

McKenzie brings relief

06/07

Coventry	1
Luton	0

COVENTRY substitute Leon McKenzie's deflected 75th minute strike earned City their first win in eight Championship games at the expense of relegation rivals Luton.

The striker had been on the field little more than 15 minutes before making the telling contribution at the Ricoh Arena, having time to turn inside the box, following great work from fellow substitute Kevin Thornton, before his shot deflected off Hatters defender Russ Perrett and past the off-balance Dean Brill. Luton, themselves without a league win in five, came closest to taking an early lead.

Barely a minute had passed before a Coventry defence which had conceded 14 goals in their previous five games showed signs of vulnerability, with Andrew Whing making a hash of Luton skipper Steve Robinson's lofted free kick.

But Dean Morgan failed to capitalise, hooking his shot agonisingly wide.

Sky Blues skipper Robert Page and vice-captain Michael Doyle were both left out of the 16 following the previous week's training-ground bust-up.

Both sides looked unsurprisingly short of firepower having both sold their top scorers — Luton's Rowan Vine signing for Birmingham and Coventry's Stern John joining Sunderland — during the transfer window.

Coventry right back David

McNamee's delightful one-two with Dele Adebola down the right channel created an opening after 15 minutes.

The hesitant Hatters defence backed off, giving McNamee, 20-yards out, time to pick his spot, but he elected to square the ball and the move broke down.

Soon afterwards, Adebola's clever turn enabled him to roll his defender, but rather than shooting, he again opted to pass, much to the home fans' frustration, before Jay Tabb's cross was cleared to safety.

Coventry resorted to long-ball tactics, a punt from defence which almost found Adebola stirring the sullen supporters from their slumber.

But the Sky Blues were much improved in the final quarter, with Coventry caretaker manager Adrian Heath reaping the rewards for his double substitution.

Kevin Kyle replaced Adebola and Chris Birchall was swapped for McKenzie, whose arrival sparked a big cheer among the home fans.

It was Kyle who almost made an immediate impact when the ball fell to him on the edge of the area, but the Scot dragged his shot wide.

Luton served a reminder that Coventry still had a contest on their hands, with Matthew Spring heading Morgan's cross inches over the crossbar.

But McKenzie pounced with 15 minutes left, much to the relief of the home support.

Thornton almost turned creator 10 minutes later when his free kick found the unmarked Marcus Hall, whose header was somehow saved by Brill.