



Spring has
to groin
and bear it

MIDFIELDER Matthew Spring fought off a niggling groin strain sustained in the 2-0 league win over Notts County to make the Hatters starting 11 against Bradford City on Saturday.

But the 24-year-old eventually succumbed to his injury and made way for substitute Peter Holmes in the 69th minute.

Here's how he fared during his time on the field...

- Minutes on pitch: 69
- Passes to Luton: 22
- Passes to Barnsley: 8
- Pass completion rate: 73 per cent
- Shots on target: 1
- Shots off target: 0
- Shots blocked: 1
- Drabbles ball retained: 3
- Drabbles ball lost: 1
- Tackles won/interceptions: 4
- Tackles lost: 2
- Free-kicks won: 1
- Free-kicks lost: 0
- Headers won: 3
- Headers lost: 0
- Crosses: 0

VERDICT: Spring kept possession neatly, as shown by his high pass completion rate, and also showed the occasional willingness to carry the ball through Bradford's non-existent first-half midfield.

Spring's central midfield partner Steve Robinson was the more energetic of the two for Luton, perhaps hinting at Spring's problem with his groin injury. And this was confirmed when Spring was eventually withdrawn 20 minutes from time.

NEWELL'S VERDICT: "It was a risk playing him and we didn't want to get into a situation where he's missing for the next three or four games. "We asked him to let us know when he was feeling it and that's what he did."



Picture: Gareth Owen

DOUBLE TOPS: Adrian Forbes nips ahead of Peter Atherton and David Wetherall to claim his and Luton's second as Chris Coyne looks on.

Forbes at the double

BRADFORD 1 HATTERS 2

THIRTEEN may be unlucky for some. But not for Hatters hot-shot Adrian Forbes.

The converted winger hit goals number 12 and 13 of the season to complete a memorable third round FA Cup win at First Division Bradford City on Saturday.

And after scoring just eight goals in six years with his previous club Norwich City, Forbes is still struggling to come to terms with his 13 strikes in just 19 starts so far this term.

Comparisons have already been made to Thierry Henry's conversion from a flying winger to a goalscoring centre forward at Arsenal. And Forbes told the *News/Gazette*: "Someone mentioned that to me after the Bradford game and it didn't click what he was talking about at first.

"I haven't looked at it like that before, but I suppose that's what's happening at the moment."

"I just can't believe it all really. I've always been an attacking winger and I've played up front on a few occasions for Norwich when there was no-one else there, but it was always just filling a

Striker's brace sparks FA joy

gap. I used to prefer it on the wing and first of all I wasn't happy playing up front, but now I've got to say I prefer it.

"There's more pressure on you because you are up there to score the goals. But of the worst games I've had lately the last one was probably against Chesterfield where I was playing on the wing again, so that saves a lot."

Forbes has more than made up for a slow start to the season, which was caused by the 24-year-old having a screw loose in more ways than one!

A bolt from a previous operation on his knee had worked its way free and was rubbing against a nerve.

Forbes said: "I had a problem with my knee and I wasn't happy to say the least. I had a bee in my bonnet, a real grump on every day, and when you're like that no-one's going to pick you."

"But I had the screw taken out within one day and haven't looked back since!" Forbes' goals came in the 20th and

48th minutes at the Bradford and Bingley Stadium. Steve Howard provided the first by running on to his own flick-on from Kevin Foley's long ball and threading the ball behind the Bradford defence for Forbes to round Combe and slide home.

Forbes' second was again provided by Howard after the big target man nudged on a Steve Robinson free-kick and Forbes blasted into the roof of the net from six yards.

Robinson, Matthew Spring and Lee Mansell all tested Combe with long-range efforts in the first-half. And Robinson also saw a 20-yard free-kick

NEWELL'S VERDICT



"We felt that our first-half performance particularly was very good and that we deserved to be in front and if not even further ahead."

"The second goal came at a great time for us just after half-time.

"But it's the FA Cup and you don't expect things to be that easy and they made sure that it wasn't.

"They were a side playing on no confidence and that was to our advantage."

"They are a side struggle in the First Division

and we knew if we could get on top of them it would go for us.

"But they put us under pressure in the end and the last half-an-hour was a long half-hour for us."

[illegible]