

Nogan pays penalty

GAVIN PEACOCK wrecked Luton Town's FA Cup dreams once again after an inexcusable, last-minute handball from Lee Nogan gifted Queen's Park Rangers a replay at Loftus Road.

Second-half substitute Peacock, who scored twice for Chelsea in the 1994 FA Cup semi-final against Luton, slotted home the crucial spot-kick to snatch a 3-3 draw for the relieved visitors.

Luton got off to a flying start with Andrew Fotiadis and Liam George giving the Hatters a two-goal lead at half-time.

But despite Stuart Douglas scoring on his return from injury, two goals from Peter Crouch and Peacock's late equaliser gave QPR a second crack at the whip.

Luton boss Lil Fuccillo was forced to change his side after the defeat against Bournemouth on New Year's Day, with Julian Watts still injured.

But the most notable inclusion to the starting eleven was George and Douglas, who had been out since mid-November, also made the substitutes' bench.

The early exchanges indicated that a hiding could well be on the cards for the Hatters as the lanky Crouch posed

match facts

● **HATTERS:** Mark Ovendale, Emmerson Boyce, Adrian Whitbread, Stuart Fraser, Petri Helin (Jude Stirling, 77), Adam Locke, Matthew Spring, Matthew Taylor, Liam George, Andrew Fotiadis, (Stuart Douglas, 70), Lee Nogan. Subs not used: Peter Holmes, Tresor Kandol, Nathan Abbey.

● **QPR:** Ludek Miklosko, Clarke Carlisle, Steve Morrow (Stuart Wardley, 46), Chris Plummer, Jermaine Darlington, Richard

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Langley, George Kulscar (Gavin Peacock, 46), Ian Barraclough, Karl Connolly, Peter Crouch, Sammy Koejoe. Subs not used: Lee Harper, Antti Heinola, Keith Rowland.

- Shots on target: Luton 6 QPR 9.
- Off target: Luton 6 QPR 5.
- Corners: Luton 5 QPR 4.
- Referee: Roger Fumandiz.
- Top Hatter: Matthew Taylor – tireless.

problems for Adrian Whitbread. QPR skipper Ian Barraclough almost opened the scoring, but saw his fierce volley held well by Mark Ovendale.

Luton were looking for their first victory in the FA Cup against higher league opposition since the season of that semi-final defeat against Chelsea and Nogan went close on 25 minutes but saw his delicate chip saved by Ludek Miklosko.

However, two minutes later, the deadlock was broken when Fotiadis headed home Matthew Spring's corner from close range.

George's inclusion in the side brought

a positive attacking display from the home side and the advantage was doubled on 35 minutes when his shot on the turn crept in after Emmerson Boyce's header.

Rangers, who are struggling in the lower reaches of the First Division, should have reduced the deficit before the break but Richard Langley squandered a golden opportunity after good work from Sammy Koejoe.

A tactical change at half-time from Rangers manager Gerry Francis, which saw Peacock and Stuart Wardley thrown into action, brought two quick goals that changed the whole complexion of the tie.

Two minutes after the break, Crouch beat the Luton offside trap to calmly slot past Ovendale.

The tall frame of Crouch then began to trouble the Hatters and the ex-Tottenham striker got his side back on level terms when he outjumped Whitbread to head in Karl Connolly's cross.

The signs were there that Luton could once again crumble to defeat but, after George had an effort which flashed over the bar, Luton began to recover their composure.

Fuccillo threw Douglas into action with 20 minutes remaining and he made an immediate impact by scoring six minutes later from a tight angle, though his shot took a huge deflection off England under-21 international Clarke Carlisle.

Fuccillo was dealt another injury blow on 78 minutes when he was forced to bring Jude Stirling into the action after Finnish international Petri Helin hobbled off.

It looked as if the Hatters would hold on to their win and book a place in the fourth round, especially when Stirling cleared a goal-bound effort from Connolly with three minutes remaining.

But Peacock's heart-breaking penalty secured a replay at Loftus Road.



Fuccillo's verdict

‘If we can play like that in the league then, without a doubt, we'll get out of trouble. I'd give us eight-and-a-half out of ten for the display and it should give us the confidence to beat anyone in our division here. They didn't make a draw; we put them back in the game. We should have won 3-2, end of story.’

‘Whitbread went ahead 1-1’