

Leeds 1
Luton 0

By DAVID ANDERSON

KEVIN NICHOLLS may be desperate to bail out of Leeds' relegation dogfight – but Casper Ankergrén is loving it.

Ankergrén answered Dennis Wise's SOS to enlist in their survival battle by parachuting into Elland Road in January from Danish side Brøndby.

And the on-loan goalkeeper displayed the ice-cool nerve of his hero Peter Schmeichel when he saved Dean Morgan's penalty five minutes from time to earn Leeds a priceless win.

Ankergrén, 27, was the calmest man inside Elland Road when Morgan stepped up to take the spot-kick, even though he knew Leeds' Championship future was in his hands.

"I don't feel nervous when

06/07



BOSS HUG: Poyet and Wise

"I play here and knowing the supporters are behind you gives you a great feeling," said the 6ft 3ins Ankergrén.

"I'd rather play in front of 30,000 here than 5,000 back in Denmark. I am used to pressure and I have high expectations of myself.

"I played for one of the biggest clubs in Denmark in Brøndby and every year I had to play under pressure because we were trying to win the Superliga and the cup.

"Now I am trying to stop Leeds getting relegated, but the pressure to get the three points is the same. I can play under pressure like this because I've done it all my career.

"Leeds are still a great club and back in Denmark everyone knows about Leeds. You only have to go inside the stadium and look at the pictures of all their former players to understand how huge this club is."

Despite Ankergrén's heroics, Leeds remain bottom of the Championship, although they are only two points below the safety line.

Their week of destiny continues tomorrow at Leicester and at Southend on Saturday and they know they need at least four points to keep alive their survival hopes.

They should have beaten Luton at a canter and they hit the woodwork three times in the first half as debutant Lubomir Michalik, who is

their 42nd different player used this season, skipper Jonathan Douglas and Robbie Blake rattled the crossbar.

Richard Cresswell, back playing after a career-threatening knee injury, scored their deserved winner on 50 minutes when he beautifully turned Markus Heikkinen and fired home past Marlon Beresford.

Luton belatedly showed some fight in the final half hour and thought they had stolen a point when Radostin Kishishev brought down Leon Barnett in the box, only for Ankergrén to deny them. Cresswell admitted his goal was

one of the most important of his career – but hopes he will notch an even more vital one before the end of the campaign. "It was big, but if I scored the goal to keep us up that would be even bigger," he said.

Touted

A jubilant Wise could not resist taking a swipe at Mike Newell and accused the Luton boss of talking "rubbish" for saying he had touted Nicholls – dropped for asking to quit – to other Championship clubs.

Talking of controversy, Leeds

chairman Ken Bates' feud with Melvyn Levi goes on and after the former director took out an injunction to stop publication of Bates' programme notes, the club had to delete two lines to keep the lawyers happy.

Luton are locked with Leeds in a grim struggle to stay up and Warren Feeney, who was at the Elland Road Academy with Alan Smith, Paul Robinson and Harry Kewell in the 1990s, says there can be no room for sentiment. "If it comes down to either Luton or Leeds, obviously I want us to stay up," he said.

Leeds plan last Casp escape



ANKER-GRIN: Leeds keeper Casper Ankergrén is delighted after saving a late penalty



SPOT ON: Ankergrén stops Dean Morgan's spot-kick