

Luton stay firm in adversity

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By Chris Gould

AFC BOURNEMOUTH

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LUTON TOWN

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LUTON'S consistency equipped them with enough self-belief to overcome Russell Perrett's first-half dismissal and haul themselves within easy reach of promotion. Bournemouth, meanwhile, complemented a record five successive away victories with a fourth consecutive home defeat.

Such inconsistency evidently begins at the match level. For 45 minutes, Bournemouth danced round their opponents with aerial back-heels and reverse passes only to be foiled by alert goalkeeping and a goal-line clearance. Yet, when facing a slight headwind and a reorganised Luton following Perrett's ejection for a professional foul, they wilted.

Encouraged to pursue victory, Luton introduced former Bournemouth striker Warren Feeney, signed

for exhibiting far more consistency at Stockport than on the South Coast.

The winning goal was certainly in keeping with the theme of the game. Bournemouth's Steve Purches, who extended Marlon Beresford with two phenomenal 40-yard shots, passed to the opposition with embarrassing accuracy. A corner resulted and Enoch Showunmi smashed the ball home from six yards.

Luton manager Mike Newell said: "I'm delighted to win, particularly with 10 men. I didn't think it was a sending-off, but I'm just happy we're very close to promotion now." Luton would have to lose all their remaining matches to be denied.

AFC Bournemouth (4-4-2): Moss; Simek, Mills, Howe, Purches; Elliot (Connell 78), Browning (Rodrigues 86), Spicer, O'Connor, Fletcher, Hayter. **Subs:** Stewart (g), Young, Maher. **Booked:** Elliot.

Luton Town (4-4-2): Beresford; Foley, Davies, Perrett, Davis; Brkovic (Feeney 62), Nicholls, Holmes (Showunmi 76), Underwood; Howard, Vine (Coyne 26). **Subs:** Seremet (g), Leary. **Goal:** Showunmi (84). **Sent off:** Perrett.

Referee: T Parkes (West Midlands).