Hero Hughes sneaks in to steal the show

Torquay 0 Luton Town 1
INJURY hit Luton survived
an early barrage – then
stole the cup tie with a
killer goal just before the
break.

With top striker Tony Thorpe ruled out, along with frontmen David Oldfield, Kim Grant and Andrew Fotiadis, manager Lennie Lawrence was forced to play a half fit Stuart Douglas alongside Bontcho Guentchev up front.

And at the back Aaron Skelton had to step in for the suspended Mitchell Thomas.

But despite the changes there was to be no repeat of Tuesday night's cup exit – and a Ceri Hughes strike four minutes before the break set up the prospect of an intriguing second round derby clash against Rushden and Diamonds.

But for that Hatters can thank 'keeper Ian Feuer, who pulled off three marvellous saves in an opening

## Report by PETE KENYON

15 minutes in which third division Torquay nearly blew Luton away.

Garry Nelson forced the giant American to use every inch of his towering frame with a 20 yard drive just four minutes into the game.

Two minutes later Mark Hawthorne burst clear – only to see Feuer get down well to fend the effort away for a corner.

And on 11 minutes it was Feuer again to the rescue – this time to deny Scott Stamps' effort with his fingertips.

Ellis Laight might have buried the ball at the far post from Feuer's parry but the angle proved just too tight.

Even when substitute Jamie N'dah had the ball in Town's net 10 minutes from time the lady linesman was on hand to lift her flag at the right moment

But after surviving the early onslaught, Hatters crept back into the game – then stole it with a 41st minute goal out of nothing.

96/97 (FAC)

After seeing Paul Showler and Guentchev both miss good opportunities from close range, Ceri Hughes decided to take route one to goal.

Torquay's defence failed to clear a near-post corner, and when the ball dropped to Hughes on the left angle of the box he simply smashed it back low through a ruck of players and into the net down by Rhys Wilmot's near post.

Stuart Douglas then missed a gilt edged chance to effectively seal the tie two minutes later – but sliced a 15 yard shot wide when he had only the 'keeper to beat.

And within minutes of the restart Douglas let Torquay off for a second time by dragging a shot wide of the far post after his pace had taken him clear of Alex Watson.

Torquay's bizarre decision to change their strip at half time failed to bring about an improvement in their play, and Hatters dominated a dour second half.

The closest the home side came was just after the hour when Julian James had to be alert to get a timely tackle in as Laight slid in at the far post with Feuer beaten.

Fifteen minutes from time Dwight Marshall came on for his first taste of first team action in nearly eight months, and although he put himself about his only shot on goal was a wayward 30 yard effort.

Guentchev could have wrapped things up five minutes from the end – but after bringing down Hughes's pass superbly and taking the ball into his stride it got tangled in his feet allowing defenders to muscle him out.

Luton Town: Feuer, James, Skelton, Waddock, Davis, Johnson, Hughes, Alexander, Douglas (replaced by Marshall 75), Guentchev, Showler. Subs not used: Patterson, McLaren. Attendance: 3450.



## Hatters' FA Cup draw

IN yesterday's draw for the second round of the FA Cup, Luton were handed a home draw against the winners of the first round replay between non-league sides Rushden & Diamonds and Borehamwood.

Those two sides drew 1-1 yesterday at Borehamwood. The replay will be at Rushden's ground at Nene Park, Irthlingborugh next week.



Marshall gets into first team action for the first time since breaking his leg last season