

Luton still lacking in home rule

By Steve Tongue

Luton Town0 Derby County 0

HOME is still anything but sweet for Luton Town. Wherever they lay their hat, away from Kenilworth Road, the Hatters seem to manage a result, taking 21 points from a possible 30. At home the total is nine out of 33, with no more than a draw to show for their superiority in yesterday's undistinguished encounter.

At least David Pleat's team were never in any danger of conceding six goals, as they did to Sheffield United a week ago. Derby, still lacking support for Tommy Johnson, did not even create that many

chances. Missing the guile of the former Luton midfielder, Mark Pembridge, they again left out Gordon Cowans and showed little to encourage those who back them season after season to rise to higher things.

Pleat has been strengthening his side without spending any money, adding the considerable experience of Paul Allen, on a month's loan from Southampton, and the former Irish international, Garry Waddock.

Allen was switched from the centre of midfield to the wing and then substituted as Pleat tried all his options, in vain. Today he will take on another triallist, left-winger Miguel Andrades from Oviedo.

Luton's best moments had come in the first few minutes, offering promise that failed to materialise. In their first attack, David Preece headed Paul Telfer's cross wide, prompting the electronic scoreboard to

flash up the message: "Maybe Next Time, Lad".

Next time, only a minute later, the 'lad' drove Kerry Dixon's lob wide and Luton were never as close again. Julian James's strong header shortly after half-time was also wide and Steve Sutton was on hand to thwart Preece and Telfer. Derby could point only to a Paul Simpson shot.

Luton: Sommer; James, M Johnson, Peake, Thomas; Telfer, Allen (Marshall 73), Waddock, Preece; Oakes, Dixon (Hartson 73). Sub: Barber (g). Booked: M Johnson.

Derby: Sutton; Harkes, Short, Williams, Kavanagh; Sturridge, Kuhl, Carsley, Simpson; Stallard, T Johnson. Subs: Cowans, Copper, Quay (g).

Referee: K Cooper (Swindon).