



Beckwith sees red as jaded Hatters crash

03/04

**Oldham 3
Luton Town 0**

LUTON'S Carling Cup heroics in midweek caught up with them as a jaded Hatters side crashed to their heaviest defeat of the season.

Ex-Hatter Ian Dowie's Oldham put three past his old team, who also saw rookie goalkeeper Robert Beckwith receive the first red card of his career.

Already three down and resigned to their fate, Hatters were forced to bring on 17-year-old Youth team goalkeeper Dean Brill with Courtney Pitt having to make way.

Luton took Premiership side Charlton to penalties on Tuesday night in a brave display to pull off a cup shock.

Sadly, the aftermath was a performance totally lacking in energy to disappoint the travelling 500 fans.

Another fall-out from Tuesday night's game was a treble injury blow to Matthew Spring, Kevin Foley and David Bayliss.

The trio have been arguably Luton's most consistent performers this season. Spring and Foley are short term but Bayliss is out for the season with a ruptured Achilles tendon.

In came Ian Hillier, Pitt – on loan from Portsmouth – and youngster Michael Leary, who impressed on his debut last Saturday against QPR.



■ Courtney Pitt, who made way for Dean Brill when Rob Beckwith was sent off

Dowie, who was linked with the West Ham job recently, turned Oldham into play-off contenders in his season in charge.

This year's task has been made harder as the cash-strapped club, who are in administration, were forced to sell its best players to stay in business... sounds familiar?

For 28 minutes the only action of any note came from the linesman's flag. Oldham's

forward line seemed to trouble with the concept of the off-side rule, which made for a stop-start spectacle.

And when a goal did come the same linesman played a major role as Oldham were awarded a penalty.

Paul Murray sent the ball into a crowded penalty area where it was picked up by John Eyre. In the melee he appeared to have his short pulled although referee Mike Pike waved play on.

He changed his mind when the linesman raised his flag. John Sheridan, who came out of retirement this season to help out, made no mistake.

Seconds from half time things became worse with the second goal.

Dean Holden's left hand cross found Calvin Zola – on loan from Newcastle – whose precision would have done his more illustrious namesake proud.

Luton were just not at the races and the game was all over two minutes into the second half. They failed to clear from a corner and when the ball was pumped back in, left back Holden was unmarked eight yards out and he sidefooted it off the post.

Oldham could have made it four but for Beckwith, Murray's goalmouth volley was goalbound before the goalkeeper got a hand to it.

But on 69 minutes Beckwith went from hero to zero as he saw red. A long ball caught the slack defence all at sea as Eyre ran on to it.

Beckwith came rushing out of his box, using his hand to block Eyre's lob.

Down to ten men Luton, who never looked like scoring all game, now looked even more desolate.

Every single player looked tired on the ball and Luton were truly woeful for large parts of the game.

Manager Mike Newell refused to blame the Charlton exertions, saying: "We were poor from start to finish. Individually and collectively we just didn't perform."

■ Mike Leary finds the going tough at Oldham in his second game for the Hatters

Luton Town: Beckwith; Hillier (Perrett 65m), Coyne, Boyce, Davis; Brkovic (Mansell 65), Hughes, Leary, Pitt (Brill 69); Howard, McSheffrey. Subs not used: Forbes, Showunmi

Referee: Mr Mike Pike (Cumbria)

GOALSCORERS:

Oldham: Sheridan (28pen), Zola (45), Holden (47)

Luton: –

SHOTS ON TARGET

Oldham: 4

Luton: 4

SHOTS OFF TARGET

Oldham: 10

Luton: 5

CORNERS

Oldham: 7

Luton: 4

OFFSIDE

Oldham: 11

Luton: 7

BOOKINGS

Oldham: Eyre (31)

Luton: Beckwith (69 red)

ATTENDANCE: 6, 077

**HATTERS STAR MAN:
PAUL HUGHES**

Had average game but fewest mistakes

Division Two results

Blackpool	2	Notts County	1
Chesterfield	1	Brentford	2
Colchester	1	Bournemouth	0
Hartlepool	0	Brighton	0
Oldham	3	Luton Town	0
Plymouth	2	Barnsley	0
Port Vale	1	Wycombe	1
QPR	1	Bristol City	1
Rushden	2	Stockport	2
Sheff Wed	0	Grimsby	0
Swindon	2	Peterborough	0
Tranmere	1	Wrexham	2

How they stand

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Port Vale	10	6	2	2	16	13	20
Swindon	10	5	4	1	19	11	19
Brighton	10	5	3	2	15	9	18
QPR	10	4	5	1	19	9	17
Plymouth	10	4	5	1	21	15	17
Colchester	10	5	2	3	14	12	17
Hartlepool	10	4	4	2	20	11	16
Barnsley	10	4	4	2	12	10	16
Sheffield Wed	10	4	3	3	14	13	15
Bournemouth	10	4	3	3	11	10	15
Bristol City	10	3	5	2	13	7	14
Rushden	10	4	2	4	18	17	14
Wrexham	9	4	2	3	9	9	14
Luton	10	4	2	4	14	15	14
Blackpool	9	4	2	3	14	17	14
Oldham	10	3	4	3	19	16	13
Brentford	10	4	1	5	9	15	13
Grimsby	10	3	3	4	15	18	12
Peterborough	10	2	3	5	12	14	9
Tranmere	10	1	5	4	10	13	8
Stockport	10	1	4	5	13	19	7
Wycombe	10	1	3	6	12	21	6
Notts County	10	1	3	6	7	20	6
Chesterfield	10	0	4	6	6	18	4

