

Luton through after referee controversy

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LUTON, the Littlewoods Cup holders, ushered Southampton out of this year's quarter-final in the most controversial of circumstances at the Dell last night

While Mick Harford and Ricky Hill scored Luton's goals, Southampton, with some justification, will claim that London referee Tony Ward had the greatest effect on events. He made his exit with a police escort.

They will suggest that the real turning point came not when Harford rose to head splendidly past Burridge in the 100th minute, but 32 minutes earlier.

It was then that Rodney Wallace, the scorer of the consolation goal in the 118th minute—a minute before his brother, Ray, was sent off—appeared to have

By Colin Gibson

Southampton 1 Luton Town 2
(After extra time, 90min: 0-0)

given struggling Southampton the lead.

Danny Wallace, the third brother in this team which has now gone 13 matches without a victory, skipped past Breacker before crossing to the near post where Ray was lurking.

His first-time volley beat Sealey and the Dell celebrated. However, the referee noticed the linesman flagging furiously.

The referee's initial reaction was that Danny had strayed across the touchline for a throw-in. His decision to award a free-kick—presumably for a foul on Breacker—confused everyone.

His sending-off of Ray Wallace in the last minute of the

game for a rash tackle on Black merely fuelled Southampton's anger. He had been booked five minutes before half-time for a similar lunge on Preece.

By then, though, a deflated Southampton were a beaten team. It was a game their manager, Chris Nicholl, had insisted they had to win, and the defeat saw him keep his team in the dressing-room for 40 minutes after the match.

The Littlewoods Cup seems to bring out the best in both Luton—this was their 14th tie without defeat—and their goalkeepers. They have not lost since the present sponsors took over the event and in the last two seasons their goalkeepers have exerted considerable influence.

In last year's final at Wembley, Dibble, Sealey's replacement, made a crucial penalty save. Last night Sealey was just as outstanding with a string of spectacular saves that allowed Luton the chance to clinch the televised semi-final place against West Ham on Feb 12.

In the 100th minute, Harford, who had scored twice in Luton's 6-1 League win over Southampton, made his most meaningful contribution of an otherwise quiet evening.

Hill produced the cross and Wegerle headed on for Harford, at the far post, to beat Burridge for his fifth goal of the season.

Harford returned the compliment eight minutes later when he and Wegerle opened up the Southampton defence. Hill was the beneficiary but his powerful finish outshone the build-up.

Southampton (4-3-3): Burridge; Ray Wallace, Moore, Osman, Cook; Baker, Case (Benali 105), Cockerill; Wallace, Rideout (Le Tissier 105), Rodney Wallace.

Luton Town (4-4-2): Sealey; Breacker, Foster, Dreyer, Grimes; Willson, Hill, Preece, Black; Wegerle, Harford (Oldfield 115).
Referee: T Ward (London).



Danny Wallace (11), of Southampton, beats David Preece to the ball at the Dell