

Red card sends Luton to victory

MANAGER Lennie Lawrence had no complaints about the sending off of veteran Luton defender Marvin Johnson eight minutes into the second-half.

It turned out to be of more benefit to Luton than to Colchester! Until Johnson's dismissal Colchester had defended deeply and looked capable of claiming a goalless draw at the very least.

Luton had threatened much more than they achieved, driving forward relentlessly but then failing to find the final shot.

Lawrence said: "We were looking good without finding the killer touch. But we were controlling the game and I think we would have won whether we were down to 10 men or not."

Doncaster referee Roger Furnandiz sent off Johnson for bringing down Neil Gregory half-way between the centre circle and Luton's goal. Johnson stumbled as both went for the ball and Gregory was

Luton 2 Colchester 0

98/99



GREGORY: Pulled down.

about to escape his attentions when Johnson tumbled into him and both men fell to the ground.

Lawrence said: "The referee was right to send off Johnson. I have seen a yellow card given for similar offences but the letter of the law says it should be a red one.

And the player knows he should have cleared the ball before it happened. But overall I

am sure we deserved the victory."

Colchester manager Steve Wignall said it had been a classic case of a team being given a fillip when reduced to 10 men.

"We were poor in the first half and we were lucky not to be two down at half-time," he admitted. "But then we got a grip on the game but the sending off set us back."

Stuart Douglas gave Luton the lead seven minutes after Johnson was sent off. Skipper Steve Davis went upfield to meet an 82nd-minute corner by Ray McKinnon and the far post header was a prime illustration of what striking is all about.

Luton: Davis, Alexander, McGowan, Spring, Davis, Johnson, McKinnon, Evers, Douglas, Gray, George. Subs: Fotiadis, Bacque, Thomas.

Colchester: Emberson, Dunne, Stamps, Williams, Greene, Buckle, Wilkins, Gregory, Sale, Gregory, Abrahams. Subs: Haydon, Duguid, Forbes.

Referee: R Furnandiz (Doncaster).