

Hatters make their point – but only just



● THE EQUALISER: Tony Thorpe

A ROUSING last 25 minutes saw the Hatters claim a well-deserved point against a Northampton team who had gone 2-0 up within the first 12 minutes, **DAVE FLETT** writes.

The atmosphere at the final whistle was in stark contrast to that at half time when Kenilworth Road resonated with chants of "He's got the sack" and "There's only one Micky Harford."

Not exactly music to Lennie Lawrence's ears at a time of the year when more festive ditties are popular on the country's terraces.

The crowd's influence in turning the tide of the game should not be underestimated however and, although the pressure on Lawrence may have eased very little, their vocal support of the players helped the Hatters make a comeback of Lazarus proportions.

Seemingly dead and buried after a disastrous start, goals from strike partners David Oldfield and Tony Thorpe snatched a draw.

After just eight minutes, the home team fell behind when Mitchell Thomas and Jason Dozzell collapsed in a clumsy heap and referee Clive Wilkes decided to give a penalty when a free kick the

HATTERS	2
Oldfield 68, Thorpe 86	
NORTHAMPTON	2
Dozzell 8 (pen), White (og) 12 Att: 8,035	

other way seemed the more appropriate decision. Dozzell made no mistake from the spot although the validity of his shimmy on the run up was questionable.

Minutes later a long punt up field from Cobblers keeper Andy Woodman led to a terrible mix up between Alan White and Ian Feuer that saw the big defender head past the American keeper.

It was footballing suicide of the highest order and only a Steve Davis diving header right on half time suggested the home team could muster any response.

Little changed after the interval until Andrew Fotiadis' 64th minute replacement for Graham Alexander precipitated some much-needed fight and pride inspired by the Hatters faithful.

On 68 minutes, Thomas made his presence felt at the near post following a corner and fed the ball to David Oldfield who poked the ball home from close range.

Gary Waddock (twice) and Davis then went close with long range efforts before a Thorpe half volley just missed

the target.

Given a second opportunity, Thorpe was never going to miss and fortunately for the hosts it came when Waddock's ball into the area was cushioned into the path of Thorpe by Oldfield and the star striker fired firmly past Woodman in the visitors goal.

"You wouldn't see goals like those in the first half on the local Rec," Lawrence deadpanned afterwards, "but we showed spirit to produce a grandstand finish and we might even have pinched a winner."

HATTERS: Ian Feuer, Darren Patterson, Mitchell Thomas, Gary Waddock, Steve Davis, Alan White, Chris Allen, Paul McLaren, David Oldfield, Tony Thorpe, Graham Alexander (Andrew Fotiadis, 64). Subs not used: Simon Davies, Matthew Spring.

NORTHAMPTON: Andy Woodman, Ian Clarkson, John Frain, Colin Hill, Ali Gibb, David Brightwell, Dean Peer, Carl Hegg, Chris Freestone (Paul Tait 70), Jason Dozzell (Michael Warner 80), James Hunt.

Man of the Match: David Oldfield - his effort throughout inspired Lennie Lawrence's men to shake themselves out of their lethargy and grab a point.



● MIX UP: Ian Feuer

● Nottingham Forest have agreed to extend winger Chris Allen's loan for a further month.

Allen is needed for January because Paul Showler is still not fully fit.

Showler, along with other long term injured players Marvin Johnson and Phil Gray, could figure in next Tuesday's Auto Windscreens Shield home clash with Brentford.

Christmas