

Norwich penalty bonus

89/90

Norwich 2 Luton 0

ANGER clouded Luton's journey home across East Anglia last night as they reflected on a defeat that sends them plummeting closer to relegation.

Their fury was aimed at referee Dennis Hedges, whose controversial and crucial penalty decision after 27 minutes of this tepid encounter proved so important.

Alec Chamberlain's dive at the feet of Norwich striker Henrik Mortensen looked perfectly fair. But Mr. Hedges stunned Luton by pointing to the spot.

Andy Townsend stroked home the spot kick at the second attempt after a couple of his mates had encroached into the area first time around.

Luton manager Jim Ryan fumed: "I think their players were embarrassed by it all."

And even Norwich boss Dave Stringer admitted it was the game's turning point: "We needed the goal to settle us down. I think it was a penalty ... because the referee gave it."

There was no disputing, however, the quality of Norwich's second goal, three minutes into the second half.

A superb pass from Ian Crook, who managed to look classy even in this downbeat affair, a lay back from Robert Rosario and fullback Mark Bowen curled his shot around Chamberlain with delightful skill.

It was his fifth goal of the season and makes him Norwich's top scorer in the Barclays League. That says everything about their disappointing season.

NORWICH: Gunn, Culverhouse, Bowen, Tanner, Linighan, Townsend, Sherwood, Mortensen (w'drn 75, sub Fox), Rosario (inj 58, sub Coney), Crook, Phillips.

LUTON: Chamberlain, Breacker, McDonough, Kennedy, James, Dreyer, Wilson, Nogan (w'drn 66, sub Rees), Dowie, Preece, Black.

Ref: D. Hedges (Headington).