterprise and ability and Wilkins and Sinton unlocked the Luton defence at regular intervals only to see the Rangers attack demonstrate a frustrating reluctance to score.

Sinton struck the post following one of many scintillating runs and Bardsley and Ferdinand both dragged shots wide after intricate passing movements had put them clean through.

QPR: Stejskal; Bardsley, Wilson, Impey, Peacock, McDonald, Wilkins, Holloway, Ferdinand, Allen (Penrice 76), Sinton.

Luton: Chamberlain; James, Harvey (Hughes 36), Kamara, Dreyer, Peake, Varadi (Stein 78), Oakes, Harford, Pembridge, Preece.

Referee: D Axcell (Southend).