

Fergie's son piles on the misery for sad Hatters

GOB-SMACKED Hatters fans watched in amazement as their side lost a game that they were winning 3-0 with just 31 minutes left to play.

The home crowd voiced their disapproval after Darren Ferguson, whose father Alex knows a thing or two about dramatic comebacks and late goals, secured a 4-3 victory for Wrexham with an 87th-minute strike.

It was a remarkable recovery by the Welshmen who had trailed to goals from Mark Stein, Julian Watts and Liam George.

But it was not altogether unexpected with Wrexham managing twice as many goal attempts during a nail-biting encounter.

In fact, if it had not been for an inspired goalkeeping display from Nathan Abbey, Wrexham would have scored six or seven!

Abbey, bizarrely for a keeper who let in four goals, was in outstanding form and did not deserve to finish on the losing side.

He saved his team three times in the opening 13 minutes. First, he tipped over a curling Ferguson seventh-minute free-kick.

Then he pulled off a tremendous double save to keep out long-range efforts from Paul Barrett and Ferguson as a Luton defence, including fit-again Marvin Johnson, got off to a nervy start.

Stein opened the scoring on 38 minutes when he sent a diving near-post header crashing past Luton-born Wrexham keeper Kevin Dearden to provide an emphatic finish to a sweeping four-man move.

Peter Holmes and Andrew Fotiadis had combined to release over-lapping full debutant Friedrich Breitenfelder, whose swift pinpoint cross was met by Stein.

Luton took a rather flattering 2-0 lead into the interval when a Holmes corner found Watts charging into the box and the ball hit the Hatters defender before bouncing over the line.

Abbey saved his side again six minutes after the break, denying Chris Killen before George scored his side's third.

A spell of pinball in the Wrexham penalty box saw Stein have a shot blocked and Dearden forced into a save from team-

mate Mark McGregor before George reacted quickly to force the ball in from close range.

But the game's pivotal moment came just minutes before George's goal when Luton skipper and midfield lynxpin Paul McLaren limped off with a calf injury.

The midfield were over-run without their captain, the suspended Matthew Spring and an adequate replacement on a subs' bench boasting £550,000 worth of signings.

A makeshift central-midfield partnership of Holmes and Breitenfelder proved lightweight and inexperienced with Ferguson bossing proceedings. On 58 minutes, Abbey pulled off an acrobatic reflex save that brought the Kenilworth Road faithful to their feet in their appreciation and somehow kept Martyn Chalk off the scoresheet.

But the Hatters' luck ran out seconds after when Craig Faulconbridge headed in despite a

valiant attempted save from Abbey.

Four minutes later, a Holmes mistake saw the ball break loose to Killen, who calmly lifted his shot over an exposed Abbey.

Luton held on until seven minutes to go before Wrexham's inevitable equaliser arrived, Chalk beating Abbey with a 25-yard drive that fizzed into the Hatters keeper's bottom corner.

Luton sub Peter Thomson, on for a rapidly tiring Fotiadis, then wasted a glorious opportunity to restore his side's lead, completely missing his kick before falling over with the goal gaping.

Moments later, ex-Manchester United midfielder Ferguson displayed much greater composure to break into the penalty box and slot past the unlucky Abbey.

Wrexham should have made it five in the final minute, but Killen elected to shoot at Abbey with an unmarked Edwards' screaming for a square pass.

matchfacts

LUTON 3 WREXHAM 4

● **HATTERS:** Nathan Abbey, Emmerson Boyce, Julian Watts, Marvin Johnson, Friedrich Breitenfelder, Paul McLaren (Stuart Fraser, 48), Peter Holmes, Matthew Taylor, Liam George, Mark Stein, Andrew Fotiadis (Peter Thomson, 71). Subs not used: Dean Brennan, Rocky Baptiste, Mark Ovendale.

● **WREXHAM:** Kevin Dearden, Mark McGregor, David Ridler (Paul Mardon, 39), Martyn Chalk, Craig Faulconbridge, Darren Ferguson, Paul Barrett (Gareth Owen, 80), Carlos Edwards, Lee Roche, Chris Killen, Eman Bouanane (Hector Sam, 82). Subs not used: Robin Gibson, Kristian Rogers.

● **Referee:** Mark Cowburn.

● **Shots on target:** Luton 6 Wrexham 12.

● **Off target:** Luton 4 Wrexham 8.

● **Corners:** Luton 7 Wrexham 9.

● **Star Man:** Abbey - outstanding.

Hill view

Some players let themselves and the team down. We weren't very good over 90 minutes and Wrexham deserved it. They were harshly done by to be three behind and could have scored five or six without losing. Even at 3-2, you can still control a game. It should take a lot to score a goal. I'm a bit devastated to give away four goals in one half. We've lost five games at home. That's 15 points and makes for a long season if we continue in this vein.

