

Spring time

LUTON Town gave their biggest crowd of the season a Boxing Day lift with a 3-2 victory over Peterborough.

Stand-in skipper Matthew Spring got his side off to a flying start, with the recalled Peter Holmes and Emmerson Boyce also on target in an exciting encounter.

Peterborough twice reduced the arrears to one goal, but Lil Fuccillo's men hung on for a much-needed three points.

The Hatters were without crocked trio Marvin Johnson (neck spasm), Paul McLaren (groin strain) and Liam George (leg) from the side that started at Reading, with Stuart Fraser, Adam Locke and Holmes all earning recalls.

Spring donned the skipper's armband in the absence of club captain Johnson and team skipper McLaren and could not have celebrated in better style.

The 21-year-old midfielder gave his side a fourth-minute lead after good work by Holmes.

Peterborough could only half clear Holmes' low cross and Spring drilled a powerful 20-yard effort into Mark Tyler's bottom corner.

Boyce then forced Tyler into a good save after meeting Spring's corner with a firm header and, on 13 minutes, Luton doubled their advantage with a perfectly-crafted goal.

Andrew Fotiadis displayed great determination to lay the ball back to Spring just inside Peterborough's half.

Spring then released a dashing Matthew Taylor down the left flank

Stand-in skipper sparks vital win



**Luton Town 3
Peterborough 2**
Dave Flett on the
Division Two
showdown

and the wing-back's perfect low cross was turned in by Holmes for his first senior goal.

The Hatters dominated the first period and Lee Nogan should have twice increased the lead before the break.

On 22 minutes Spring almost punished a back-tracking Peterborough defence with a stinging 25-yard drive that Tyler could only beat out to Nogan.

But the 31-year-old striker's follow-up from close range was weak and straight at a relieved Tyler.

Nogan then compounded his wastefulness by dragging a second chance wide after racing clear of the visitors' defence to collect Fotiadis' flick-on.

Boyce's header from another Spring corner was cleared off the line on 29 minutes by Dean Hooper as Luton bombarded the Peterborough goal.

But a decidedly second-best Peterborough got back into the

game on 41 minutes when David Farrell's low shot from the edge of the area deceived Nathan Abbey and nestled into the disconsolate home keeper's bottom corner.

The Hatters bounced back from that set-back to re-establish their two-goal cushion four minutes into the second-half.

Fotiadis' strong run was brought to a crude end by a clumsy challenge from Gareth Jelleymann.

The Peterborough substitute received a yellow card, but worse punishment was to follow for the visitors. Taylor's powerful left-footed free-kick from 25 yards was kept out by Tyler, who also reacted brilliantly to save Whitbread's follow-up.

But even the visitors' keeper was helpless to save his side a third time, with Boyce heading in his first goal of the season.

Whitbread and Fotiadis then both went close to a fourth goal before Peterborough got a second unexpected avenue back into the game when sub Howard Forinton fell over Abbey's outstretched arm as he attempted to round the home keeper. Leon McKenzie sent Abbey the wrong way from the spot on 69 minutes and Barry Fry's men were back in the game.

Taylor gave Luton brief respite with a thunderous effort that just cleared Tyler's crossbar before McKenzie screwed a glorious chance wide at the other end.

Forinton headed into Abbey's hands as Peterborough searched for an equaliser and Abbey somehow kept out an 82nd minute deflected drive.

In a nail-biting end to the match Fotiadis should have eased the nerves when he burst clear from the half-way line, only to shoot wide with just Tyler to beat.

See Talk of the Town inside.



WELL DONE, SKIPPER: Matthew Spring is congratulated by team-mates after his goal.

big match line-up

● **LUTON TOWN:** Nathan Abbey, Emmerson Boyce, Adrian Whitbread, Stuart Fraser, Petri Helli, Adam Locke, Matthew Spring, Peter Holmes (sub Andre Scarlett, 76 mins), Matthew Taylor, Andrew Fotiadis, Lee Nogan (sub Trevor Kandol, 77 mins). Other subs: Kent Karlsen, Jude Stirling, Mark Ovendale.

● **PETERBOROUGH UNITED:** Mark

46 mins), Adam Drury, Andy Edwards, Leon McKenzie, David Farrell, Richard Forsyth, Tony Shields, Matthew Gill, David Rogers (sub Gareth Jelleymann, 30 mins), Andy Clarke (sub Howard Forinton, 63 mins). Other subs: Jon Cullen, Dan Connor.

● **Referee:** B Knight.

● **Attendance:** 7,374.

● **Luton top player:** Matthew Taylor - excellent performance.