

Bantams sunk by Forbes double

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(FAC)

ADRIAN FORBES' double condemned Bradford to more FA Cup misery as second division Luton caused a third-round upset at Valley Parade.

The magic of the Cup is not something Bradford have enjoyed in recent years, having now crashed out in the third round every season since they beat Crewe in December 1999 on their way to a fourth-round exit.

Mike Newell's men outmanoeuvred and outmuscled their Division One opponents in every department from the first whistle.

Chief tormentor was Forbes, whose superb individual display reaped its reward with goals in the 20th and 48th minutes, although he also missed a late penalty.

Andy Gray's late penalty turned out to be nothing more than a consolation, although Bantams manager Bryan Robson - three times an FA Cup-winning captain with Manchester United - will claim his side have more pressing matters to address, given their perilous position in the league.

On this evidence Robson faces a huge task if his side are to address their defensive problems in time to stave off relegation.

After a frenetic opening the visitors thought they had opened the scoring

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after just 11 minutes when Steve Howard latched on to a hopeful punt up field and slammed the ball into the back of the net from 10 yards.

However, the linesman deemed Howard to be in an offside position and the effort was ruled out.

The Bantams were all at sea and were punished for such a sloppy start when Forbes scored nine minutes later.

The impressive Howard waltzed past two defenders before flighting a superbly weighted ball into the penalty area for Forbes to sweep home from close range.

Bradford responded with purpose and Alun Armstrong bundled the ball into the net shortly before the half-hour mark, only for the linesman to chalk his effort off because the on-loan Ipswich striker was offside.

But for all their possession, Robson's men looked paper-thin in the final third of the field and Luton were comfortably the more potent attacking force.

Matthew Spring's 30-yard rocket called City goalkeeper Alan Combe into action with a stunning fingertip



● **HIT AND MISS:** Bradford forward Dean Windass can hardly believe it as Ahmet Brkovic clears off the line for Luton, *above*, while the Hatters celebrate their decisive second goal, *below*. PICTURE: BRUCE ROLLINSON



save, while Steve Robinson's deft free-kick forced Combe into another tidy stop just before half-time.

But three minutes after the interval Combe could do nothing as Forbes scored his second goal of the afternoon.

Robinson's cross from the right flank caught Bradford cold and Forbes made no mistake with an incisive finish from six yards.

Shell-shocked, Bradford went about trying to drag themselves back into the game and laid siege to the Luton goal.

Dean Windass struck the crossbar with a fine header and with seven minutes remaining Gray's penalty, after Emmerson Boyce had fouled Windass, gave the home side hope.

But they could not find an equaliser - and Luton could have made matters worse but for Forbes seeing his spot-kick saved by Combe.

Hatters boss Newell, who once played on loan for Bradford, said: "We have come to a first division club, we have won the game and now we are looking for a good draw in the fourth round. If you are drawn away to one

of the big clubs, that is a pay day.

"The last half-hour was a long half-hour from our point of view, but you don't expect things to be easy in the FA Cup and you expect the home team to come at you at some stage in the game."

BRADFORD: Combe, Atherton, Wetherall, Bower, Heckingbottom, Evans, Windass, Kearney, Farrelly, Gray, Armstrong. Subs: Davies, Branch, Francis, Gavin, Muirhead.
LUTON: Beresford, Foley, Coyne, Boyce, Davis, Mansell, Spring, Robinson, Brkovic, Forbes, Howard. Subs: Brill, Holmes, Crowe, Hillier, Leary.

REFEREE: M Clattenburg (Co Durham).