

Angry Harford off in stormy clash

Peterborough Utd 1
Luton Town 2

GOALS from Steve Howard and Ahmet Brkovic gave Hatters three vital play-off points in a controversial game at London Road yesterday.

This local derby had been hotly-contested throughout but threatened to boil over when director of football Mick Harford was sent off.

He was ordered into the stands after a fierce protest following an incident between Enoch Showunmi, who was trodden on by a Posh defender.

Hatters richly deserved their two goals although a late strike from Posh put Luton firmly under the cosh for the final ten minutes.

Grimsby's midweek win over the Hatters opened up a six-point gap between them and today's opponents, who occupy the final relegation place.

The 3-2 defeat at Blundell Park meant that Luton dropped out of the play-off places and manager Mike Newell was eager for all three points against local rivals Posh to jump straight back into the promotion shake-up.

Newell made two changes, bringing in midfielder Paul Hughes and Ahmet Brkovic.

Hughes started his first game since October's defeat at Bournemouth replacing youngster Michael Leary.

Surprisingly dropped from the side was Holmes, who has rarely disappointed on the wing, to make way for Ahmet Brkovic.

Despite their league position, Posh started on top and almost went ahead as early as the sixth minute.

From a corner, centre half Guy Branston rose at the back-post and 6' 6" Morton Hyldgaard had to be at full stretch to tip over the header.

Hatters' riposte came on ten minutes when Robinson's cross - at the second time of asking - fell to captain Chris Coyne at the



■ Enoch Showunmi in action against Peterborough. He suffered in a second half incident that led to Mick Harford being ordered to the stands

edge of the box. His dipping volley went just over the bar.

The early attacking exchanges made way for a scrappy middle of the first half but Peterborough should have taken the lead on 20 minutes - Mark Arber slicing a half-volley when unmarked at the far post.

Six minutes later Hatters made them pay with a superb goal. With the ball bouncing around the Posh area, a half-hearted clearance came to Howard on the edge of the D. He took a touch before smashing a shot into the very top right hand corner for his

third goal in two games.

On the half hour mark, Hatters had Hyldgaard again to thank when Calum Willock finished a solo run with a fierce drive that the Dane pushed to safety.

The save came at the end of a shaky spell for the goalkeeper, who had looked particularly vulnerable at crosses.

Posh boss Barry Fry threw caution to the wind by bringing on two half time substitutes, tricky winger Dave Farrell and striker Richard Logan.

Neither of those two could live up to a truly dire opening to the second half, when long ball tactics and niggly tackles dominated.

A blizzard that set in midway through the second half was the only talking point at this stage.

But on 69 minutes came a moment of controversy. Posh defender Sagi Burton contested a 50-50 ball with Enoch Showunmi on the touchline and both players fell over as the ball went out of play.

As Burton got up, instead of running around Showunmi, he chose to tread over the gangly striker. The Luton bench were outraged as neither the referee nor linesman saw the incident, and Harford was sent to the stands after grabbing the fourth official to make his point.

On a more savoury note Luton increased their lead on 77 minutes with Brkovic's first of the season.

A Steve Robinson free kick was aimed into the penalty area where the diminutive Croatian rose unmarked and his header squirmed under goalkeeper Mark Tyler.

Far from being the killer goal, this derby was not yet over as Willock, a threat all game, smashed into the roof of the net on 79 minutes.

The goal signalled a Peterborough onslaught but Hatters held firm to secure local bragging rights for another season.



**MATCH
FACTS**



Luton Town: Hyldegaard; Keane (Neilson 84m), Boyce, Coyne, Davis; Nicholls, Robinson, Hughes, Brkovic; Howard, Showunmi. Subs: Brill (gkr), Leary, Mansell, Holmes

Referee: Phil Crossley (Kent)

GOALSCORERS:

Peterborough: Willock (79)

Luton: Howard (26), Brkovic (77)

SHOTS ON TARGET

Peterborough: 4

Luton: 4

SHOTS OFF TARGET

Peterborough: 11

Luton: 4

CORNERS

Peterborough: 12

Luton: 4

OFFSIDE

Peterborough: 2

Luton: 5

BOOKINGS

Peterborough: Legg (50), Burton (90)

Luton: Boyce (54)

ATTENDANCE: 6,628

HATTERS STAR MAN:

STEVE HOWARD

Class finish set Luton on their way

How they stand

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Plymouth	33	19	9	5	68	31	66
Bristol City	33	18	10	5	47	24	64
QPR	32	16	11	5	56	30	59
Swindon	32	15	9	8	52	39	54
Luton	32	14	10	8	52	44	52
Port Vale	32	15	6	11	53	45	51
Brighton	33	14	8	11	47	36	50
Bournemouth	33	13	10	10	41	36	49
Barnsley	33	12	12	9	41	41	48
Wrexham	33	14	6	13	37	38	48
Hartlepool	32	12	11	9	50	41	47
Sheffield Wed	33	11	12	10	38	40	45
Rushden & D	33	12	7	14	53	53	43
Tranmere	32	9	14	9	38	43	41
Colchester	31	11	8	12	32	41	41
Blackpool	32	11	7	14	38	45	40
Grimsby	33	10	9	14	43	57	39
Oldham	33	8	13	12	47	48	37
Chesterfield	32	8	10	14	31	48	34
Brentford	33	9	7	17	36	54	34
Notts County	33	8	7	18	37	56	31
Peterborough	33	6	12	15	37	47	30
Stockport	33	5	14	14	42	58	29
Wycombe	33	4	12	17	35	56	24

Division Two results

Blackpool	0 Plymouth	1
Bournemouth	1 Oldham	0
Brentford	2 Notts County	3
Chesterfield	P Colchester	P
Grimsby	6 Barnsley	1
Peterborough	1 Luton	2
Port Vale	P Swindon	P
Sheff Wed	1 Bristol City	0
Stockport	1 Brighton	1
Tranmere	P QPR	P
Wrexham	1 Rushden & D	1
Wycombe	3 Hartlepool	4



■ It's behind you: Steve Howard seems to have lost his bearings



■ Ahmet Brkovic and Enoch Showunmi celebrate the second goal