

Super run is over!

JOE Kinnear's honeymoon as Luton Town manager came to an end at promotion-chasing Walsall last night.

The Hatters went down 3-1 at the Bescot Stadium with skipper Matthew Spring netting the visitors' consolation.

It was a result that underlined the hard work Kinnear still has to put in to guide his team to safety.

Three straight victories had lifted spirits at Kenilworth Road before this match but defeat in the West Midlands makes a better result at Swindon Town on Saturday crucial.

Kinnear will especially be looking to bolster a defence that has now conceded three goals in each of its last two games.

Kinnear fielded the same starting line-up that he had done in each of his previous three matches since taking over as manager.

But the Hatters fell behind for the first time under Kinnear when Walsall striker Jorge Leitao netted on 13 minutes.

Exposed Hatters keeper Mark Ovendale pulled off a good save from Paul Hall's close-range shot but when his defenders failed to clear during the ensuing scramble, Leitao sent an overhand kick across the line.

Luton failed to seriously test Walsall keeper Jimmy Walker before the break with Emmerson Boyce having the only noteworthy effort but his header after 15 minutes from Matthew Spring's free-kick was off target.

The visitors lost a limping Lee Mansell on 20 minutes.

He was replaced by Adam Locke after a collision with big home striker Brett Angell.

Luton continued to struggle against

Kinnear boys are halted by no-nonsense Walsall



**Walsall 3
Luton Town 1**
Dave Flett on last night's match at the Bescot Stadium

a physical Walsall side, whose no-nonsense approach denied the visitors any time on the ball.

Walsall doubled their lead on 36 minutes in bizarre and fortunate circumstances.

Home captain Tom Bennett tried his luck with a weak 25-yard effort but the ball finished up in the net after a divot on the horrendous Bescot Stadium pitch deceived an unlucky Ovendale.

At the other end, Hatters' strikers Stuart Douglas and Liam George struggled to make any impression against a strong, uncompromising defence.

Kinnear responded by withdrawing both players at half-time and beefing up his front line with the introductions of Peter Thomson and Andrew Fotiadis.

And the Hatters started the second-half in a much more determined mood.

Walker kept Petri Hellin off the scoresheet on 52 minutes when he saved the Finnish international's diving header after Rowland's excellent cross to the far post.

Three minutes later, the Hatters did reduce the arrears when Jude

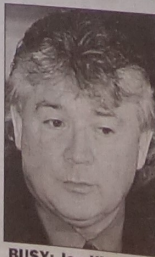
Stirling's cross was poorly dealt with by the home defence and Spring's daisy-cutter on the edge of the area found its way into the back of the net through a crowded penalty box to cheer the away supporters.

Walsall began to show nerves as Luton looked for an equaliser, but a costly mistake by Dryden saw the home side increase their lead.

Dryden's slip let in Saddlers' substitute Darren Byfield, who raced clear and beat Ovendale with a low drive.

The Hatters' keeper then prevented Angell from inflicting further damage on 74 minutes, saving two headers from the experienced target man.

Jennings gets the call



BUSY: Joe Kinnear.

GOALKEEPING great Pat Jennings is being lined up to join the Luton Town coaching staff.

Hatters' boss Joe Kinnear wants his ex-Spurs team-mate to become the club goalkeeping coach on a part-time basis.

Jennings played in two World Cups for Northern Ireland and enjoyed a tremendous club career at both Tottenham and Arsenal.

Kinnear said: "I have

spoken to Pat this week and would like him here two days a week to work with our four goalkeepers.

"He was a world-class keeper with more than 120 caps for Northern Ireland.

"He was coaching at Tottenham, but he is not doing a lot now and I would love to get him here to pass on his experience and knowledge."

Hatters have also been linked with John Hartson and Matthew Upson...p71.

big match line-up

● **WALSALL:** Jimmy Walker, Zigor Aranalde, Ian Roper, Tony Barras, Ian Brightwell, Tom Bennett (sub 74 mins, Ronnie Ekelund), Dean Keates, Paul Hall (sub 85 mins, Darren Wrack), Pedro Matias, Brett Angell, Jorge Leitao (sub 55 mins Darren Byfield). Other subs: Carl Emberson, Matt Gadsby.

● **LUTON TOWN:** Mark Ovendale, Jude Stirling, Emmerson Boyce, Richard Dryden, Petri Hellin, Lee Mansell (sub 20 mins Adam Locke), Matthew Spring, Keith Rowland, Matthew Taylor, Liam George (46 mins, Peter Thomson), Stuart Douglas (sub 46 mins, Andrew Fotiadis). Other subs: Nathan Abbey (gp), Friedrich Breitenfelder.

● **Referee:** Neal Barry.

● **Attendance:** 4,816

● **Luton top player:** Keith Rowland - tidy display.