

Bluebirds soar back to the summit

Cardiff.....4
Luton1

CARDIFF enjoyed a comprehensive 4-1 defeat of 10-man Luton as goals from Darren Purse, Paul Parry and a brace from Michael Chopra ensured Dave Jones' side returned to the top of the table on goal difference.

The home side took the lead after just 10 minutes in dramatic fashion.

Parry's inswinging corner was met at the far post by Riccardo Scimeca, but his goalbound header was blocked on the line by the hand of Luton winger Lewis Emanuel.

Referee Paul Melin had no choice but to show Emanuel a straight red card and award a penalty, and Purse made no mistake from the spot, coolly slotting the ball beyond Marlon Beresford into the bottom corner.

Luton boss Mike Newell reshuffled his side by bringing on Chris Coyne to play in a three-man defence but the Hatters found themselves overrun by the Bluebirds.

Scimeca tested Beresford from 20-yards, before Stephen McPhail cut

inside onto his left foot but hit his shot straight at the keeper.

McPhail then found Chopra unmarked in the penalty area with a superb cross but the former Newcastle man fired over with the goal at his mercy.

However, Chopra made amends just minutes later as Jones' side finally made their dominance pay with a second goal after 30 minutes.

Chopra weaved his way down the Cardiff right before picking out the onrushing Parry with an incisive through-ball.

Parry collected the pass in his stride and bent a sublime curler from the edge of the area past Beresford and into the bottom corner.

However, Luton responded on the stroke of half time through Rowan Vine.

Vine beat Neil Alexander at his near post with a drive from the corner of the six-yard box to give the travelling Hatters fans hope of a second half comeback.

And Leon Barnett had a good chance to equalise after the break, but his powerful header from Richard Langley's corner was

comfortably held by Alexander.

That was the closest Newell's side came to scoring and the ever-dangerous Chopra capitalised on that miss and restored the Bluebirds' two-goal lead with the third goal after 58 minutes.

Parry's deep cross was headed back across the goal by Steven Thompson and Chopra was left with the simple task of burying the ball

Red card leaves Newell fuming

LUTON boss Mike Newell condemned the decision to red card Lewis Emanuel in the early stages of the Hatters' hammering at Cardiff.

A fuming Newell said: "I cannot see how any referee or assistant could give a penalty and red card when it was obvious that the lad couldn't get out of the way.

"We had started well and although it was a blow going down to 10 men, we decided to keep two up front and were able to create a number of chances.

"Cardiff are a much better side now than they were last season," said Newell.

in the top corner from six-yards.

Chopra then outpaced the Luton defence only to shoot straight at Beresford, before grabbing his second in the 77th minute.

Substitute Malvin Kamara whipped in a teasing cross from the right and Chopra was again in the right place to slot home low into the bottom corner from inside the six-yard box.

"They have brought in good players, are on form and deserve to be where they are in the league."

Cardiff manager Dave Jones said: "I told my players at half time that the best form of defence was attack and that they had to be big and brave.

"We had to be patient and pass the ball around and that led to both our second half goals.

"Michael Chopra is on fire at the moment and if he is given the ball in the right areas, he will continue to score goals, but it was a solid all-round performance and an ideal way to bounce back from the midweek draw at Plymouth."