



ALTRINCHAM 0 LUTON TOWN 1

Lawless 48



Luton goal controversy has Alty fuming

10/11

MATCH STATS

ALTRINCHAM v LUTON

3	SHOTS ON TARGET	2
4	SHOTS OFF TARGET	13
2	CORNERS	9
1	OFFSIDE	1
11	FOULS CONCEDED	11
2	YELLOW CARDS	3
0	RED CARDS	0

STAR MAN: Dan Gleeson (Luton)
ATT: 1,416

ENTERTAINMENT: ★★★★★

REF RATING: Richard West 6/10

ALTRINCHAM: 4-5-1: Coburn 7; Milne 7, Smith 8, Williams 7, Brown 6; Baynes 7, Densmore 7, Danylyk 7 (Denham 65, 6), Somner 7, Clee 6 (Reeves 59, 7); Twiss 7. Subs not used: Coates, Joseph, Lawton

LUTON: 4-4-2: Tyler 7; Gleeson 8, Pilkington 7, Kroca 7, Murray 6; Gnapka 6 (Howells 77, 6), Keane 7, Lawless 8, Drury 7; Barnes-Homer 6, Crow 7 (Walker 90). Subs not used: Atieno, Asafu-Adjaye, Besta

By Dave Stringer

LUTON got their promotion push back on track just two days after their set-back at Wrexham.

But once again the Altrincham faithful left Moss Lane shaking their heads in disbelief at another refereeing controversy.

The Hatters had signalled their intent to improve on a laboured first half performance when sent out early by their manager Richard Money.

The tactic had an immediate result. Andy Drury sent in a curling shot that was the visitors first effort on target.

And just 60 seconds later the crucial goal had been scored.

Matthew Barnes-Homer played in Alex Lawless whose clever jinked shot beat Stuart Coburn in the home goal.

Most in the crowd would have accepted that the ball had crossed the line despite the best efforts of

Robbie Williams to keep the shot out. But the referee was not sure and with no immediate help from his assistant play was allowed to go on.

Only after some pressure from the Luton players was the flag belatedly raised and after a brief consultation the goal was awarded.

Home boss Ken McKenna refused to comment on the incident but Money was adamant that the correct decision had been taken.

He said: "Other people may say different but I'll tell you the truth. The ball was a yard over the line. The linesman didn't give it at first but they got it right in the end."

Money went on to claim that this was his side's best away performance for some time and added: "It could have been any score really, but it was 0-1 we've got the three points and that's it. Our creative players were excellent. Our front two caused problems throughout and we put in a very solid defensive performance."

"I told my players that I don't like to put pressure on them but I said



LAW UNTO HIMSELF: Alex Lawless nets Luton's controversial winner

PICTURE: Gareth Owen

yesterday that this was a must-win game.

"There was lots of endeavour in the first half without getting the breakthrough and I sent them out early for the second half because I didn't want them getting stiff. And it worked because we got the goal."

McKenna said that he was delighted with the first half performance and the application of his players.

He said: "I was pleased that we battled hard to keep it goalless at the break. I felt that's how Luton

play and that we would get chances the longer the game went on.

"We played an excellent team there but I felt that we did enough to get a point."

For all their dominance during the opening period the Hatters failed to trouble Coburn as they struggled to break down a stubborn defence expertly marshalled by James Smith.

But after the breakthrough Luton had the chances to put the game to bed. Claud Gnapka came close with a header and both Barnes-

Homer and Drury came close to adding a second. But when Barnes-Homer did hit the back of the net the effort was ruled out for off-side.

The introduction of Damian Reeves and Chris Denham gave the home side some much needed impetus.

Reeves created space for a well-struck left-footer and Denham tried his luck at the near post after jinking his way into the area.

But in the end both efforts provided simple saves for Mark Tyler, as the Hatters saw out the game.