

Luton quick to settle in the snow

By Charles Whebell

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LUTON TOWN put all thoughts of an FA Cup quarter-final out of their minds at a snow-covered Kenilworth Road last night to collect valuable points in their battle to avoid relegation to the Second Division.

The game, which was given the go-ahead by the referee, Gurnam Singh, just half an hour before the kick-off, was effectively settled within 50 minutes as the home team went four goals up.

Luton, who started the game with just one change from the team that beat Cardiff in the FA Cup on Sunday—Kerry Dixon relegating John Hartson to the substitutes' bench—took the lead after five minutes.

A dreadful mix-up between the Portsmouth goalkeeper, Alan Knight, and Jon Gittens, his defender, saw the latter belting the ball into the stand. The throw was taken quickly to Scott Oakes, whose right-foot cross to the far post was headed home by Paul Telfer.

Luton took to the blizzard-like conditions far the better and should have gone further ahead in the 25th minute when a free-kick from Telfer found Dixon alone in the Portsmouth penalty area but his header sailed over the bar.

Three minutes later, however, Luton were rewarded for controlling the game when a corner from the right was headed clear by the Portsmouth defence only as far as David Preece, and the man who scored his team's winner on Sunday rifled home a left-foot volley from the edge of the penalty area.

Five minutes into the second half Hughes scored Luton's third and 30 seconds later it was four as Oakes lobbed Knight from 35 yards.

Three after that Kit Symons pulled one back for the visitors but by then it was immaterial.

Luton Town: Sommer; James, Linton, Peake, Dreyer, Telfer, Preece, Harper, Hughes, Dixon (Hartson 74), Oakes (Thorpe 80). **Sub:** Petterson (g).

Portsmouth: Knight; Gittens, Danie (Durnin 45), Hall, Symons, Dobson, Neil (Wood 53), Blake, Kristensen, Creaney, Powell. **Sub:** Flahavon (g).

Referee: G Singh (Wolverhampton).