

Lewin back to lift Rams

Picture: MICHAEL REGAN/ACTION IMAGES

LOCAL teenager Lewin Nyatanga returned to Derby to steer them back into the top two and relegate Luton to League One.

Nyatanga, 18, has been out on loan at Sunderland and Barnsley but, in his first game for Derby since September, he hit a 37th-minute winner.

Nyatanga, from Burton, plays for Wales and became their youngest international as a 17-year-old.

This was another milestone for him. He was brought back from Barnsley because of injury to centre-half Michael Johnson and Darren Moore's suspension.

He needed to be strong defensively with Dean Leacock as bottom club Luton, needing a victory to avoid going down, caused Derby some early concern.

Derby looked to get on top quickly, yet the closest they went before Nyatanga's goal was a scorching Matt Oakley drive from a tapped David Jones free-kick in the 13th minute.

The ball crashed against the top of the bar and apart from that Derby, their recent form less than impressive, looked tense, allowing Luton to

DERBY	1
LUTON	0

By John Wragg

settle. Indeed, for a team with one win since December and nine defeats out of their last 10 games, Luton were lively, something that obviously took the hosts by surprise.

Gary Teale tried to ease Derby's nerves with an angled shot, saved by goalkeeper

☐ **BIRMINGHAM** have been cleared of misconduct by a Football League disciplinary commission after failing to fulfil their Coca-Cola Championship fixture with Leeds in mid-January.

Dean Brill in the 24th minute, but effective, attacking football was still rare until Luton captain Chris Coyne kicked a Steve Howard header off the line.

Then Leacock's header from a Jones corner was deflected away.

However, Derby got their breakthrough eight minutes from half-time. Luton couldn't hold on and from another

corner by Jones, Leacock connected with a diving header that was blocked for Nyatanga to score from the rebound.

It was an important goal and not the first time Nyatanga has helped out Derby this season. While out at Barnsley, he was in the team that beat Birmingham 1-0 over Easter.

Early in the second half, pressure was needed to find a quick second and help the Rams control the game. Leacock, from a 52nd-minute free-kick, got in a header that was deflected on to the bar and then Howard followed up with a shot that was blocked.

Howard also slid on to a Jay McEveley cross, but he couldn't beat Brill from close range.

Substitute Arturo Lupoli was also frustrated, wasting a 70th-minute chance and then Howard, again, shot wide.

However, Billy Davies' team had just done enough.

DERBY (4-4-2): Bywater; Edworthy, Leacock, Nyatanga, McEveley; Teale (Pearson 73), Oakley, Jones, Currie (Lupoli 65); Howard, Barnes (Fagan 80).
Goals: Nyatanga 37.

LUTON (4-4-2): Brill; Foley, Barnett, Coyne, Emanuel; O'Leary (Langley 73), Heikkinen, Spring, Bell; Andrew, Talbot (Idrizaj 73).
Booked: Idrizaj.

Referee: R Beeby (Northants).



HAPPY RETURN: Steve Howard helps scorer Nyatanga celebrate