

PLEAT POSER AS ELLIOTT IS HURT

LUTON 3 LEICESTER 1 By GRAHAM PUNTER

84/85 (FLC)

DAVID PLEAT was trying to decide this week whether to dip into the transfer market or give youth a chance after Paul Elliott broke a leg on Tuesday.

England Under 21 defender Elliott was stretchered off for the second consecutive Milk Cup game after a 32nd-minute collision with Leicester's Alan Smith.

"We have to decide whether or not we do something about it or give a youngster a chance," said Pleat.

The obvious replacement is Stacey North although next Saturday Pleat may be tempted to keep the back four that performed so well following Elliott's departure.

The injury marred a third round tie in which Luton recovered from the Milk shakes to overcome a talented and determined Leicester side.

Pleat praised the character of his team for their recovery after what he called a "nightmare" first 20 minutes. "They did fantastically well to come out of it — I cannot praise them enough," he said.

Colin Todd made his debut in the centre of the back four, with Mal Donaghy switching to left-back. Tim Breacker came in for a fine game at right-back.

In the early stages the defenders looked in need of being introduced to each other, such was their lack of understanding. Donaghy looked uncharacteristically vulnerable and was booked for fouling Lynex when he was caught out of position.

Todd, who went on to play a cultured game and prove his value

He may have to buy

to Luton's young side, was guilty of early nerves. And keeper Dibble, back after injury, nearly handed Leicester the lead with a wayward punch.

City opened with pace and flair and were unlucky not to take advantage of the early lapses. Lineker had a chip saved after displaying wonderful control and Smith found the net, only to be ruled offside. Then Dibble had to hurl himself at Lineker's feet to keep his goal intact.

Such was the frenzy of Leicester and the anxiety of Luton that Pleat went scurrying from the stand to his dug-out after just 16 minutes.

This was Luton's best move to date and it inspired the team to gather their wits enough for Stein to crack in a shot that won Hatters' first corner after 26 minutes.



● Action stations at Sunderland . . . Steve Elliott is foiled as he heads for goal. Another picture inside.

Then came Elliott's injury as he clattered into Alan Smith, a late tackle that earned the Luton player a booking along with his agony.

There was an eight-minute gap before Parker joined the action, with Turner moving to left-back and Donaghy taking over from Elliott.

Luton finally broke Leicester's resistance after 52 minutes when Moss chipped keeper Andrews. An own goal by Williams followed five minutes later and in the 67th minute City were finished by a Donaghy header. With two minutes remaining Bunn raced clear, only to hit a post.

Leicester rallied in the closing

minutes, thanks mainly to the pace and character of Lynex on the right, and Smith, the striker replacing cup-tied former Luton resident Peter Eastoe, headed against a post.

In the sixth minute of injury time, Leicester scored a deserved consolation goal when Lineker squeezed the ball past Dibble.

LUTON: Dibble, Breacker, Todd, Elliott (P), Donaghy, Hill, Turner, Bunn, Stein, Elliott (S), Moss. Sub: Parker.

LEICESTER: Andrews, Feeley, Williams, O'Neill, Wilson, Lynex, MacDonald, Ramsey, Jones, Smith, Lineker. Sub: Banks.

Crowd: 8,015.