



BOXING CLEVER: Lee

Mansell celebrates his equaliser for Hatters with U's skipper Andy Myers and keeper Simon Brown in despair.

A Beresford blinder!

COLCHESTER UNITED 1 LUTONTOWN 1

HATTERS boss Mike Newell watched his side reach the half-way point of the season with a point at high-flying Colchester United and insisted he still hadn't seen a side to frighten him in Division Two.

Luton earned a share of the spoils at Layer Road thanks to Lee Mansell's third strike of the season in the first-half, cancelling out Scott McGleish's 12th minute opener for the hosts.

And although Hatters enjoyed long spells of possession in the second period, in the end they had goalkeeper Marlon Beresford to thank for the Boxing Day point which left them in ninth spot, just outside the play-off places.

Reflecting on the 23 games played so far, Newell said: "I

NEWELL'S VERDICT

"For all the play we had in the second-half we didn't create anything clear-cut.

"I'm a little disappointed in that, but having said that I'm happy with the way the lads played and applied themselves.

"I thought we were comfortable apart from conceding the goal in the first-half. I thought we had

enough of the ball in the first-half and in the second.

"The problems we had were made by ourselves in the second-half. The chances they had were given to them by us.

"I'm fairly happy with the point. I don't like getting beaten, particularly after losing at home."

haven't seen anything in the league for us to fear and we've played every team now.

"We've had hard times for 20 or 30 minute spells, but nobody's put us up against it for the whole 90 minutes.

"Considering everything that's happened here we're reasonably happy with the position we're in.

"We would hope that if we get out of receivership, which

has been promised for five or six weeks now, then things will get better. We will have more options and may be able to change the squad, but it depends what we can do.

"As the season goes on, injuries and suspensions will kick in again and you'd expect the teams with bigger squads to be up there."

Newell added: "I've enjoyed it immensely here. It's been

difficult from the beginning and things haven't got a great deal easier, but I feel at home.

"I'm happy with the players and particularly my coaching staff of Mick Harford and Brian Stein. Their help has been essential and people don't realise how much they do - it's a lot more than me!"

On the field, Newell named an unchanged side for the third game in a row. But Hatters got off to a bad start when Wayne Andrews' pinpoint cross found McGleish unmarked in the box to nod home powerfully from eight yards to give the hosts the lead.

Sixteen minutes later Hatters were level when Matthew Spring's wayward long range shot took a lucky deflection off U's skipper, former Chelsea man Andy Myers. The ball fell perfectly for Mansell just inside the right corner of the penalty area and the 21-year-

old produced a fine finish, drilling home low to goalkeeper Simon Brown's right.

U's continued to threaten and pacey front-man Andrews was the main danger. Chris Coyne and Sol Davis were both booked for chopping Andrews down in full flight.

And Beresford had to be alert to save twice from Andrews, first from a tight angle in the 38th minute and then with his legs when the striker ran clean through three minutes later.

After further important blocks in the second half, Beresford made it a hat-trick of stops from Andrews six minutes from time when he superbly tipped a goal-bound header around the post to ensure honours ended even.

STAR HATTER: Marlon Beresford. Another super showing in the week he signed for a third month at Luton Town.