

Lions clinch Marv-ellous win

Millwall2
Luton1

By ANDY SIMS

MARVIN Williams climbed from the bench to earn Millwall a dramatic victory with a stoppage-time winner against Luton at The New Den.

Chris Coyne looked to have denied Millwall a precious win in their fight to beat the drop when he cancelled Ben May's opener out shortly after the break.

But as the clock ticked down, Williams capitalised on some poor Luton defending and put another dent in the Hatters' fading play-off hopes and move Millwall closer to safety.

Luton, who welcomed skipper Kevin Nicholls back from a hamstringing strain, got the first sight of goal when Steve Howard drove a low shot in that was comfortably gathered by Andy Marshall.

But it was Millwall who almost grabbed the early lead when Marlon Beresford failed to hold a thumping May free kick.

Carl Asaba looked odds-on to tuck the rebound home until Coyne foiled the striker with a superb last-ditch tackle.

Colin Cameron, making his debut following his loan move from Wolves, brought an

assured touch to the Millwall midfield but their defence remained distinctly jittery and a mix-up between Zak Whitbread and Matt Lawrence offered Nicholls a shooting opportunity. Fortunately for the Lions, the experienced midfielder skied his effort over the top.

Ryan Vine earned himself a needless booking on the half-hour for pushing Lawrence to the floor, and moments later May fired the hosts ahead.

The striker neatly controlled a high ball on his chest, turned Luton defender Markus Heikkinen and fired low past Beresford from 12-yards for his third goal in as many games.

But Luton got themselves on level terms barely 60 seconds after the restart when Paul Underwood launched a free kick into the Millwall area.

Coyne latched on to Howard's knock-down in a crowded goalmouth and smashed his third goal of the season past the helpless Marshall.

Howard then saw a shot saved and Carlos Edwards fired straight at Marshall as Luton went for the jugular.

But the Hatters were almost caught napping at the other end when Cameron meandered into the area, controlled the ball on his knee and blasted narrowly over the top.

Ahmet Brkovic thumped a shot against Marshall and fired wide

from another goalmouth scramble before Edwards squandered a glorious chance to put Luton ahead, wastefully shooting the wrong side of the post with the goal at his mercy.

Millwall skipper Dave Livermore fired inches wide from the edge of the area before Brkovic headed straight at Marshall at the other end.

Referee Uriah Rennie was having an unusually quiet game until he decided to book Paul Robinson for time-wasting, although the defender had to be substituted with the injury that had floored him.

As the final whistle approached, Coyne headed wide from a Vine corner before Williams struck. Bursting between two static defenders, he prodded the ball past Beresford to seal a dramatic win and condemn Luton to a 13th defeat on the road.

Brave move pays off

MILLWALL boss David Tuttle shrugged off the jeers of the disgruntled home supporters as he sent substitute Marvin Williams into the match against Luton with 20 minutes to go.

But Tuttle had the last laugh as Williams took advantage of

some hesitant Luton defending before hitting the winner.

"I made the decision and luckily it worked," Tuttle said. "Williams and Barry Colgan came on and livened the game up for us.

"With the effort we put in, I thought we deserved a result."

Mike Newell was left lamenting a 13th defeat on the road this season — form which he admits will probably cost Luton a play-off place this season.

"I'm getting used to not winning games that we should away from home," Newell said.

"It's more than frustrating and I'm fed up of saying it.

"I didn't feel we competed in the first half, and I told them at the break to go out and compete and I felt we did.

"But we're not putting sides away when we're away from home.

"If we can sort that out I think next year we will have a real chance of promotion.

"We're not giving up this year — although obviously this hasn't helped — but we're looking for other teams to slip up now.

"Out of the 13 games we've lost away, I can count on one hand the ones I felt we didn't deserve anything from.

"If we'd turned seven or eight of them into points, things would look different."