

Hatters heading in right direction

03/04

Luton 2 Notts County 0

LUTON kept their play-off hopes alive with a 2-0 home win over struggling Notts County.

The Hatters started strongly, playing some attractive football and forcing County onto the back foot.

Adrian Forbes grabbed the opener after just four minutes with a cheeky lob over Steve Mildenhall in the County goal.

The hosts enjoyed the bulk of the possession but couldn't turn their superiority into goals.

The Magpies looked better in the second half with Paul Riley and Mark Stallard both coming close with headers.

But Luton centre half Emmerson Boyce put the result beyond doubt 11 minutes from time.

Luton's director of football Mick Harford thought his side fully deserved to win but claimed the 2-0 margin could have been even wider.

He said: "We had Notts County on the rack for the first 20 minutes or so but only scored once when we should have killed off the game. But we kept at it and although the second goal was late we deserved to win.

"When we were totally in control of the game we didn't have the killer instinct and you know that you will always come under pressure at some time in a game and we did. There was a spell when we looked vulnerable but we came through it and we're delighted with the overall performance."

Notts County manager Billy Dearden was left cursing a string of missed opportunities and an overcrowded treatment room.

He said: "We could have got something out of that game. We made chances in the second half.

"In fact we created a lot of opportunities and played some good football and I'm very disappointed to lose. We have five players out through injury and now Paul Heffernan has a groin strain."

County have recently come out of administration and Dearden confirmed that red tape is another barrier preventing him from adding to his squad.

He added: "The Football League won't let us bring anybody in, which I would like to do.

"But to take positives from this game we gave it our best shot and didn't throw the towel in. We had chances but we should have been more clinical in our finishing and perhaps have had more quality with our crosses."