

Tony Barnes on that flare-up

Echo camera man Mike Dellow captures scenes of soccer shame

SECTIONS OF the crowd, and certain players from both sides were responsible for turning an important encounter between two top Third Division teams into a night of soccer shame at Kenilworth Road.

From the start Luton's infamous Oak Road End choir set up a series of obscene chants — and soon the smaller contingent of Watford supporters began to echo the obscenities.

And then a group of Watford fans reached the supreme height of spectator stupidity when they invaded

the pitch — presumably in an effort to have the game abandoned.

All these young hooligans achieved was to give the club they claim to support a bad name.

But as so often happens, the fans were probably taking their cue from the violence on the pitch. Players from both sides allowed the tension to get the better of them.

Watford can claim that they did not start it. One of the main reasons for the deterioration of the game was the niggling tactics of Luton forward Lewis.

But Watford were at fault because of the degree of their retaliation. To be provoked is as serious a soccer sin as to provoke and the Watford players must accept a large share of the blame.

There is a third party who must accept some of the blame for the way the game went — Stourbridge referee Ken Burns.

Referee Burns became a strong contender for the title of the man who made the worst decision of all time when he sent off Barry Endean after

the luckless Watford forward had been attacked by Alan Slough.

Slough jumped on Endean from behind and grabbed him by the neck. Endean made no attempt to retaliate for at least 10 seconds and then put up only a token resistance.

Players who lose their heads, and fans who think it's funny to invade the pitch — all have a lot to answer for. But none contributed as much to the ugly mood of the game as Mr Burns.



■ Slough's stranglehold



■ Endean gets to grips



■ Double dismissal

'Disgusting two-legged animals'

It was a night of savagery

AN IRATE Watford supporter, like many others who went to the Luton-Watford clash, was disgusted at what happened at Kenilworth Road.

She writes:

NEVER again shall I proudly stand at the Rookery End of Vicarage Road to cheer my team to victory. I returned from Luton on Wednesday night, sickened by the disgusting behaviour by our so-called supporters, the Rookery Enders.

Football is a wonderful game. Surely the players must have been put off by it all. The Watford supporters did nothing to support their team. I can only suppose they went for a slanging match with the Oak Road Enders who were just as disgusting.

Well, I hope they all enjoyed themselves. I didn't.

I am glad I did not take my seven-year-old son with me, what with the obscene songs and chants and the fights. How on earth can we teach our youngsters to be sportsmen with this sort of thing going on?

My thanks and praise go out for the police and St John's men who worked non-stop to control these two-legged animals called supporters.

Mrs Jean Wright
31 Millcroft Crescent,
Oxhey

THREE players sent off, nine spectators arrested and another 100 treated for injuries — these are the shameful statistics from Wednesday's brutal and bruising Kenilworth Road clash.

Watford went down 2-1 to Luton. But it was a night that will be remembered more for the savagery than skill of the soccer served up by both teams.

Referee Ken Burns of Stourbridge — the man who failed to send off Garry Sprake for punching Bobby Gould in the recent Leeds/Arsenal match — sent off Luton's Allan Slough and Watford's Barry Endean in the 53rd minute, and Tom Walley late in the second half.

Unlucky

Endean was unlucky. He tackled Slough untimely ... it looked a foul ... and as he walked away was grabbed round the neck from behind and thrown to the ground. He jumped up and attempted to push Slough away from him.

Referee Burns dashed across and sent both players off.

Tom Walley's dismissal was far more justified. He had been involved in incidents with Max Dougan and Keith Allen — both of whom seemed to object to the way they had been tackled — before he hacked down Brian Lewis after both had gone for a ball to the far post.

While Walley was being sent off the group of young Watford fans invaded the pitch and raced down the full length before being made to sit on the touchline.

The antics of certain sections of the crowd and the rough stuff from some players completely overshadowed the actual football match.

In fact, without the punch-ups and the hooliganism it would have been a very dull

By TONY BARNES

affair. Luton stamped their authority on the game right from the start, and apart from brief spells in the trouble-torn second half Watford spent the game in almost total defence.

Man for man, Luton looked the better side. Balding Ian Buxton beat Watford's young centre half Walter Lees to almost every ball in the air, and Luton's midfield duo of Keith Allen and Mike Keen looked to have far more control than Dixie Hale or Roy Sinclair.

Stewart Scullion toiled magnificently but generally Luton's tough defence was more than a match for the Watford forwards. Endean achieved little before he went off, and Brian Owen looked far from fit before being replaced in the second half.

But I thought John Williams played dashing winger Graham French very well, and skipper Keith Eddy always looked safe in the back although he did misjudge a couple of balls — something that rarely happens.

Duncan Welbourne defended well and until he was sent off Tom Walley looked Watford's most effective player in defence or attack.

But Watford's man of the match was, I thought, keeper Mike Walker. He always looked safe and made some tremendous saves — including two, from Rioch and Buxton, that looked certain goals.

Luton favoured long ball tactics — very effective on the tight Kenilworth Road pitch — and made them work because of their ability in the air.

Buxton outjumped Lees to pave the way for the first goal after 28 minutes. He nodded the ball down for Lewis to beat Eddy and push it back. Buxton applied the finishing touch

with a fierce drive into the corner of the net.

After the interval, the trouble started. Eight minutes into the second half Endean and Slough went off and after then the game was constantly interrupted because a string of fouls.

Among the incidents: Walley went over the ball to Rioch and was attacked by Allen, Dougan pushed Walley in the chest after a strong tackle by the Watford player — and all the time referee Burns just stood and watched.

Watford produced some of their best moves in the second half.

Just over

Substitute Terry Garbett — on for Owen — headed an Eddy free kick down for Endean to hit the ball just over the bar. And Scullion almost made an opening when he dashed up the right and crossed dangerously for keeper Tony Read to beat Garbett to the ball.

Luton increased their lead when a long Rioch pass found Buxton lurking near goal and the centre forward forced Walker to give away a corner with a fine finger-tip save. From Lewis's kick Allen beat the Watford defence.

Five minutes from the whistle, Walley was sent off. And minutes after the invading Watford supporters were cleared off the pitch Scullion scored the Hornets' only goal of the game.

The live-wire winger latched on to a poor back pass from Moore to Read and slammed the ball past the keeper into the net.

Luton: Read; Dougan, Banister, Keen, Slough, Moore, French, Lewis, Buxton, Allen, Rioch. Sub: Branston.

Watford: Walker; Welbourne, Williams, Eddy, Lees, Walley, Scullion, Hale, Sinclair, Endean, Owen. Sub: Garbett.



■ Walley in trouble