



Finding the flaw: Julian James tangles with Marcus Gayle Picture: TED BLACKBROW

Fear strikes as Wimbledon make most of Luton let-off

PETER FEAR put Wimbledon in the driving seat for the first time eight minutes into extra-time after Stewart Castledine's 90th-minute equaliser. Fear's 25-yard right-foot drive saved the Premiership high-flyers from going down and out in the Coca-Cola Cup third round after Luton put them under the cosh at Kenilworth Road last night.

With a performance full of passion and desire Luton deservedly took the lead after 28 minutes of a first half they dominated. A cleverly curled free-kick by Ceri Hughes exposed the jittery Premiership team's central defenders.

Dean Blackwell stretched but only managed to deflect the ball off the back of his head and it shot past goalkeeper Neil Sullivan.

Lennie Lawrence's side, unbeaten in

By JOHN BURTON

Luton Town . . . 1 Wimbledon . . . 2
(After extra time)

13 league games and victors over Derby in the previous round, had already ruffled Wimbledon by holding them to a 1-1 draw at Selhurst Park to earn this replay and were again the more committed team.

Without injured captain Vinnie Jones, nursing a knock after playing for Wales last weekend, Wimbledon lacked inspiration and were hustled out of the efficient pressing game which has seen them go 12 games unbeaten in the top flight.

Fortunately Sullivan was in splendid form and kept out the lively front pair of Tony Thorpe and Kim Grant.

He raced off his line to hack the ball clear after Grant outpaced the luckless Blackwell. The goalkeeper produced a magnificent double-save after 10 minutes, first from Thorpe by plunging to his right to deny a right-foot drive. Paul Showler then pounced on the loose ball but Sullivan recovered to keep his effort out with his feet. Dean Holdsworth, no longer a first choice, wasted the kind of chance to equalise that he would have grabbed with relish if playing at the top of his game.

Marcus Gayle robbed Marvin Johnson five minutes before half-time to set Holdsworth free on goal.

The striker took the ball into the box and looked odds on the score but when he tried to round giant goalkeeper Ian Feuer the ball was nicked off his toe.