

# Grim night for unlucky Hatters



**CERI HUGHES . . . Injured in last Tuesday's home defeat.**

**THE TEAM** that took it's goals so well at Molineux against the league leaders Wolves had put a few in the scoring bank against Grimsby at Kenilworth Road.

"Another cruel night" was David Pleat's verdict after the fifth home defeat of the season made a mockery of Luton Town's promotion play-off aspirations, before they were lifted again so dramatically at Wolverhampton on Saturday.

The cruelty was not confined to the result, with Ceri Hughes picking up an injury which will keep him out of football for three months at least.

That happened after only 18 minutes, giving Scott Oakes the chance to reestablish himself in the team.

After a patchy first half, the game picked up in the second, and the Town did not deserve to lose in terms of possession and attacking ideas.

But Grimsby goalkeeper Paul Crichton made four very good saves, one of them

## LUTON TOWN 1 GRIMSBY TOWN 2

described by caretaker manager John Cockerill as world class when he kept out a John Hartson piledriver.

But too many Town shots whistled just wide of the target, and the final cruel stroke was a decider in injury time.

Dwight Marshall's personal dose of cruelty came in the first half, when he drove a scorching drive at the bar from 20 yards.

Grimsby pinched the lead in the 70th minute, when David Gilbert got up unmarked on the blind side to convert a deep cross by Kevin Jobling.

Marshall pulled back a perfect pass to enable Oakes to smash in an 82nd minute equaliser, and the game was more than a minute into stoppage time when Grimsby won it.

Trevor Peake fouled the lively Neil Woods a couple of yards outside the box, and was yellow carded.

And Gilbert delivered the final cruel thrust, curling in the winner from the free kick, and even the Town manager had to admit it was a superb goal.

● **BRIAN SWAIN**

## Match facts

● **LUTON:** Sommer; James, Peake, Johnson Thomas; Telfer, Waddock, Preece, Hughes (Oakes 19 mins); Hartson, Marshall. Other subs Dixon and goalkeeper Barber.

● **GRIMSBY:** Crichton; Croft (Agnew HT), Handyside, Lever, Jobling; Watson, Dobbin, Groves, Gilbert; Livingstone, Woods. Other subs: Childs and goalkeeper Colgan.

● **GOALS:** 0-1 70 mins David Gilbert; 1-1 82 mins Scott Oakes; 1-2 91 mins Gilbert again.

● **OTHER ATTEMPTS:** Town seven saved, nine wide and one hit the bar; Grimsby four saved and five wide. Corners: 9-2 to the Town.

● **REFEREE:** Paul Alcock, of Redhill.

● **ATTENDANCE:** 5,839, lowest league gate of the season so far, although Grimsby had a very small following.

● **ENTERTAINMENT:** It would have been excellent if the Town had converted their good play into goals. Instead it was another painful experience as they suffered their fifth home defeat of the season.