

Joe: Fans did us proud at Villa

HATTERS boss Joe Kinnear admitted that his biggest disappointment during the 3-0 Worthington Cup defeat at Aston Villa was failing to give the terrific travelling army of supporters something to shout about.

More than 5,000 Hatters fans travelled to Birmingham for the second round clash but their vocal support could not save their team being outclassed and losing to a Dion Dublin brace and Ulises de la Cruz's first goal.

Cruz struck on nine minutes when he stabbed in from close range after a low Gareth Barry cross.

Ex-England international Dublin scored his first on 25 minutes when he headed in Lee Hendrie's free-kick.

The 33-year-old striker made it 3-0 on 48 minutes when he controlled the ball with his thigh before turning to fire a low volley inside Carl Emberson's near post from the edge of the area.

Dublin missed out on a hat-trick when a 58th-minute effort was ruled out for offside and substitute Oyvind Leonhardsen also hit the woodwork for Villa.

Hatters boss Kinnear said afterwards: "The support was

fantastic and I just wish we could have given them something to shout about. There was no question about who should have won but nobody likes getting beaten by the manner in which we conceded goals.

"I felt we defended Dublin's header badly and the keeper could have done better with the last one, but he's been a top-class player all his life and he took both goals well, so perhaps I'm being hyper-critical. They are a much better side than ourselves and have been put together for about £40million.

"I think Dublin's wages cost about as much as our entire squad."

●**ASTON VILLA:** Peter Enckelman, Olof Mellberg, Gareth Barry, Dion Dublin (Marcus Allbak, 83), Darius Vassell (Stefan Moore, 46), Steve Staunton (Oyvind Leonhardsen, 68), Ulises de la Cruz, Lee Hendrie, Jilloyd Samuel, Mark Kinsella, Ronny Johnsen. Subs not used: Stefan Postma, Peter Crouch.

●**HATTERS:** Carl Emberson, Emmerson Boyce, Russell Perrett (Ian Hillier, 46), Chris Coyne, Sol Davis, Steve Robinson, Peter Holmes (Alan Neilson, 45), Matthew Spring, Paul Hughes, Steve Howard, Andrew Fotiadis (Dean Crowe, 73). Subs not used: Ahmet Brkovic, Cedric Berthelin.

●**STAR MAN:** Emmerson Boyce – battled until the end.