

MORE HOME DESPAIR

95/96
(AFC)

HATTERS fans, among Luton's smallest home crowd for years, can hardly be blamed if they are home sick at Kenilworth Road.

They haven't seen Luton win on their own pitch since April and the painful run continued last night in the Anglo Italian Cup.

Things looked quite promising for the first half hour or so. Manager Terry Westley changed his side and gave a debut to 17-year-old Sean Evers, a Letchworth boy who he thinks might just become the next David Preece.

For a time the youngster lived up to expectations, spraying the ball about impressively and showing commendable composure under pressure.

The Italians showed a mixture of stylish passing and muscular strength and the home fans howled in vain for a penalty when Tony Thorpe made a solo run and was pulled back by his shirt.

But he evaded his tormenter. The ref played on, and Thorpe hit his shot wide of the far post.

Then came the swift one-two which all but settled the game.

In the 35th minute Julian James looked very unlucky to be penalised for a foul, but from the free kick Luton's marking was abysmal and Marco Negri headed Perugia into the lead.

LUTON TOWN 1 PERUGIA 4

And two minutes later Kelvin Davis presented the Italians with a second goal.

A long clearance was punted down the middle of the field, Davis raced out to clear, but miss-kicked completely and Giovanni Cornachini accepted the gift, running through to shoot into the empty net.

To their credit Luton tried to hit back and were given a lifeline in injury time at the end of the first half.

Richard Harvey set Hughes free and he was brought down by Cottini and Bontcho Guentchev stepped up to net his second penalty of the season.

But the second half was barely a minute old when Perugia won their first corner of the match and Cottini's header from it restored their two goals advantage.

And worse was to follow because in the 59th minute Negri was put through on goal and teenager Davis brought him down.

Luckily, and perhaps wrongly, the ref decided not to give him the red card and settled for the penalty which Negri converted.

LUTON TOWN: Kelvin Davis; James, Steve Davis, Skelton; Linton, Hughes, Evers, Harvey; Guentchev (Marshall 68 mins), Thorpe (Waddock 68 mins), Oldfield (Woodsford 68 mins).

ATTENDANCE: 2,352.