

Dragons ticking the right boxes

IT WAS the midweek away win that gave both Graham Westley and Steve Evans the utter belief their side could go on and win the Blue Square Bet Premier title.

Tuesday, September 29, 2009: Luton Town 0 Stevenage Borough 1.

Tuesday, October 5, 2010: Luton Town 1 Crawley Town 2.

Tuesday, October 18, 2011 brought us Luton Town 0 Wrexham 1 – a result that told us everything about the struggles the Hatters have breaking down organised, committed and totally professional teams who have to be taken seriously as championship contenders.

There was a minute – or best part of one – in this week's Dragons win that we have to deal with first.

It came with the score goal-less and 24 minutes still to play. That was when a ball flew over Luton striker Stuart Fleetwood's head, and it ran through to the Welsh side's goalkeeper Joslain Mayebi.

The Cameroonian dribbled it to the far corner of his penalty area, towards the byline, so Fleetwood had to run 40 yards to make him pick it up and get the game going again.

It was a perfectly legitimate time-wasting exercise, but completely against the ethos of free-flowing football we have come to expect from Wrexham under Dean Saunders and caretaker Andy Morrell this season.

Stevenage have gained a reputation for taking 'time-outs' during each half when a player receives treatment, and I was at Kidderminster in April 2010 when the Harriers' tannoy guy opened one mid-game announcement with: "If I can just remind you during the Stevenage tea-break..."

Whether that kind of tactic is right or wrong, Westley prepares his team to the finest detail and they are now in League One. Even cuter Craw-



TAKE HAT: Mathias Pogba fires in Wrexham's winning goal against Luton on Tuesday

PICTURE: Les Evans

ley are heading there, too.

On Tuesday night, Wrexham showed that they too can "win ugly". Mayebi's moment, for me, was miserable. But it did the trick because it frustrated the life out of Luton and, more importantly, their fans.

Seven minutes later, the usually impeccable George Pilkington misjudged a high ball and Mathias Pogba scored to put Wrexham eight points clear of Luton, who have won just once in eight Tuesday games this term.

Wrexham's stats look much more positive – especially for Morrell. The 37-year-old has picked up six wins in seven games since Saunders left for Doncaster.

Asked afterwards about his own position, he gave the usual

stock answer: "I just get on with it again. As long as nobody talks to me, we'll be all right. I'll just keep my head down, keep the players in that little cocoon that we are in, try and keep them away from everything that's going on off it."

"Hopefully the Trust will get sorted at some point, and then it's a time to sit down and go from there."

Morrell summed up his side's work ethic in injury-time. Having introduced himself as an 87th-minute sub, he chased back 30 yards as Keith Keane tried to set up a last-gasp Hatters attack to rob the midfielder of possession.

It backed up the determination of lads like Mark Creighton, Nathaniel Knight-Percival and Neil Ashton had

shown all night to ensure they continue to roll out results even without their best footballer, injured midfielder Lee Fowler.

Showered and changed, with his kit bag slung over his shoulder like a schoolboy, Morrell took on board my recollections of Stevenage and Crawley's Kenilworth Road victories.

"Has this shown you your team can win it?" I asked.

"I don't know," he replied. "But at the moment, there is a real togetherness in there. I can feel it. The lads that aren't involved at the moment are right behind the eleven that are. When you get that situation at a club, it's all good."

"Deano put together a great little team. It's not that deep in numbers, but it's good in strength and if we can keep

people fit and maintain that same team spirit, then I think we'll do all right."

Again, nicely side-stepped – as we have grown accustomed to seeing the forward do to defenders in Wrexham red, Coventry sky blue and Blackpool tangerine over the years.

So I'll answer it for him. A lot depends on how the aforementioned Wrexham Supporters' Trust cut their cloth to avert predicted £500,000 losses when their takeover is finally sorted.

But they simply have to offer the caretaker the job, and if he accepts, he had better start believing. Because like Westley and Evans before him, Mozza made a massive statement at Luton – without really saying too much!