



BATTLE STATIONS: Luton's Adrian Forbes and Michael Duff of Cheltenham in the thick of it last night.

Forbesie is foiled

CHEL TENHAM TOWN 2 LUTON TOWN 2

DAVE FLETT reports from
Whaddon Road

LUTON Town threw away the lead twice before settling for a point at lowly Cheltenham last night.

Goals by recalled pair Paul Hughes and Adrian Forbes had twice seen the Hatters go in front, but a late goal from substitute Julian Alsop earned the home side a share of the spoils.

The result was particularly hard on Forbes, who worked hard and threatened throughout the evening to make up for his red card against Tranmere on Saturday.

Hatters' injured trio Tony Thorpe, Emmerson Boyce and Ahmet Brkovic made way for Forbes, Chris Willmott and Hughes.

Cheltenham included all three Northern Ireland players, whose international duties caused the original fixture to be postponed.

Luton started the game in a lively fashion, with Forbes volleying wide from 18 yards after just two minutes.

Sammy Igoe's lively run and low cross then found Matthew Spring in the home penalty box, but the Hatters' midfielder sent

match facts

CHEL TENHAM TOWN: Shane Higgs, Jamie Victory, John Brough, Michael Duff, Mark Yates, Martin Devaney, Marvin Brown (sub 75 mins, Tony Naylor), David Bird (sub 68 mins, Julian Alsop), Shane Duff, Grant McCann, John Finnigan. Other subs: Paul Brayson, Russell Milton, Neil Howarth.

LUTON TOWN: Carl Emberson, Chris Willmott, Russell Perrett (sub 32 mins, Ian Hillier, sub 62 mins, Duncan Jupp), Chris Coyne, Sol Davis, Sammy Igoe, Kevin Nicholls, Matthew Spring, Paul Hughes, Steve Howard, Adrian Forbes (sub 88 mins, Peter Holmes). Other subs: Mark Ovendale, Alan Kimble.

REFEREE: Trevor Parkes (West Midlands).

ATTENDANCE: 3,762.

TOP HATTER: Adrian Forbes.

a poor shot wide.

Carl Emberson saved from Martin Devaney on 11 minutes after the Cheltenham winger had robbed Sol Davis of possession and run purposefully at a back-peddalling Chris Coyne.

Luton went ahead a minute later with Igoe again the instigator.

The on-loan Reading winger embarked on a forceful dribble

before laying the ball to wide to Forbes, whose low right-wing cross found Hughes.

Ex-Chelsea midfielder Hughes then fired a firm side-footed shot into the roof of the net from 10 yards.

Cheltenham were gifted an avenue back into the game when captain Kevin Nicholls' clumsy challenge on John Finnigan in the box gave Grant McCann the opportunity to send Emberson the wrong way from the penalty spot on 27 minutes.

Luton were dealt a further blow on 32 minutes when Russell Perrett limped off and was replaced by Ian Hillier, with Willmott switching to centre-back.

But the visitors got back in front on 38 minutes when Hillier's excellent cross from the right found Forbes sliding in to poke the ball past Cheltenham keeper Shane Higgs from six yards.

A lively Forbes had the first chance after the break, but his shot across goal sailed high and wide.

The Hatters survived a scare on 54 minutes when home captain Mark Yates headed against the post after McCann's right-wing cross with Emberson beaten.

Hillier became the visitors'

second injury casualty of the night on 60 minutes when he came out the worst after a crude challenge on McCann near the touchline.

The Welsh right-back conceded a free-kick and was stretchered off with what looked a serious problem. Duncan Jupp replaced him.

Relegation-threatened Cheltenham threw on giant striker Julian Alsop on 68 minutes and reverted to a three-man attack.

But Coyne and Willmott stood firm at the back, while Forbes continued to look a threat at the other end.

Home boss Bobby Gould introduced experienced forward Tony Naylor on 75 minutes in a desperate bid to find a goal.

Spring volleyed over an excellent chance moments later to secure the points and Alsop punished his wastefulness on 81 minutes when his looping head from Jamie Victory's cross went over Emberson's head.

Alsop then almost grabbed a second, but miscued his shot when unmarked, with the goal gaping at the far post.