

Challinor squares it

02/03

Luton 1 Stockport 1

DAVE Challinor hit a late equaliser to earn Stockport a 1-1 draw at in-form Luton.

Luton, who won 5-0 at Colchester in their last start, had looked destined to take all three points when Steve Howard rammed home his 23rd goal of the season.

Luton goalkeeper Rob Beckwith had to be on his toes to prevent Aaron Lescott giving Stockport an early lead.

Howard headed narrowly over the crossbar before Beckwith made a fantastic save to turn Aaron Wilbraham's right foot effort over.

Luton went ahead just after the hour when substitute Ahmet Brkovic escaped down the left and the former Orient man whipped over a fine cross that Howard powered past Ola Tidman.

But Challinor grabbed County a share of the spoils with seven minutes left when he smashed home from close-range after Richard Lambert's corner created havoc.

Stockport manager Carlton Palmer slammed referee Mike Thorpe following his side's draw.

He felt his side should have won the game and criticised the performance of the official.

"I was disappointed with him," said Palmer. "He was a disgrace. We had two shouts for penalties, a definite handball and an elbow in the face. Everyone else could see it, so why couldn't he?"

Luton manager Joe Kinnear had no qualms with the referee, saying: "Some referees are okay and some are not. There were some tight decisions but you've got to live with it."

Told what Palmer had said, Kinnear chuckled and added: "That's Palmer isn't it? He doesn't know what time of day it is."

Palmer claimed Stockport dominated the game and complained that his players should have been given more protection, but he hailed Challinor for his leveller.

"We were the better side all the way through. Their goalkeeper did ever so well and my only criticism was that we were trying to walk the ball into the net," he added.