

James makes Derby pay

LUTON may still be coming to terms with the unglamorous demands of the Nationwide League Second Division, but at Kenilworth Road last night, due to Julian James' first goal for 18 months, they gave themselves a fighting chance of dismissing Premiership side Derby County from the Coca-Cola Cup.

While Derby have lost only once in an enterprising start to life in the Premiership, Lennie Lawrence has found cause to criticise his mid-table Luton side for displaying insufficient fitness to last two matches a week.

Hence, in accord with football's appealingly contrary nature, the lower-division slackers toppled the top-flight celebrities.

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(c.c.)

By Peter Lansley

Luton Town 1
Derby County 0

Jim Smith, Derby's manager, said: "It was a typical unprofessional performance from a team thinking we're in the Premier League against a team in the lower division. We won't go through if we play like that again. But we won't play like that again."

Lawrence, duly impressed with his charges, said: "We've outplayed a Premiership side and it's just a shame we didn't get the second goal."

Derby could have been envisaging a much trickier second leg. James, the right-back, gave them their 26th-

minute lead after Kim Grant laid back Mitchell Thomas's centre to invite the deflected 25-yard shot.

Yet Luton deserved better fortune when, four minutes before the interval, Steve Davis's thunderous drive struck the angle of the woodwork. Moments from time substitute Andrew Fotiadis, 18, was through, but saw Hoult make a decisive save.

Though Derby showed an improved appetite in this second period it was only just that they go into next week's return trailing.

Luton Town: Feuer; James, Davis, Johnson, Thomas; Alexander, Waddock, Hughes; Oldfield Grant (Fotiadis 75), Guentchev. Subs: Showler McLaren. Booked: Feuer.

Derby County: Hoult; Rowett, Stimac, Parke Laursen, Dailly, van der Laan (Carsley 69), Powell; Asanovic; Ward, Simpson (Cooper 84 Sub: Taylor (g)). Booked: Parker, Ward.

Referee: G Pool (Tring).