

Rush's last minute stunner sets

WONDER



■ CELEBRATION - The Cobblers celebrate Matthew Rush's late strike last night

STRIKE SINKS SAD HATTERS

96/97 (AWS)

A LATE wonder strike from ebullient winger Matthew Rush put paid to a disappointing Luton Town side in the Auto Windscreens Shield at Sixfields last night.

A largely uneventful second round tie appeared to be destined for golden goal territory when Rush conjured up a goal deep in normal time to give the Cobblers a victory their sheer hard work deserved.

Both sides tried to play their way from one end of the field to the other but the match lacked fluency in damp conditions and Town boss Ian Atkins rightly pointed out that his side have played better than this within the last month or so.

But a side missing rested skipper Ray Warburton and striker Mark Cooper (assistant boss Danny O'Shea also didn't start) and injured quartet Sean Parrish, Roy Hunter, Ali Gibb and Jason White, adapted impressively and scrapped manfully.

Chances at both ends were few and far between but the Hatters were restricted to just three accurate shots on Andy Woodman's goal throughout the entire game.

The visitors never capitalised on territorial advantage at the start of the second half with stand-in centre half David Rennie, asserting himself after an unconvincing start, and both partners Ian Sampson and replacement O'Shea acquitting themselves superbly.

Rennie grew in stature as the game went on and further up the field dangerman Rush provided the classy finish which sealed the tie in Northampton's favour – the Cobblers first win over Luton in more than 60 years no less, and the first on home turf since 1934!

Hatters centre half Marvin Johnson should have been sent off for a blatant professional foul on Christian Lee who was tugged back by his shirt having broken free in clear sight of goal.

Referee Mick Fletcher inexplicably failed to show Johnson a red card for the sort of spoiling challenge this rule was specifically brought in to counter.

Goalkeepers can be sent off for accidentally handling the ball outside the area, central defenders for clumsy rather than malicious last-ditch fouls and full backs for a natural handball reflex if the ball is destined to end up in the net.

But a defender who blatantly checks a striker and deprives him a clearcut goalscoring opportunity?

**Cobblers1
Luton0**

By ANDY ROBERTS at Sixfields



nity? Stay on the field, why don't you? More nonsense from the man in black, it has to be said.

Johnson may have got off lightly but his team didn't as Rush, driving a tap free kick from Rennie firmly past Ian Feuer into the giant American's bottom right-hand corner, ensured justice was done.

Doubtless inspired by Carlisle's Can Can, the goal was greeted by a burst of the new Sixfields anthem.... Come On Come On!



■ SEE YOU LATER – Lee Maddison stays in control

John Frain had Feuer on his toes as early as the fifth minute of this delayed tie, sending in a free kick which was tipped round the post.

An open game nevertheless saw the defenders in the ascendancy, and it was the 29th minute before the Cobblers struck again with any menace, Lee seeing his shot blocked after Neil Grayson had challenged well for a high ball.

Dave Martin tried his luck from distance and the Hatters had to wait until the 38th minute before recording their first shot on target, Woodman holding on to Kim Grant's header from a Dwight Marshall cross.

Rush impudently teased Johnson a minute later and he was unlucky when his low right-wing cross only just failed to get through to Grayson.

Sampson took a knock to his ankle in the 40th minute and Woodman saved well from Marshall who, without Tony Thorpe alongside him, cut a largely forlorn figure.

Rennie looked a little uncertain three minutes into the second half when caught out by Darren Patterson's raking centre and Grant's effort whistled past the upright.

Grant, Ceri Hughes and Graham Alexander began to pepper shots at the Cobblers goal but none held any venom and Rennie, with the help of the doughty O'Shea, soon assumed control.

Martin then got into a head-to-head confrontation with Alexander, was booked in the 67th minute for persistent infringements and stalked off down the tunnel a minute later when subbed for Dean Peer. Within seconds, Patterson was carded for a hefty foul on Frain as the action really began to warm up and in the closing 15 minutes Rush began to wield his influence wide on the right.

Two dangerous crosses won corners and a low shot from the Norwich City loaner ran to Feuer who, however, was unable to keep out the 89th minute winner which keeps Town's twin towers double alive.



Cobblers v Luton Town

Auto Windscreens Shield, Sixfields, Tuesday, February 4, 1997

**Cobblers1
Luton0**

THE LINE-UPS...

Cobblers

Woodman	Hardly troubled all night	7
Clarkson	Coped comfortably with Guentchev	7
Maddison	An impressive return to the fold	7
Sampson	A storming first half	8
Martin	Some telling midfield challenges	7
Rennie	Outstanding at centre half	9
Frain	Plenty of hard work down the left	7
Grayson	Kept in check by the Luton backs	6
Lee	A beneficial test for the youngster	6
Rush	Thoroughly enjoyed his outing	8
Warner	Refused to hide in good company	7

SUBSTITUTES

O'Shea	Calming influence after the break (for Sampson 46)	7
Peer	Intelligent use of the ball (for Martin 68)	7
Colkin	Loads of effort at the death (for Warner 75)	6

Luton

Feuer; Patterson, Thomas, Evers, Davis, Johnson, Hughes, Alexander, Grant, Marshall (sub Fotiadis 62), Guentchev (sub Oldfield 62). Sub unused: Wilmot.

THE GOALSCORERS...

Cobblers

Rush – 89 mins

Luton

None

IN THE BOOK...

■ = BOOKING ■ = SENDING OFF

Cobblers

Martin (67 mins) – Persistent infringements

Luton

**Patterson (68 mins) – Foul
Johnson (Luton) – Foul**

FOR THE RECORD...

	COBBLERS	LUTON
Shots on	5	3
Shots off	3	7
Corners	5	2
Caught offside	7	3
Fouls conceded	14	16
REFEREE:	Mick Fletcher (Warley)	
ATTENDANCE:	4,201	
LUTON FANS	1,100	

MATCH RATING:

6

COBBLERS STAR MAN...

DAVID RENNIE

Results & fixtures

LAST NIGHT'S RESULTS

FA Cup Third round replay

Woking1 Coventry2

Fourth round

Arsenal0 Leeds1

Bolton2 Chesterfield3

Peterborough2 Wrexham4

Fourth round replay

Wimbledon1 Manchester United0

Nationwide League First Division

Birmingham2 West Brom3

Second Division

Notts County0 Bournemouth2

Third Division

Colchester2 Leyton Orient1

Hereford1 Darlington1

Lincoln1 Wigan3

Mansfield0 Chester2

Rochdale3 Scarborough3

Auto Windscreens Shield Northern Section

Burnley0 Stockport1

Crewe1 Blackpool0

York0 Carlisle2

Southern Section

COBBLERS1 Luton0

GM Vauxhall Conference Spalding Cup

Farnborough2 Kidderminster2

Tennents Scottish Cup Third round

B. echin3 Alloa0

Third round replay

Berwick1 Falkirk2

Bell's Scottish League First Division

Clydebank1 St Johnstone1

Morton2 St Mirren0

Third Division

Cowdenbeath1 Albion Rovers1

East Stirling4 Montrose2

Forfar1 Arbroath1

TONIGHT'S GAMES

FA Cup Fourth round

Manchester City Watford

Nationwide League First Division

Swindon Queens Park Rangers

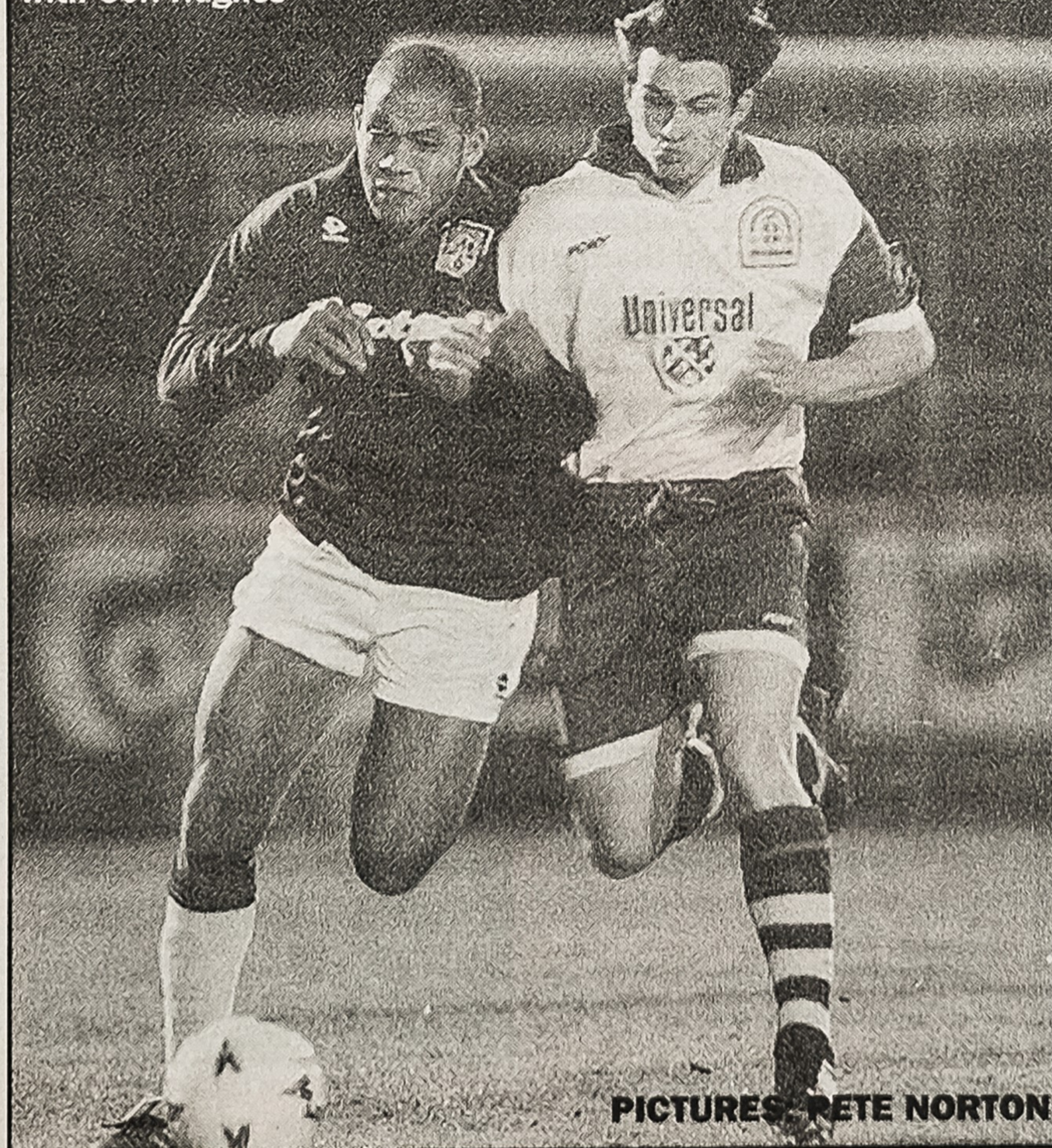
Bell's Scottish League Second Division

Hamilton Livingston

Queen Of South Ayr

Stranraer Clyde

■ MATCHWINNER – Cobblers scorer Matthew Rush tussles with Ceri Hughes



PICTURES: PETE NORTON