

TOWN SLUMP AS A STAR IS BORN

BRIAN CLOUGH wished the Luton crowd a happy New Year, then made sure the joy was short-lived.

His team of opportunists won Monday's battle in the Kenilworth Road mud on a day when Luton found a new star but lost their way among Division One's pace-setters.

The good news was the emergence of Emeka Nwajiobi, the Nigerian pharmacist signed from Dulwich Hamlet, who scored a goal in a sparkling debut.

On his way to the dug-out Clough returned the crowd's applause and wished "happy New Year" to anyone within earshot.

But that was the limit of his generosity as his well-drilled Forest side gave nothing away. Hatters were made to fight for every opening while Forest enjoyed the luck that gave them two deflected goals.

Luton began brightly with Emeka showing confidence in his first Canon League game, prepared to take on Kenny Swain at every opportunity.

He was instrumental in the first goal after nine minutes when he knocked on first time a pass from Horton. Walsh collected, jinked and curled the ball in off a post.

Just after the half-hour Emeka was unlucky with a shot well saved by keeper van Breukelen.

Forest's luck began after 37 minutes when Paul Elliott was harshly judged to have fouled Davenport.

Birtles took the free kick and his shot was deflected off the defensive wall past Sealey.

A minute later Davenport was really fouled and the offence earned Mal Donaghy a booking.

Forest had their second moment of good

LUTON 2 N. FOREST 3

Walsh, Nwajiobi Birtles, Hodge, Davenport

Report by Graham Punter

fortune after 39 minutes. Hodge shot low past Sealey but play could have been halted earlier when Paul Hart pulled down Stein.

Two minutes before the break Forest winger Wigley shot hopefully and Davenport deflected the ball into the net.

Just on half-time the bookings were equalised as Chris Fairclough challenged Frank Bunn unfairly.

Luton had two great chances within a minute as the second half got underway. First Horton's quick thinking put Brian Stein clear but with just van Breukelen to beat the striker clipped the ball wide.

Then Elliott found himself with the ball at his feet after a goalmouth scramble but delayed his shot and the effort was smothered by the Forest keeper.

Emeka's big moment came after 63 minutes when he survived several tackles, passed to Walsh, eventually got the ball back and then blasted it into the net.

Play became

desperate and scrappy as Luton looked for a late equaliser. Raddy Antic came on for Frank Bunn, who looked jaded in his reclaimed midfield role in the latter stages, but made no real impression.

With seconds left Walsh was pulled down in the penalty area but referee Axcell, who earned the crowd's disgust for an inconsistent 90 minutes, was unmoved.

Among the 12,126 crowd was England boss Bobby Robson. Of Luton's claimants to another international outing, Walsh and particularly Ricky Hill would have impressed him most.

LUTON: Sealey, Stephens, Elliott, Donaghy, Thomas, Hill, Horton, Bunn, Stein, Walsh, Nwajiobi. Sub: Antic.

FOREST: van Breukelen, Anderson, Fairclough, Hart, Swain, Wigley, Bowyer, Hodge, Walsh, Birtles, Davenport. Sub: Wallace.



● Emeka scores on his debut against Nottingham Forest on Monday — and the scoreboard pays tribute.