

Luton's likely lads give QPR the elbow



HORTON

THE ONLY man who did not raise an eyebrow after LUTON'S 1-0 win at QPR was Brian Horton.

While all around were lifting theirs in amazement at what others were saying, the Luton skipper never flinched. It would have been too painful, even if he had wanted to.

Horton's right eyebrow had just been stitched back to where it was before it had been given a close inspection of one of John Gregory's elbows.

Dorset referee Leslie Burden never saw the clash, but that was not surprising because there were several other incidents which escaped his notice.

But he did see the boot which Gregory flicked out at Luton goalkeeper Les Sealey and off went the England international for the second time in his career.

The dismissal surprised both managers, but for different reasons. QPR's Terry Venables thought Gregory was hard done

By MARTIN HARDY

by, a victim of somebody's persuasion.

"And it wasn't a linesman or one of our players who had a word with the referee," he said.

Luton's David Pleat was only surprised that Gregory was still on the field by the 71st minute.

"He tends to get involved unnecessarily at times," said Pleat. "There were other things happening out there involving Gregory which he would have been sent off for had the referee seen them."

Significant

But Gregory, Sealey and Horton refused to give their versions of incidents which could cast some clouds over the QPR man's international future. "I don't want to get involved," they chorused.

What is perhaps as significant is which of these sides will be closest to the championship scramble come next April?

Some QPR players believe

they are good enough to win the title, perhaps when they learn to use their feet more and their mouths less, they could emerge as serious contenders.

Luton are a joy to watch. A team that can suffer a six-goal mauling at Liverpool and then bounce back with a performance of such authority and discipline deserves recognition.

Gary Parker proved that not only have they strength in depth, but also reserve.

The 17-year-old was given the responsibility of all Luton's set-pieces and how he responded.

He capped a splendid performance by creating the opening and cross for the outstanding Paul Elliott's 11th-minute match decider.

Luton could well be the team that raises most eyebrows this season.