

LENNIE KIDS ARE DOING HIM PROUD



TROUBLE-SHOOTERS: Police move in on Cardiff fans



SPRING IN HIS STEP: Luton's Matthew Spring bounces in to challenge Jason Fowler of Cardiff at Kenilworth Road 99/00

IT took a super-strike to do it but Luton's win was no surprise to manager Lennie Lawrence.

Cardiff, he said, fell into the trap that hit the Hatters last season, a condition he calls "Cup-tieitis".

The Welsh Bluebirds were singing after knocking First Division QPR out of the Worthington Cup in midweek while Luton were being bundled out by Bristol Rovers.

Lawrence's squad, financed on a shoe-string, upset all the odds last season by storming through to the quarter-finals of the Worthington Cup. But they paid a price.

"Never once did we win a match on the following Saturday after our midweek cup victories," recalled Lawrence. "Those cup ties seemed to drain everything out of us."

City boss Frank Burrows declined to talk about the cup or the second-round tussle with Wimbledon. He was still baffled

By JIM O'BRIEN
Luton 1 Cardiff 0

at the way Cardiff had so much of the game at Luton but still went down to their first league defeat of the season.

"Both teams played very well and made scoring chances," he said. "It was a cracking game. We deserved a share of the points, but in football you don't always get what you deserve. It was hugely disappointing to put in all that effort off the back of extra-time on Wednesday and get nothing out of it."

"Now we must swallow our disappointment and pick ourselves up for our game against Scunthorpe."

Burrows will probably make changes for today's home match, with midfielder Jason Fowler very doubtful after collecting a back injury.

Lawrence, in contrast, has already told his young team that they are all selected again for tomorrow's trip to Bournemouth. Cardiff were

incensed when referee Roger Furnandiz waved play on when Jason Bowen was toppled by Gary Doherty on a run for goal. Burrows said he never commented on referees, but Lawrence admitted the decision could have gone against Luton.

The composure of Phil Gray finally defeated Cardiff's goalkeeper Jon Hallworth, who produced a string of quality saves before being left helpless by Gray's 80th minute volley.

Cash

Luton are enjoying being second in the table, but all is not right behind the scenes with the club still in receivership and strapped for cash while a deal is worked out to make major creditor Cliff Bassett the new owner.

Lawrence has had to get by with youngsters and short-term hirings. His 21-year-old goalkeeper Nathan Abbey is on a month's contract which expires in a week's time, and central defender Julian Watts completes

a four-week loan from Bristol City on the same day.

"I need to sort out new agreements quickly," said Lawrence.

Abbey will be delighted to sign the new deal. At the end of last season Lawrence gave him the boot because he felt the young keeper had no chance of making the breakthrough into league football while England Under-21 international Kelvin Davis was ahead of him.

But then Lawrence was ordered by the receivers to sell Davis to Wimbledon. At the same time Abbey's move to a club in Belgium fell through and he went back to Luton.

"He has made mistakes and cost us a goal or two but he is settling down and I see potential there," said Lawrence.

"I have been bombarded by agents offering keepers including some well-known names. But I still haven't got money either for transfer fees or for big wages."

"I have been pleasantly surprised at how well we have done with so many youngsters."