

Suffering Luton hit new low

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By Timothy Collings

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A GRIM week for Luton and their despondent fans ended in misery and uproar at Kenilworth Road last night when Kevin Rapley scrambled the only goal of an ugly contest.

Rapley, on loan from Brentford and making his debut for Notts County, bundled the ball in after 71 minutes when Ian Richardson headed on a corner to bring his relegation-haunted team only their third away win this season.

Only 10 years ago, Luton were in the old First Division and holders of the Littlewoods Cup. Last night,

it was hard to believe such happy days had ever occurred as the home fans in a crowd of only 4,021 jeered their team off the pitch and called for the dismissal of Lennie Lawrence.

Luton last night fielded a team of fitful young talent on show in a run-down ground that is not even their own. And with nothing to borrow against, the board have little choice but to sell players to survive.

This season has seen the sale of captain Steve Davis to Burnley. His successor at centre back, Sean Dyche, was their best player last night, but he is on loan from Bristol City and may not stay unless Luton's current crisis is resolved swiftly.

The opening period

demonstrated this as he organised a suspect defence. Shots from Richard Liburd, Paul Bolland and Rapley reflected the play as Notts County pressed without reward.

Three substitutions early in the second period enlivened Luton but after Rapley had scored, their luck ran out. Phil Gray hit a post and Andre Scarlett's follow-up goal was disallowed for offside.

When you're down, you're down.

Luton: Davis; Alexander, Dyche, Johnson (White 46), McGowan, Cox (Scarlett 63), Spring, McLaren, McKinnon; Douglas (Gray), Doherty. **Sub:** Scarlet.

Notts County: Ward; Hendon, Warren, Richardson, Pearce; Liburd, Bolland, Owers, Tierney; Beadle, Rapley. **Subs:** Creaney, Hughes, Fairclough. **Goal:** Rapley.

Referee: R Styles (Waterlooille).