

Marshall saves the day for Hatters

96/97 (FAC)

Luton Town 2 Boreham Wood 1

DWIGHT Marshall bagged a brace to save Hatters' FA cup blushes.

For seven long minutes ICIS Premier League Boreham Wood looked like they might actually dump Luton from the cup after snatching a 59th minute opener.

And only a cruel fluke in Hatters' favour got them back on level terms.

Goalkeeper Ian Feuer launched a massive goal-kick up field and as Billy Harrigan and Garry Nisbet looked to clear their lines, the ball hit Harrigan's back and

Report by PETE KENYON

fell perfectly for Marshall.

The little Jamaican – who had not been given a sniff at goal all afternoon – needed no second chance and drilled past the advancing Simon Sheppard from 15 yards. The sigh of relief was almost audible.

Seven minutes from time Marshall made it an impressive five goals in his four starts this season – volleying home from close range after Darren Patterson headed Ceri Hughes's free-kick back across goal.

It was more than Hatters deserved against a Boreham Wood side which never played pretty football but worked hard enough to merit a draw.

In a dour first half the visitors were tigerish in defence, first to every ball and made Luton look like the non-league side.

Gary Waddock, back in the side after a groin injury, struggled to provide any sort of service and Luton were back pedalling against the longball game.

And instead of concentrating on keeping the ball on the deck, Hatters succumbed to hit and hope football much to the frustration of the crowd.

In the whole of the first 45 minutes Luton managed just a single effort on target – a Paul Showler header which was easy for ex-Watford goalkeeper Sheppard to deal with.

Ten minutes after the break Marshall might have opened his account after getting in front of

his marker but his touch was not quite enough to deflect Aaron Sketon's pass beyond Sheppard's reach.

And five minutes later Boreham Wood were in front.

Nisbet misshit a pass which went over Luton's flat back four and fell perfectly for Tony Samuels on the left edge of the six yard box.

With Hatters appealing vainly for offside, Samuels drew Feuer then squared across goal for merchant banker Terry Robbins to side foot into an empty net.

Boreham Wood's vocal army of 700 supporters went wild and Hatters looked to be on their way out.

But if ever there is a good time to concede a goal this was surely it and, with half an hour still to play, Luton bounced back.

But it took a diving save from Feuer barely four minutes after the goal to keep Luton on track – Nisbet was left holding his head in his hands after the effort was brilliantly parried away for a corner.

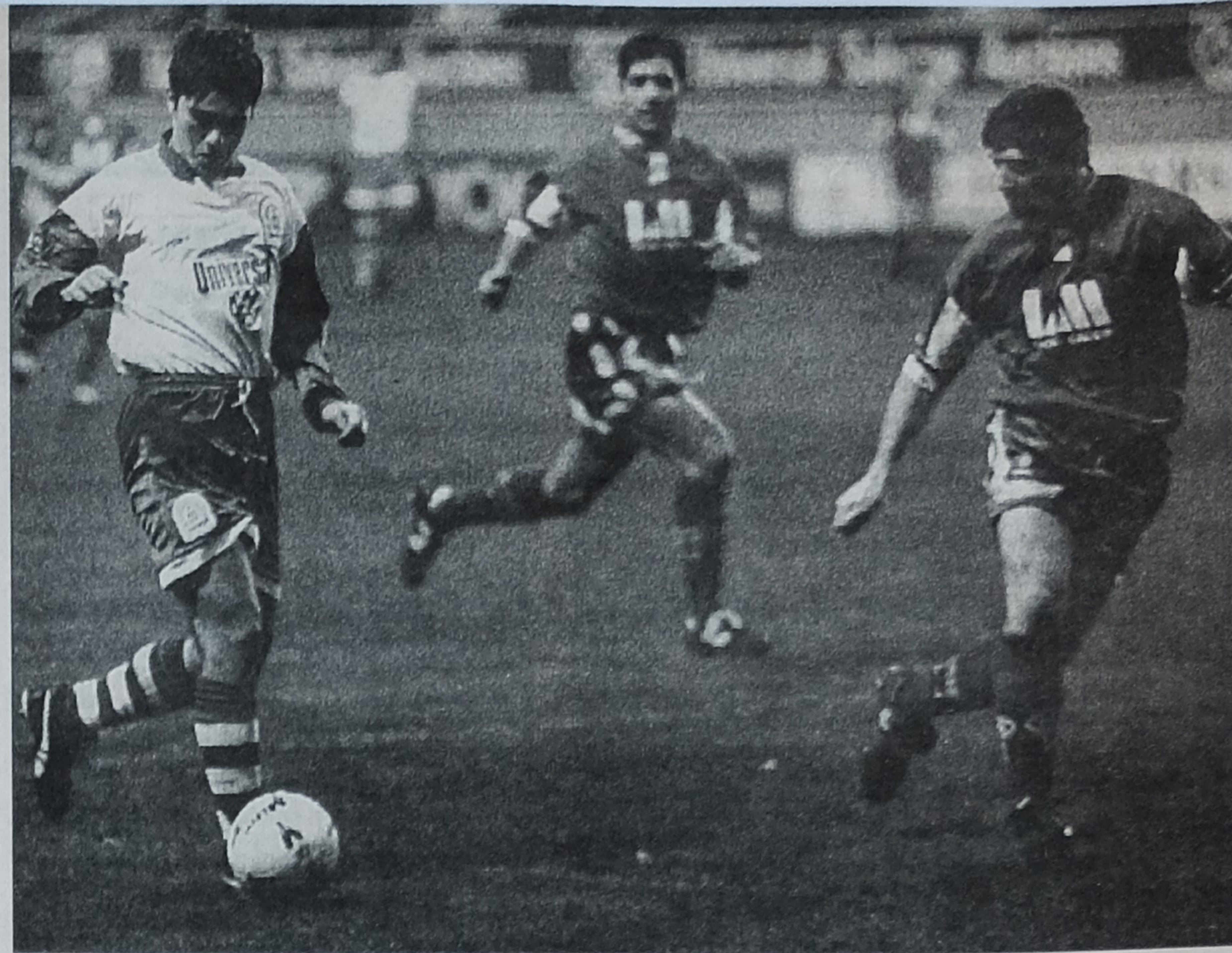
As so often happens, Luton went straight up the field and equalised.

Feuer launched his long kick upfield and Marshall was able to capitalise from Harrigan's cruel piece of luck.

Even after the equaliser Boreham Wood could have gone ahead again but Darren Patterson – in for the injured Marvin Johnson – did just enough to nudge Samuels off the ball at the vital moment.

After the match Lennie Lawrence breathed a sigh of relief and paid tribute to the opportunism of Marshall.

"They gave us a shock – we failed to play through them and around them and although we improved slightly in the second half only Marshall's opportunism won us the match. Our equaliser certainly had a lot of luck about it, but I thought their goal was a bit lucky too."



● Tony Thorpe probes the Boreham Wood defence



● Graham Alexander shows his strength



● Goal hero Dwight Marshall in action