



■ Oh so close: Phil Gray puts the ball in the net for the Hatters but it was disallowed



■ You put your right leg in: Phil Gray and Lutel James in midfield action



■ Andrew Fotiadis tees up to score for Luton

Hatters let it slip away

97/98

HATTERS blew the chance to go back into second place after allowing Bury back into a bruising encounter.

Andrew Fotiadis slammed home from close range after good work from Liam George and Matthew Spring, but Luton then gave away a soft equaliser to surrender their 100 per cent league home record.

Relegated from division one last year, Bury came to Kenilworth Road with a reputation for route one attack and uncompromising defence. And they did not disappoint.

In a dour first half Hatters tried hard to carve an opening but found the visitors almost impossible to break down.

Matthew Taylor fired a 20-yard free kick straight at Paddy Kenny early on, but it was Bury who should have taken the lead.

With just six minutes played tricky winger Lutel James capitalised on a rare Marvin Johnson error to put the division's top scorer Ian Lawson through on goal.

But Tanny Abbey justified Lennie Lawrence's decision to give him a one-year contract, which he is due to sign tomorrow, by tipping the ball away from

**Luton Town 1
Bury 1
By PETE KENYON**

Lawson's feet as the Huddersfield striker prepared to poke home.

It was Abbey's only real action of the day – Bury managed just two shots on target – as the visitors demonstrated a lack of adventure.

George found space on the left but failed to pick out the un-marked Fotiadis and Taylor on the far side, and a minute later the ball just wouldn't drop quickly enough for Fotiadis following Taylor's header back across goal.

Matthew Spring's 30 yard drive flew inches wide on 15 minutes, and six minutes later Stuart Fraser squandered Hatters' best chance to date – by firing an angled drive straight at the keeper after being gifted the ball by a misjudgment of bounce from the last defender, Paul Reid.

Two minutes before the break Phil Gray had the ball in the net but was judged to have taken it out of Kenny's hand before bundling home.

But the Irishman should have buried his initial chance after being picked out unmarked near the penalty spot by Paul McLaren's exquisite pass.

With yards either side of Kenny to aim

for, and from close range, Gray scuffed his shot straight at the keeper then bundled him into the net in frustration at his own wastefulness.

With Hatters looking jaded – this was their third game in seven days – and with the usual fluid passing game just not working, a goalless draw looked the odds on result.

But seven minutes after the break Chris Billy failed to make a simple clearance following Abbey's long kick and was made to pay dearly for the error. After the Bury defender tripped over his own feet, George snapped up possession and passed to Spring.

He picked out Fotiadis in the centre and the young striker wasted little time hammering the ball into the roof of the net past the hopelessly exposed Kenny.

But on 69 minutes Hatters were caught woefully short at the back and were made to pay for their slackness.

Ian Lawson put James clear on the overlap and when the ball was turned back into the box nobody was even near Lee Richardson as he swept the ball first time into the corner of the net.