

Get well soon, Sol

Treble for Lee but all thoughts with Davis

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LUTON TOWN 0

By IAN GIBB

06/07

SHELLSHOCKED Luton boss Mike Newell stayed on the pitch to shake every Ipswich player's hand after Alan Lee's hat-trick destroyed his shambolic team.

But he knew something of which nobody outside the Luton club was aware. His left back Sol Davis had suffered a stroke on the team bus on the way to East Anglia on Saturday night, causing him to lose feeling down his left side. He is being treated at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge.

Ipswich manager Jim Magilton said: 'It makes such a great result pale into insignificance.'

Newell refused to make excuses for his team but did say: 'We will never know exactly what effect it had on the lads. This is not an excuse but I need to make this public.'

'We were 20-25 minutes out of Luton when it happened. He has made a bit of an improvement. He lost the feeling in his left side and it has affected his speech. He has had an MRI scan which apparently shows it was caused by a blockage to the brain. We have been given an indication it will take three to six months before he makes a recovery. That's all we're interested in, not football-wise, just that he makes a recovery.'

The news about Davis, 27,

certainly went some way to explaining why Luton were so poor.

They were so bad they could have been four down by half-time instead of 1-0, as opening scorer Sylvain Legwinski also hit a post, Alex Bruce's header came back off the bar and Billy Clarke shaved it immediately after forcing an astonishing save from Marlon Beresford.

Luton can point to a controversial linesman's decision early in the second half at 1-0 when Rowan Vine scored after Carlos Edwards' centre but the effort was given offside. Referee Iain Williamson obviously took the opinion that Vine had gone offside earlier in the move, though at that point he

was not interfering with play. Ipswich manager Magilton generously conceded the point, saying: 'That could have changed the whole course of the game.'

But overall, Luton were taken apart and any half-decent centre into their penalty area could have produced a goal. The opener came on 19 minutes when a Matt Richards corner was met powerfully towards the near post by Legwinski, who placed his header in the far left corner of the net.

It was virtually all over after 54 minutes when former Cardiff striker Lee won a header, though he appeared to hamper Beresford, and Jaime

Peters slid the ball into the net.

Luton were all over the place in the 66th minute when Legwinski gave Lee the chance to shake off Kevin Foley and slot the ball into the right corner.

It was 4-0 after 74 minutes when Beresford saved one-handed from Danny Hayes' header but Lee put away the rebound and went on to complete his hat-trick in the last minute from the penalty spot after substitute Gary Roberts was tripped by Foley.

Portman Road was jubilant over Ipswich's most emphatic win in two years. It was only later that the revelation of Davis's illness reminded us that there are more important matters than winning at football.



Absent friend: the celebrations of Legwinski (left), Lee and Peters were overshadowed by news about Davis

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