

Kinnear gives Luton lift-off

NORTHAMPTON

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LUTON TOWN

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Douglas (4)

By **JOHN HENDERSON**

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JOE Kinnear's return to the touchline had the desired effect on lowly Luton as the Hatters recorded only their second away win of the season.

The former Wimbledon boss, who recently quit Oxford United, saw his new side take all three points thanks to an early strike from Stuart Douglas.

A delighted Kinnear said afterwards: "It's great to be back on the training ground and in the dug-out but most of all in the dressing room.

"It doesn't matter whether it's Old Trafford or Northampton, I love it back in there."

Kinnear knows he faces a stiff task to keep Luton up but added: "I've always had confidence in my own ability and I'd certainly have settled for a 1-0 victory in my first game.

"We've got a very young side but they worked like Trojans."

Kinnear added that he hoped current first team boss Lil Fuccillo would remain with the club.

"I hope Lil stays on board. It's going to be a hard job and I'm going to be taking stock of the situation over the next few days."

The unmarked Douglas headed home the only goal of the game from Lee Mansell's fourth-minute cross and although Northampton enjoyed the majority of possession they could not turn it into goals.

Top scorer Jamie Forrester headed straight at Mark Ovendale in the first half and Dave Savage also shot straight at the Luton keeper from long range.

After the break Northampton boss Kevin Wilson introduced Steve Howard to join Forrester and Marco Gabbiadini in attack and Cobblers finally began to starting creating a few chances.

But the closest they came was in the 66th minute when Forrester was



CHALLENGE: Luton's Richard Dryden (right) competes for the ball

twice denied by excellent saves from Ovendale when clean through on each occasion.

Luton continued to threaten on the break and they should have wrapped the points up in the 68th minute when the lively Liam George was brought down in the box.

But to his dismay, skipper Matthew Spring crashed the ensuing spot-kick against the woodwork.

George himself had two late chances on the counter-attack but saw both his efforts go the wrong side of the upright and in the end it was Douglas' early strike that gave Kinnear the perfect return to club management.

Disappointed Cobblers boss Kevin Wilson said: "We didn't have the end product today and once Luton scored they sat back and made it very difficult for us."