

TWO moments of misery for Mick Martin saw Newcastle United's promotion hopes blow up in their face in a drama-packed match at Kenilworth Road.

United, 2-0 up and heading for glory, were smashed in the cruellest possible way conceding two penalties in the dying minutes.

And it was skipper Martin, switched to the centre of defence when David Barton limped off after only 10 minutes, who ended up the villain of the piece giving away both spot kicks.

Even though regular penalty taker David Moss was out injured, Luton crashed home their 12th and 13th penalties of the season through Brian Stein, who was carried off shoulder high by delighted Luton fans.

United, who had battled against the odds and had called the tune for threequarters of the game, were hanging on at 2-1 when Luton gained the first of their penalties after 82 n in es.

Stein tucked this one away and then four minutes later gave Luton three fortunate points when he again scored from the spot.

So at the end of the day Luton finally broke the Indian spell Newcastle had held over them — United had won their previous four games against Luton.

Newcastle must be wondering how they lost this game after having Luton on the rack for so long. The back four were always in command of the Luton strikers despite the blow of losing Barton after only 10 minutes.

Superb

The absence of the experienced Martin in midfield hardly seemed to matter as substitute Kenny Wharton slotted in superbly alongside John Treweek and Peter Cartwright.

The pattern was set for the first half after only two minutes when Varadi missed the sort of chance he has been gobbling up all season.

It came following a move which was identical to the one from which the 22-year-old striker gave United the lead at Wrexham earlier this month.

Varadi raced on to a ball from Chris Waddle down the left touchline. His pace took him clear, but after seeing the whites of Findlay's eyes Varadi dragged his shot just wide from six yards.

Within two minutes Carr was called on to make his only real save of the first half.

TOP MEN Newcastle: Haddock Luton Horton

The big 'keeper was clearly unsighted when Horton ran on to a cross from the right and hit a low shot which was sneaking inside Carr's right hand post until he got down to claw it behind.

Newcastle really seemed up against it when Barton limped off after 10 minutes but his replacement Wharton almost put them ahead after 20 minutes when his subtle chip hit the cross-bar.

Deserved

However, Newcastle came straight back to take a deserved lead after 23 minutes when the hard-running Cartwright cut the ball back from the by-line for Mills to drive home from eight yards.

Newcastle continued to look the better team in the first half and it didn't seem to matter that they did not cash in on their superiority during this spell when John Treweek increased their lead from the penalty spot in 68 minutes, after the battling Mills had been brought down by the double challenge of Money and Goodyear.

However, six minutes later Stein put Luton back into the game when

Martin's moments of misery

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By JOHN BARRETT
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despite looking suspiciously offside, he was allowed to go on and round Carr before slipping the ball into the empty net.

United found themselves up against it but seemed to have escaped when both White and Antic saw their shots crash against the cross-bar.

Then, with Varadi already booked for lashing out at Goodyear and with Wharton and Carr

also in the book for timewasting, Luton got the break they wanted with just eight minutes remaining.

Horton raced into the penalty area and went down following a challenge from Martin with Mills being booked for arguing against the penalty decision.

Stein did the necessary, sending Carr the wrong way to level things at 2-2.

Even a draw was no good to United in their present circumstances but they didn't even get the satisfaction of this when Martin went in to challenge Stein and was judged to have handled.

Once again Stein sent Carr the wrong way from the spot, but this time there were no appeals to the referee from the bemused United.

LUTON: Findlay, Stephens, Money, Horton, Goodyear, Donaghy, Antic, Stein, White, Fuccillo, Turner.

NEWCASTLE: Carr, Brownlie, Saunders, Treweek, Barton (Wharton), Haddock, Mills, Martin, Varadi, Cartwright, Waddle.



IT'S MINE . . . and Luton's hat-trick hero Brian Stein seems determined to keep possession of the ball despite a double challenge from Newcastle's David Mills (left) and John Brownlie.