

HATTERS OFF TO NEWELL'S BOYS

Luton5
Leeds1

By TOM COLLOMOSSE

LUTON condemned Leeds to a fourth successive defeat and piled more misery on the troubled Yorkshire club with a comprehensive victory.

Leeds have now lost seven of their last eight league matches and, after a reasonable first half display, they were desperate for much of the second period.

The visitors came into the match on a miserable run of three straight losses, and it was Luton who made the better start.

Warren Feeney — in the team in place of Sam Parkin — volleyed just wide in the first minute after Rowan Vine's knock-down had found him unmarked.

At the other end, Markus Heikkinen hacked on loan Middlesbrough winger Adam Johnson's shot off the line — and his intervention proved crucial as Luton took the lead in the 12th minute.

Hayden Foxe's wayward pass from defence fell to Feeney, and the Luton forward transferred the ball to Carlos Edwards, who outpaced Stephen Crainey before rounding Neil Sullivan and finishing confidently from a narrow angle.

Luton's lead lasted only five minutes, though. Johnson's corner found Foxe unmarked, and the Australian defender — making his full league debut for Leeds — headed past Marlon Beresford from eight-yards.

The first half ended with honours even — but Luton made the decisive move of the match with two goals in three second half minutes.

In the 54th minute, Kevin Foley released Feeney down the right, and the Northern Ireland international's cross was bundled in by Vine with his chest at the far post.

And three minutes later, Edwards outwitted Crainey yet again, before pulling the ball back to Vine, whose mis-hit shot from 12-yards fell perfectly for David Bell to steer in his second goal in three matches.

Leeds twice came close to reducing the deficit within four minutes of Luton's third goal.

First, Paul Butler's header from Gary Kelly's cross was nodded off the line by Feeney, and a minute later it was Richard Cresswell's turn to be disappointed when Foley blocked his header on the line, allowing Beresford to gather.

Luton made it 4-1 in the 73rd minute, Heikkinen rising the highest to head in Steve Robinson's free kick from the right.

In stoppage-time, Luton made it five when Edwards turned in Vine's deflected cross at the near post, and there was still time for Vine to hit the post.



Luton's CARLOS EDWARDS (right) celebrates with STEVE ROBINSON

Manager had that winning feeling

MIKE Newell admitted his Luton side had fancied their chances against Leeds, following their crushing win.

"I imagine it will have been a long time since Luton beat a club like Leeds 5-1," the Hatters boss said.

"We started quite well and, although they came back into the match towards the end of the first half, we felt that if we could score the second goal, more would follow.

"But we did not expect to get five. Given the way we have been playing at home, and the results Leeds have had, we felt we could beat them."

On this form, Luton look a match for any team in the division — but Newell is concerned that his squad is not deep enough to sustain injuries to key players.

He said: "We will have no problem keeping the players' feet on the ground, because it is too early to

start talking about promotion.

"We don't have a lot of cover in certain positions, and a couple of injuries might just hurt us badly.

"We have had better performances than we had today, even though we scored five goals.

"Goals blind people's opinions, and we can certainly play better than that."

Leeds caretaker manager John Carver refused to speak to the press after the match.