

Grounds for joy

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By BRIAN SCOVELL

badly. And the gaffer gave us a bit of a rollicking. We will have to address that before the next game against Wolves. Dean Gerken kept us in the game.'

Luton's pressure later in the first half should have been rewarded but Gerken made five magnificent saves. On another day Luton's bewildered striker Rowan Vine could have scored a hat-trick.

An exasperated manager Mike Newell said: 'Colchester are a formidable side and they created their chances and we didn't.'

Colchester have no foreigners, no prima donnas, no cheats and no overpaid 'staff'. But they have pace, total commitment and wonderful team spirit. However, with only 18 full-time professionals they are vulnerable and Williams is anxious to sign some players in the January sales.

Colchester took 23 minutes to

open the scoring following Kevin Watson's corner. The ball was played to the left twice before Kemal Izzet crossed and winger Kevin McLeod's header beat goalkeeper Dean Kiely.

After surviving Luton's onslaught, the speedy Richard Garcia crossed from the right and Iwelumo brilliantly volleyed the second in the 41st minute. Luton were finished when Garcia volleyed in the third after 59 minutes and Iwelumo headed the fourth from a fine cross by Jamie Cureton.

Luton were awarded a penalty for a push by Garcia five minutes from time and Vine had some consolation when he scored from the spot. For once, Gerken went the wrong way.

Near the end Newell brought on Sol Davis, who suffered a stroke in October. 'We didn't think he would be fit to play again this season,' said Newell. 'But we are delighted to see him out there again.'

Despite the win, Williams said: 'I was very disappointed. We gave the ball away too often and we had to rely on great goalkeeping. We were a little slack.'

Mick Harford, the former Luton striker who joined Colchester as coach six months ago, said: 'I am not surprised that we've done so well, not when I see how the lads perform in training week in and week out.'

'I think we've shown ourselves to be more than good enough. After a tough start, they've turned it round.'

'I would say we just need to continue avoiding injuries and suspensions. We haven't had many, which has allowed us to name a settled and successful side.'

'The players have been excellent with their discipline. Only Chris Barker and Richard Garcia have been suspended.'

'The manager's organisational skills are first class. The players are well versed with what he is aiming to do and they know the strengths and abilities of the squad.'

If they do go up, Colchester will follow the example of Reading and Wigan, who improved their grounds in stages, with the capacity rising to 18,000 if they consolidate. If that is the case, the Premiership can prepare for another fairytale.

IT WOULD be a miracle of all miracles if homespun Colchester were promoted to the Premiership elite but after this rout of Luton, they must be wondering where they will end up playing next season.

Their proposed 10,000-capacity Community Stadium is unlikely to be ready until 2008 and officials admit that, if promoted, one alternative would be for them to play at Ipswich Town's Portman Road, some 18 miles up the road.

Ever since 1994, when Ipswich pinched their old boy George Burley from Colchester to be their manager, the two sets of fans have been far from bosom pals. But business is business.

Another near-capacity crowd, just under 6,000, saw Geraint Williams' side clock up 10 successive home wins in the League. Their total of 32 home goals — an average of more than three a game — is the best in the Championship.

Chris Iwelumo, who scored twice yesterday, said: 'We won playing