

Bayliss off as Hatters slip



■ Fracas: David Bayliss got his marching orders after this confrontation. Below: Jean-Louis Valois tussles for the ball in the defeat at Rochdale



Rochdale 1 01/02
Luton Town 0

FORMER Rochdale player David Bayliss was sent off as the Hatters slipped ten points behind leaders Plymouth Argyle.

Plymouth beat Mansfield 1-0 to take a significant step towards the Division Three title.

The only goal at Spotland came on 12 minutes when a soft Patrick McCourt shot from the edge of the area took a wicked deflection up and over Carl Emberson on its way into the net.

Dale survived a second half onslaught by getting bodies in the way of shots and the Town shot themselves in the foot with some hasty, ill-directed finishing.

Several desperate last-ditch saves both before Bayliss was sent off with a 15 minutes to go, and especially afterwards only added to Luton's frustrations.

Playing against a strong wind and into a low sun on a drying, bumpy pitch, the Hatters didn't threaten in the first half.

Emberson had almost nothing to do after the break either but once Steve Howard had forced a diving save from Steve Banks, the home goal keeper had to perform heroics to keep the points and make Rochdale the first side this season to do the double over the Hatters.

Adrian Forbes had a clear chance within two minutes but wastefully pulled his shot wide.

The miss become even more important two minutes later when McCourt was allowed to run at the Town defence. Russ Perrett closed him down as he reached the penalty area but his innocuous shot hit the Luton man and curled high over Emberson for the only goal.

Dean Crowe's clever turn made space for himself but he shot over and when Forbes burst through from halfway he chose the wrong option in parting with the ball with the goal at his mercy.

Dale's only other chance of the entire game came when Lee McEvilly headed a left wing cross down towards goal but it

bounced up and over the crossbar.

Howard hit the target after 53 minutes, and from then on it became one-way traffic.

Matthew Taylor totally mis-hit his shot after two defenders had gone for the same ball, and Forbes followed suit – twice – as Dale hung on.

Matthew Spring played Kevin Nicholls in with a great pass but his flicked effort was saved by Banks' feet and the keeper saved exactly the same way from Taylor's drive minutes later.

As the rebound fell, Bayliss slid in powerfully but Wayne Evans got there first. He took a heavy whack and the Luton player, lining up against his former club, saw an instant red card.

It capped an eventful game for the referee, who he booked four Luton players and six from the home side. Arguably only two of the 10 were deserved.

Several goalline clearances later, Taylor's injury time strike looked like tying things up, but incredibly, Banks got his body in the way and the low drive flashed up off him and over the bar to seal Luton's disappointment.

Luton Town Emberson, Boyce, Perrett, Bayliss, Taylor, Forbes, Spring, Nicholls, Valois (Coyle 58), Howard, Crowe (Hughes 89). Subs not used: Ovendale (GK), Skelton, Hillier.

Attendance: 4306 (1163 away fans).

Luton bookings: Perrett, Nicholls, Howard, Bayliss (sent off)

Luton Man of the Match: Matthew Taylor

NATIONWIDE DIVISION THREE

Bristol Rovers	2	Halifax	0
Darlington	3	Shrewsbury	3
Exeter	0	Cheltenham	2
Hartlepool	4	Torquay	1
Hull City	2	Rushden	1
Kidderminster	2	Carlisle	2
Leyton Orient	2	Swansea	2
Lincoln	1	Macclesfield	0
Plymouth	1	Mansfield	0
Rochdale	1	Luton	0
Scunthorpe	1	Oxford	0
Southend	0	York City	1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Plymouth	32	20	7	5	46	23	67
Luton	31	17	6	8	59	39	57
Rochdale	32	15	10	7	46	36	55
Mansfield	30	16	6	8	46	30	54
Hull	33	15	9	9	47	33	54
Scunthorpe	32	13	10	9	57	40	49
Shrewsbury	33	13	9	11	47	42	48
Rushden & D	33	13	9	11	43	41	48
Cheltenham	29	12	11	6	42	34	47
Kidderminster	30	13	7	10	38	30	46
Hartlepool	30	12	7	11	46	333	43
Darlington	31	11	8	12	41	44	41
Exeter	31	11	8	12	33	48	41
Southend	31	11	7	13	36	35	40
Bristol Rov	30	10	8	12	31	34	38
Oxford	33	8	11	14	40	44	35
Lincoln	30	8	11	11	31	39	35
Swansea	32	8	9	15	37	49	33
Macclesfield	31	8	9	14	27	39	33
Carlisle	30	7	11	12	34	38	32
Leyton O	30	8	8	14	42	54	32
York	29	8	7	14	35	51	31
Torquay	32	7	10	15	29	50	31
Halifax	31	5	10	16	22	49	25