

Reffing hell for Hatters

	LEEDS UNITED	2
	Douglas 49 Lewis 53	
	LUTON TOWN	1
	Howard 83	

05/06

By ADAM REES

LUTON TOWN boss Mike Newell berated referee Keith Hill after Leeds cranked up the pressure on Sheffield United.

Two goals in five minutes at the start of the second half from Jonathon Douglas and Eddie Lewis earned United the win to leave Newell furious.

Just minutes before Douglas broke the deadlock, Hill had waved away Luton claims for a penalty when Grogan appeared to handle.

And Newell said: "It was a clear handball and everyone in the ground saw it."

"It was a penalty and changed the game – they went straight down the other end and scored."

"And the frustrating thing is that the referee didn't want to talk about it. It was a clear mistake and I wish they would explain their decision when they make mistakes."

"They've not got the onus on them to explain their mistakes. And it's not only the referee – the linesman was only 15 yards away."

And Leeds boss Kevin Blackwell admitted he felt for Newell. But with United now eight points behind the Blades with a game in hand, Blackwell said: "Decisions change games so Mike can feel aggrieved."

"But we went to Derby the other week and should have had two blatant penalties and if it happens to Leeds no-one seems to moan."

"I got a phone call from the ref (Phil Dowd) admitting he missed them so this decision equals out them two."

"But the game didn't hang on that because we had chances and should have scored more goals."

"There are a lot of points to play for but we've got to keep winning and there are plenty of people who would love to be in our shoes."

Luton started the livelier and returning centre back Chris Coyne should have given them an early lead.

Paul Underwood's free kick found Coyne just eight yards out, but he blazed wildly over the bar.

And it took the hosts 25 minutes to create their first chance. David Healy's pass was flicked into the path of Lewis by Douglas but the American international had his shot turned behind by Marlon Beresford.

But the Hatters were always a threat and Kevin Foley was the next man to fluff a great chance.

Rowan Vine's cross found the young midfielder unmarked but he failed to keep his header down and it went over the bar.

MATCH STATS

LEEDS v LUTON

4	Shots on target	6
8	Shots off target	4
7	Corners	7
4	Offside	2
18	Fouls conceded	21
2	Yellow cards	1
0	Red cards	1

Att: 23,644 Rating: ★★★/★★

LEEDS (4-4-2): Sullivan 6, Kelly 7, Butler 6, Grogan 6, Crainey 7, Blake 7 (Moore 5), Miller 6, Douglas 8, Lewis 8, Hulse 7, Healy 6 (Bakke 6). Subs not used: Bennett, Einarsson, Griffiths.

LUTON (4-4-2): Beresford 7, Edwards 6, Barnett 6, Coyne 6, Davis 5, Brkovic 6 (Feeney 6), Foley 6, Morgan 5 (Showunmi 6), Underwood 6, Vine 7, Howard 7. Subs not used: Perrett, Holmes, Brill.

Beresford then denied Rob Hulse's close-range effort before Ahmet Brkovic's 20-yard whistler flew past the post at the other end.

And after the re-start, the Hatters were denied a penalty when Brkovic's run was ended by Sean Grogan's handball.

But the protests were waved away and Leeds rubbed salt into the wounds when they opened the scoring in the 48th minute.

Douglas played a great one-two with Robbie Blake and kept his composure to clip past Beresford for his fifth Leeds goal.

It was two just five minutes later. Hulse got to the by-line and crossed for Lewis to tap-in from close range.

But the Hatters refused to buckle and their pressure told seven minutes from time.

Steve Howard got on the end of a looping cross to head his 100th goal past Neil Sullivan.

Luton's frustrations finally boiled over in the final minute when Sol Davis was sent off for a second bookable offence.

STAR MAN: EDDIE LEWIS
(Leeds United)