



■ Matthew Spring was in fine form for Hatters and should have got on the scoresheet



■ Gary Doherty came to Hatters' rescue to score twice

Doherty to the rescue

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(FAC)

EMERGENCY centre forward Gary Doherty rescued Hatters with two equalisers against Third Division Lincoln City.

Trailing 1-0 to Gavin Gordon's 14th minute strike, Luton boss Lennie Lawrence moved quickly to change things around at half-time in this second round FA Cup clash on Friday.

Off came the ineffectual Adam Locke, with substitute Effe Sodje moving to the right sided centre back position and Doherty pushing up to bolster Liam George and Stuart Douglas in attack.

Within 20 minutes man-of-the-match Doherty rewarded his manager's faith by poking into an empty net from 20 yards after Douglas' pace took him clear of the last man.

Keeper Barry Richardson did his best to beat Douglas to the ball, but outside his area he could only slide in with his feet and the ball squirmed kindly into the path of Doherty, who did well to stab it goalwards under pressure from a retreating defender.

Luton Town 2
Lincoln City 2
Report by Pete Kenyon

It should have been the cue for Hatters to turn on the style in front of Sky TV's cameras, but Lincoln's assistant manager Phil Stant responded by throwing himself into the fray at the expense of hobbling goalscorer Gordon.

With the gaffer on the field Lincoln responded by moving up a gear, and the energetic veteran striker was at the centre of virtually everything they created.

Thirteen minutes from time a lightning breakout from a Luton corner ended with Stant drawing Marvin Johnson and Julian Watts, then releasing Lee Thorpe on an overlap down the centre.

But with Thorpe preparing to complete the formalities, and with just Nathan Abbey to beat, Sodje appeared from absolutely nowhere to slide in with an absolutely magnificent tackle.

Any mistiming at all and it would have been a penalty, but what a perfect way to let manager Lawrence know what he stands to lose if he lets him walk out of the door. But



■ Stuart Douglas sets up Luton's second goal for emergency centre forward Gary Doherty

four minutes later, and just nine minutes from time, there was nothing Sodje could do as an Abbey mistake in the Hatters goal led to Lincoln taking the lead with a farcical effort.

Stuart Bimson, who looked likely to set up a goal every time he took one of his viciously inswinging left footed corners, curled one into the danger area and Abbey tried to punch clear.

But the effort merely ricocheted off the back of Dave Barnett's head and into the back of Luton's net.

Nobody's head was buried more deeply in their hands than skipper Marvin Johnson's, who had given away the offending corner when he really could have cleared into touch instead.

But within the space of a minute Barnett had gone from hero to villain as he got caught in possession just inside his own half by the quick-thinking Douglas, who burst clear down the left flank.

Keeper Richardson had to come to

narrow the angle, leaving Douglas with an easy pass inside to Doherty to sidefoot triumphantly into an empty net.

Earlier Hatters had dominated the first half after falling behind to another farcical goal.

There had looked to be little danger when the ball fell to Matthew Spring inside his own half, but under pressure from an opponent his sliding tackle proved to be a perfect through ball for Gordon, who found the ball at his feet, unmarked, on the edge of the box.

Abbey did his best to narrow the angle but Gordon tucked home coolly.

Matthew Taylor, who like a number of players just failed to perform on the night, smashed a free kick inches over, Liam George hit a drive against the keeper, and Luton might have had a penalty when Matthew Spring's screeching effort looked to have been handled en-route to goal by a tumbling John Finnigan who, to be fair, knew little

about it. But right on the break Luton missed their best chance when Douglas contrived to miss from two yards out after George's cross found him unmarked in front of goal.

Luton: Abbey, Fraser, Watts, Doherty, Johnson, George, McLaren (McIndoe, 80), Douglas, Spring, Locke (Sodje, 45), Taylor.

Attendance: 4,291.

Man of the match: Doherty.