

Lawrence lessons are far advanced

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Peter Lansley on experience that serves Luton well

LENNIE Lawrence, who is renowned for perfecting the art of escapology, encountered a gremlin in the works last season. At least Luton Town's relegation, however, has provided him with the challenge of balancing his managerial record by extending an eight-game unbeaten run into another promotion campaign.

games completed a convincing victory.

Whether Luton prove their promotion credentials will depend on maintaining the goal supply and getting the most out of former Wales international midfielder Ceri Hughes. Long-term prosperity for a club still technically up for sale will surely involve moving from the restrictive Kenilworth Road stadium with those atmosphere-draining executive beach huts.

Results from a Department of Environment public inquiry into plans for the new Kohlerdome are due in the new year by which stage Lawrence will have discovered his team's mettle. The portents are good; tomorrow they could be better, as they visit the country's in-form team, Wimbledon, in the Coca-Cola Cup. "If we're at our best and they're not, we've got half a chance," said Lawrence.

Luton Town: Feuer; James, Davis, Johnson, Thomas; Alexander, Waddock, Hughes (McLaren 80), Showler; Oldfield (Fotiadis 72), Thorpe (Guentchev 82). **Goals:** Davis (10), Showler (24, 55). **Booked:** Thomas.

Peterborough United: Sheffield; Huxford, Heald, Clark, Drury; Ebdon, O'Connor, Payne (Willis 46), Houghton; Rowe (Regis 46), Charlery (Griffiths 46).

Referee: R Pearson (Durham).

In between all the narrow scrapes Lawrence led Charlton and Middlesbrough to one promotion and one demotion apiece. Now this former schoolteacher is determined his Luton team, in a higher class than Peterborough in Saturday's 3-0 victory, should learn the lessons of last term's relegation.

Luton, nowadays stripped of potential big-money sales such as Scott Oakes and John Hartson, remain a neat, workmanlike side. Organisation at set-pieces did for Barry Fry's flubbugged team as Steve Davis headed in and then Paul Showler helped home Tony Thorpe's shot from Graham Alexander corners.

Showler, whose first-ever League goal was when he played for Fry's Barnet, was Lawrence's sole summer purchase, a £50,000 signing from the manager's previous club, Bradford. His fourth goal in as many