



■ Adam Locke gets in the thick of the action in midfield on his debut for Hatters against Brentford

Unlucky Luton 99/00 stung by Bees

A patched-up Hatters side was more than a match for Brentford until the home side scored.

They netted from the first corner of the game after 55 minutes and after that the promoted side, with a 21-game unbeaten run behind them, took on new confidence to go on and win comfortably enough.

With young Tresor Kandol starting up front with Stuart Douglas and Liam George, Luton badly missed the experience of Phil Gray and the in-form Andrew Fotiadis.

They were not helped either by Matthew Spring having an off-day. And they got the worse of referee Peter Taylor's decisions by a long way.

After having the best of a first half of mediocrity in which they perhaps should

Brentford 2 Luton Town 0

Report by BILL COLE

Pictures by ANDY HANDLEY

have had a penalty awarded in their favour, Luton went down to a scrappy first goal but a superb second.

Without Gray to hold the ball when it was played up front, the Hatters struggled to create a clear chance from open play all game.

Not that the home side were any better before the interval. Their first shot of any description did not come until the 18th minute and that almost went for a throw in, it was so wide.

Luton, on the other hand, did look dangerous from set pieces and the Bees were having particular problems defending Spring's corners from the left. But the ball

wouldn't drop to a Luton boot, although George had an effort kicked off the line and keeper Andy Woodman had to save Douglas's shot as it looked like squeezing in.

Brentford's first shot on target came on 48 minutes and could have put them in front. If it hadn't been for Nathan Abbey it would have done as Lloyd Owusu turned and hit a sharp, low shot from 10 yards that Abbey was equal to.

Seven minutes later, they did take the lead from their second on-target effort. The ball went out of play right under the linesman's nose and as he started to indicate a goal kick to Luton he was overruled by Mr Taylor on the other side of the area and the decision was crucial.

It gave Brentford the first corner of the game, defender Powell got a flick on at the near post and Matthew Taylor couldn't keep it out.

In an attempt to inject some punch into a powder-puff attack Lennie Lawrence brought on Efetobore Sodje to play at the back and pushed Gary Doherty up front with 18 minutes to go.

Sodje's first act was to foul Owusu out by the corner flag. Gavin Mahon dropped it in at the far post, where the unmarked Hreidarsson headed it back across goal for Scott Partridge to volley a beauty high past Abbey's despairing dive and into the far corner of the net.

With nothing left to lose, Luton pushed men up-field and could have paid for it several times.

But big defender Julian Watts showed the best attacking control of the game for the visitors. He beat his man in the area with a lovely turn and pulled back a nice little ball for George, but the little number eleven couldn't convert.

In an effort to compensate for the loss of Gray, Fotiadis and Paul McLaren, Lennie Lawrence is attempting to get strikers in on loan and will offer Adam Locke – who put in a reasonable performance – another month's contract.

Luton: Abbey, Fraser, Johnson, Doherty, Spring, Locke, Watts, Douglas, George, Taylor, Kandol (Sodje, 71).
Attendance: 7,039.

■ Stuart Douglas feels like a sandwich in this up-front tussle

