

'I want a rematch,' demands fan

LUTON TOWN'S painful exit from the FA Cup at Queen's Park Rangers caused much debate in the town's pubs and in the nation's television studios.

Former England manager Glenn Hoddle and ex-Spurs striker Garth Crooks joined Lil Fuccillo in berating referee Roger Furnandiz's decision not to penalise a horrific challenge on Hatters teenage midfielder Lee Mansell that ultimately cost the Kenilworth Road club a lucrative fourth round home clash with Arsenal.

Mansell was flattened by a knee in the head from Rangers' midfielder Richard Langley as the Hatters led 1-0 deep into the third and last minute of injury time.

But Furnandiz allowed play to continue and Chris Kiwomya, later shown to be offside by the television cameras, grabbed an equaliser before netting the extra-time winner.

Kiwomya's first goal came just 17 seconds before the final whistle and the injustice of the whole affair prompted one fan to write to us this week demanding a rematch.

An angry Pritesh Shah, of Portland Road, Luton, said: "I strongly believe Luton Town should appeal for a rematch. Lee Mansell went up for a comfortable header only for Richard Langley to run 20 yards and knee him straight in the back of the head.

matchfacts

QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS 2 LUTON TOWN 1 (AET)

● **QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS:** Ludek Miklosko, Jermaine Darlington, Ian Baraclough, Chris Plummer (Chris Kiwomya, 35), Clarke Carlisle, Mark Perry, Matthew Rose, Karl Connolly (Michel Ngonge, 68), Richard Langley, Sammy Koejoe (Stuart Wardley, 91), Peter Crouch. Subs not used: Lee Harper, Steve Morrow.

● **HATTERS:** Mark Ovendale, Gavin McGowan, Kent Karlsen, Adrian Whitbread, Stuart Fraser

(Jude Stirling, 9), Peter Holmes, Matthew Spring, Lee Mansell, Lee Nogan, Andrew Fotiadis (Andre Scarlett, 80), Stuart Douglas (Mark Stein, 66).

Subs not used: Nathan Abbey, Liam George.

● **Shots on target:** QPR 10 Luton 4.

● **Off target:** QPR 6 Luton 5.

● **Corners:** QPR 6 Luton 5.

● **Top Hatter:** Whitbread – brick wall.

"The referee Roger Furnandiz, watching from 10 yards, shockingly allowed play to continue and QPR scored from the resulting move. The entire Luton squad were in disbelief that the free-kick was not given and so did not put up much of a defence against the QPR attack. QPR then scored the winner in extra-time.

"This appalling show of refereeing should be condemned for its actions and the FA should give Luton a fair chance in the FA Cup."

Unbiased panelists Hoddle and Crooks agreed with Pritesh's sentiments regarding the foul. Hoddle, commenting on ITV, said: "It was a terrible foul and an incredible decision. The challenge was like something out of Australian Rules football."

The furore continued into the weekend on BBC's Football Focus with Crooks saying: "If that was a Manchester United player on the floor and the referee waved play on like Mr Furnandiz and the outcome was that the opposition scored we would be hearing about that decision for the rest of the season.

"On the night Luton played the better football and deserved to win or should I say won the game but for a dreadful decision.

"You can understand Lil Fuccillo's disappointment and no team deserves to get knocked out of a cup game in that manner."

A terribly disappointed Fuccillo said after the game: "I was quite disgusted with Richard Langley's challenge on Lee Mansell and Roger

Furnandiz's decision not to give the foul. The referee will go back to his job in the morning, while I have to pick the lads up after the disappointment."

Fuccillo switched formation for the Loftus Road clash, employing a four-man defence with the transfer-listed Gavin McGowan recalled at right-back. Mansell, 18, was also handed his debut in place of an injured Adam Locke and made a fairytale start to his first ever match, swapping passes with Andrew Fotiadis before firing in off a post from the edge of the area after just 58 seconds.

The Hatters were dealt another injury blow on nine minutes when Stuart Fraser was stretchered off with a broken leg, but sub Jude Stirling responded by playing his best-ever first team match as a makeshift left-back.

Adrian Whitbread and the recalled Kent Karlsen were also in uncompromising form as Luton held their lead until Kiwomya's late and cruel equaliser.

In extra-time, QPR won a 96th-minute penalty after Kiwomya broke the offside trap and dispossessed a dithering Mark Ovendale before being pulled down by the Hatters keeper.

But the villainous Langley rattled his spot-kick against the bar and it was left to Kiwomya to settle the tie when he buried a low 112th-minute shot past Ovendale.