

Top Hatters

KIDDERMINSTER 1 LUTON TOWN 4

DAVE FLETT reports from
AGGBOROUGH STADIUM

LUTON Town moved level on points with Plymouth Argyle at the top of Division Three last night after a terrific win at Kidderminster.

The Hatters also equalled a club record four consecutive away wins in a season with a sensational display of clinical finishing.

A Matthew Spring brace and goals by Matthew Taylor and Steve Howard secured the Town's win and a whirlwind three-goal blast in five second-half minutes blew away shell-shocked Kidderminster after they had taken the lead.

Hatters made one change to the startling line-up that won 2-1 at Southend, with Ahmet Brkovic replacing Adrian Forbes.

Frenchman Jean-Louis Valois had the first chance of the evening after just two minutes, but his 25-yard free-kick curled wide of Stuart Brock's goal.

Beanpole striker Drewe Broughton rattled Mark Ovendale's crossbar at the other end seconds later in a pulsating start.

Brkovic and Howard were prominent in the early stages for the Hatters and combined well on seven minutes to almost break the deadlock.

Howard sent a venomous low drive thundering wide after being released by Brkovic.

The Hatters striker went close again on 13 minutes after Taylor had powered down the left flank and delivered a perfect cross to the far post, but Brock tipped over Howard's header to keep

match facts

● **KIDDERMINSTER:** Stuart Brock, Ian Clarkson, Craig Hinton, Lee Ayres, Scott Stamps (sub 60 mins Ian Joy), Danny Williams, Mark Blake, Richie Appleby (sub 37 mins Ian Foster), Dean Bennett, Drewe Broughton, Bo Henriksen. Other subs: Brendan Murphy, Sam Shilton, Andy Ducros.

● **LUTON TOWN:** Mark Ovendale, Emmerson Boyce, Russell Perrett, David Bayliss, Matthew Taylor, Ahmet Brkovic (sub 86 mins Paul Hughes), Matthew Spring, Kevin Nicholls, Jean-Louis Valois (sub 46 mins Ian Hillier), Steve Howard (sub 86 mins Adrian Forbes), Dean Crowe. Other subs: Carl Emberson, Marvin Johnson.
● Referee: Joe Ross (London).
● Attendance: 4,147.
● Top Hatter: Matthew Taylor.

Kidderminster level. Ovendale saved comfortably from a Broughton header, but Emmerson Boyce was relieved to see Bo Henriksen shoot wide on 25 minutes after conceding possession to the Danish striker.

Henriksen broke the visitors' offside trap on 30 minutes and his firm shot was only parried by Ovendale, but the Hatters keeper recovered superbly to take the ball off Broughton's head.

David Bayliss capped an assured first-half display on the stroke of half-time when his excellently-timed tackle denied substitute Ian Foster a shot.

Kidderminster striker Dean Bennett volleyed wide in stoppage time after Ovendale had punched clear and Taylor was booked for descent.

Kinnear made a tactical switch at half-time, introducing Ian Hillier for Valois and pushing Taylor into midfield.

But it was Kidderminster who made the breakthrough on 50 minutes courtesy of Danny Williams.

The home midfielder fired his first free-kick straight at the Hatters' defensive wall but was fortunate enough to receive the ball back and, this time, sent a low deflected drive spinning in off a post.

Hatters' heads failed to drop, however, and, within three minutes, the visitors were level in bizarre circumstances, with Taylor claiming his seventh goal of the season.

Taylor fired a low drive from the right into the six-yard area and the ball went between Brock's legs before hitting the hapless keeper's heel and rocketing into the corner.

Two minutes later, Matthew Spring put Luton in front, breaking sharply down the left to collect Hillier's through ball and sending a low shot from 20 yards past a badly-positioned Brock.

Howard then completed a whirlwind three-goal blast in five minutes, keeping a cool head to side-foot in on 58 minutes after Brock had spilled Nicholls' low drive.

Home captain Mark Blake squandered an excellent chance to put his side back into the game on 65 minutes, shooting woefully wide after poor defending.

Five minutes later Spring put the game beyond doubt, side-footing confidently into Brock's bottom corner after another dangerous cross from the irresistible Taylor was only half cleared.



HEADS UP: Frenchman Jean-Louis Valois in the thick of the action for the Hatters during last night's sizzling win at Kidderminster.
Picture: GARETH OWEN