



**HIGH RISK:** Cardiff's Cameron Jerome and Luton goalkeeper Marlon Beresford tussle for the ball

Picture: GARETH EVERETT

# Victory is still not enough for Newell

Luton strengthened their position among the Championship front-runners by ending Cardiff's eight-match unbeaten run.

Peter Holmes's second-half winner secured the victory for Luton after Dean Morgan's first-half strike had cancelled out Michael Ricketts's early opener.

It was another wholly deserved victory for Mike Newell's side, who have had no problem acclimatising to life in English football's second tier since promotion in May.

The victory was Luton's fourth on their travels in the League this season and left them in third place in the Championship.

A thrilling game was full of incident, with Luton hitting the bar in the 10th minute after a well-placed header from Ahmet Brkovic beat Cardiff goalkeeper Neil Alexander.

Luton striker Steve Howard was also unlucky not to score in the 63rd minute when his excellent effort struck the Cardiff upright.

The home side also had a moment of misfortune when, on the hour, Darren Purse struck the post, while in the dying moments Ricketts hit the bar with a header and then saw his deft left-foot shot cleared off the line.

Cardiff drew first blood after just nine minutes through the

**CARDIFF** 1  
Ricketts (9)

**LUTON** 2  
Morgan (30) Holmes (57)

By Steve Martyn

perseverance of striker Ricketts, who capitalised on a hesitant Luton defence to fire a low drive into the corner of the net beyond goalkeeper Marlon Beresford. But the former England striker was given little sight of goal thereafter as the visitors took control of the game.

Luton's equaliser came in the 30th minute as a cross from Brkovic was met by Dean Morgan, who struck his third goal of the season with a superb left-foot volley from 15 yards out to beat the diving Alexander.

Luton exerted early second-half pressure on the Cardiff goal and their winner came in the 57th minute from busy midfielder Holmes, who unleashed a shot from the edge of the area which curled inside the post.

Luton manager Newell was proud of his team but felt they should have scored more than two goals.

He said: 'I was disappointed we didn't add to our tally as we

created ample opportunities to take the game away from Cardiff. I would have been very disappointed to have come away with anything less than the three points.

'We gifted Cardiff their goal, with defenders not being positive and clearing the ball away first time.'

Cardiff were urged on by their biggest crowd of the season — 14,657 — and bombarded the Luton goal in the final 10 minutes but they were frustrated in their attempts to find a goal.

Cardiff boss Dave Jones was disappointed his side failed to score during their late rally.

He said: 'Considering the amount of pressure we exerted on them, we should have got a goal.'

'Once we went in front we sat back and let them settle into the game. When they scored their equaliser we should have carried on playing instead of waiting for the offside flag.'

'Luton are a direct team who got the ball forward quickly and we should have coped better.'

**CARDIFF (4-4-2):** Alexander; Weston (Lee 82min), Purse, Loovens, Barker; Ardley, Koumas (Mulryne 86), Ledley, Cooper (Parry 58); Jerome, Ricketts. Subs (not used): Cox, Margetson. Booked: Jerome.

**LUTON (4-4-2):** Beresford; Edwards, Coyne, Heikkinen, Davis; Brkovic (Underwood 75), Holmes, Morgan (Keane 81), Nicholls; Feeney (Showunmi 86), Howard. Subs (not used): Brill, Perrett. Booked: Holmes.

Referee: M Jones (Cheshire).