

Points dropped, but still hats off to U's

Halfway through the season and bidding for a play-off place

03/04



Carl Marston
with Colchester United

HALFWAY through the season and Colchester United, despite yesterday's failure to beat Luton Town, can still take heart from their lofty position and current points tally.

The U's are usually facing up to a relegation battle, going into the second half of the season. Not so this term. In the play-off zone, and with 36 points from 23 games, represents a tale of festive cheer.

Phil Parkinson's men have set such high standards, over the last few months, that it was impossible to leave Layer Road without a feeling of disappointment last night.

United preserved their unbeaten record in December, but they had the chances to see off visiting Luton Town. A draw was scant reward for their endeavours.

Scott McGleish broke the deadlock with a powerful header in the 12th minute. It was his 11th goal of the season, two more than he managed throughout the whole of last season.

The U's lead lasted 16 minutes. Lee Mansell's smart finish salvaged a battling point for the Hatters, although their hosts had numerous opportunities to regain their advantage, especially late on.

The Division Two play-off race is certainly hotting up, with at least 12 teams in the current shake-up, and that's not including the two pace-setters Plymouth and QPR.

United look well-equipped to stay in contention, and they should not be too daunted by tomorrow's clash with QPR at Loftus Road.

Yesterday, although the sides were

		Colchester Utd		1		Luton Town		1
1 Brown	6	Substitutes		29 Beresford	8	Substitutes		
25 Stockley	6	.....		41 FOLEY	8	.....		
2 Myers	6	3 Keith		24 Davis	7	33 Brill		
18 Chilvers	7	(not used)		17 Boyce	6	(not used)		
19 White	7	4 Johnson		12 Coyne	6	34 Crowe		
6 Pinault	7	(not used)		32 Mansell	7	(not used)		
10 Izzett	7	5 Fitzgerald		11 Robinson	6	16 Showunmi		
12 Fagan	6	(not used)		4 Spring	5	(not used)		
16 VINE	8	11 Cade		18 Brkovic	6	23 Hillier		
8 Andrews	7	(for McGleish, 74 mins)		19 Howard	6	(not used)		
9 McGleish	7	31 McKinney		7 Forbes	7	27 Holmes		
		(not used)				(for Mansell, 88 mins)		
Goals		.....		Goals		.....		
McGleish 12 mins		4-4-2 .....Formation .....4-4-2		Mansell 28 mins		.....		
		7 .....Corners .....5		Bookings		.....		
		6 .....Offsides .....2		Coyne (8, foul); Davis (45, foul);		.....		
		9 .....Shots on target .....4		Brkovic (45, foul); Forbes (63, dis-		.....		
		7 .....Shots off target .....7		sent); Howard (80, foul)		.....		
		15 .....Fouls conceded .....18				.....		
		0 .....Hit woodwork .....0				.....		
								
DATE: Friday, December 26, 2003		VENUE: Layer Road		REF: Mr J Ross (London)		5		
ATTENDANCE: 5,083		PITCH: Good surface		WEATHER: Breezy				