

LUTON DOWN BUT NOT OUT

LUTON TOWN (0) 1

Nicholls 85 (pen)

GRIMSBY TOWN (1) 2

Anderson 34, Boulding 77

Referee: G Cain 7. Attendance: 5,827

★★★★★

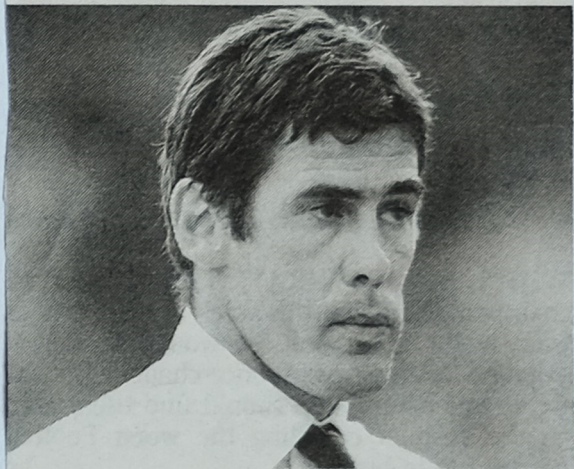
Grimsby too tough for Newell's spirited team

THE VULTURES MAY BE HOVERING above Kenilworth Road, but there is plenty of life left in this Luton Town team, despite seeing their perfect start to the season ended by Grimsby Town. Off-field turmoil made Luton a standing joke in the off-season, but when the club went into administration, no one was laughing.

After selling Tony Thorpe, the striker, to Queens Park Rangers on Friday, Mike Newell, the Luton manager, below, admitted that he does not know who will still be at the club next week. "There are a lot of players who are committed to the club but there are two or three who I believe have been got to by agents," Newell said. "Things have to be sorted out. We have had no offers for any of our players, but that doesn't seem to mean anything . . . there are no rules any more."

With an embargo on signings, Newell has to plug the gaps with players on loan and the two in his side, Gary McSheffrey and Courtney Pitt, were Luton's most creative players. Pitt, a 21-year-old borrowed from Portsmouth, switched flanks regularly and looked dangerous every time he ran at the Grimsby defence, although his propensity to fall over and moan at the referee rather let him down.

Grimsby looked just a bit too tough for Luton and, after Iain Anderson fired them in front from 25 yards after 34 minutes, they seldom looked like surrendering their lead. In



Marcel Cas, a 31-year-old Dutchman, they have a freight train on the right-side of midfield, almost impossible to shrug off the ball. In first-half injury time, Cas ran 50 yards before firing a shot against the crossbar and, on 77 minutes, his pinpoint cross, headed in by Michael Boulding, sealed the match.

Kevin Nicholls scored from a penalty for Luton five minutes from time, after Dean Crowe had gone down under a challenge from Simon Ford, one of the less far-fetched of a series of penalty appeals.

After succumbing to a four-year battle against relegation last season, a first win in four matches this campaign was important for Grimsby. It is a long time since they have played regular winning football. "This gives us something to build on," Paul Groves, the player-manager, said. "But first and foremost, we have to get enough points to survive." Survival is all Luton want right now, too.

RON LEWIS

Luton Town (4-4-2): R Beckwith 6 — K Foley 7, C Coyne 5, E Boyce 5, A Neilson 6 — K Nicholls 6, M Spring 5 (sub: A Brkovic, 81min), P Hughes 6, C Pitt 8 — S Howard 5, G McSheffrey 7 (sub: D Crowe, 66 6). *Substitutes not used:* D Brill, D Bayliss, S Davis. *Booked:* McSheffrey. **NEXT:** Brighton and Hove Albion (a). **FORM:** LWW

Grimsby Town (4-4-2): A Davison 7 — J Crowe 6, A Crane 8, S Ford 7, D Barnard 6 — M Cas 8 (sub: P Groves, 81), S Campbell 6, D Hamilton 7, I Anderson 7 (sub: D Mansaram, 90) — M Boulding 7, L Ten Heuvel 5 (sub: J Rowan, 57 5). *Substitutes not used:* A Pettinger, M Edwards. *Booked:* Ten Heuvel, Crane. **NEXT:** Wycombe Wanderers (h). **FORM:** WLD

Shots on target: (h) 6 (a) 8. **Fouls:** (h) 10 (a) 10. **Offsides:** (h) 6 (a) 7