

DWIGHT PUTS THINGS RIGHT

AFTER a nightmare opening day to the new season when they lost at home to Norwich Luton Town were in more trouble last night.

Second Division Bournemouth came within 20 minutes of dishing out an even more humiliating defeat in the Coca Cola Cup.

New manager Terry Westley will be grateful that he has another chance, but must surely know Hatters must improve considerably if they are to emerge as winners after the second leg at Bournemouth next Tuesday.

On Sunday Westley was able to take some consolation from knowing that the victorious Norwich team could well become the First Division champions this season.

He could also point to crucial absences from his team caused by injuries.

Last night he made four changes, dropping goalkeeper Kelvin Davis, veteran skipper Trevor Peake and midfielders Gary Waddock and Tony Thorpe.

Juergen Sommer was recalled in goal and there was a Luton debut for Steve Davis, who was made skipper for the cupie.

John Taylor and Dwight Marshall returned in attack and it was Marshall who saved Luton's blushes with a fortunate 70th

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minute equaliser.

As against Norwich the Hatters looked promising in the very early stages.

In the game's first attack Guentchev was fouled and from the free kick Davis had a rasping drive blocked by the wall, and from the rebound Marshall hammered a drive inches too high.

Guentchev was involved in another promising attack – the Bulgarian's lay-off set up Taylor, whose shot was too weak to give the Hatters the breakthrough.

Graham Alexander joined in the attacking and his crackling drive from just outside the box produced a fine save by Ian Andrews.

Luton were looking the more likely to score until they were knocked completely out of their stride by a 16th minute goal.

A minute earlier Bournemouth had sounded a warning when Steve Jones was so surprised to have the time and space for the shot that he put it well over the bar.

But he made no mistake with the second opportunity. A Luton attack broke down when Guentchev lost possession.

Bournemouth centre-back Rob Murray belted the ball clear and Marvin Johnson

was caught flat-footed as Jones outpaced him and shot past Sommer.

The home fans suffered frustration after frustration as Luton did much more of the attacking without getting anywhere.

On balance of play Luton might have thought themselves unlucky to be losing at the interval, but in the second half there were times when their Second Division opponents looked the better team.

Guentchev almost found one with a spectacular overhead kick which flashed inches wide of the target, but it needed a mistake by goalkeeper Andrews to present Luton with an equaliser they barely deserved.

All-action Davis, backing up the attack, tried a long range drive and Andrews failed to hold the ball.

It bounced off him and the ever dependable Marshall, last season's leading scorer, gratefully snapped up the rebound to give some overdue cheer to the small crowd.

LUTON TOWN: Sommer; Thomas, Davis, Johnson; Alexander, Hughes, Oldfield, Harvey; Marshall, Taylor, Guentchev. Subs: Thorpe (for Marshall 85 mins), unused subs Waddock and Peake.

BOURNEMOUTH: Andrews; Beardsmore, Murray, Mean, Morris, Young; Holland, Robinson, Brissett; Jones, Fletcher. Subs: Bailey (for Fletcher HT); McElhatton (for Robinson 86 mins), unused sub Rawlinson.

Referee: Gurnham Singh of Wolverhampton.
Attendance: 2,728.