



# Enoch's volley nets Hatters vital point

03/04

Queens Park Rangers 1  
Luton Town 1

**A KEVIN NICHOLLS** inspired Luton grabbed a point in a tightly-contested grudge match at Loftus Road.

Given the captain's armband again, Nicholls drove them on after Paul Furlong had struck for QPR just a minute from half time.

A comeback was unlikely after manager Mike Newell was forced to use all his substitutes in the opening half, but Enoch Showunmi struck with 15 minutes to go.

Kenilworth Road was a hive of activity this week with Dean Crowe moving to Oldham and Paul Underwood arriving on transfer deadline day.

The former Rushden and Diamonds captain went straight into a side that was missing Sol Davis through suspension and skipper Chris Coyne and striker Steve Howard through injuries sustained in last week's 1-1 draw with leaders Plymouth Argyle.

Curtis Davis, 19, and Ahmet Brkovic came in for the injured duo as Hatters looked to get back into the top six.

There is no love lost between the fans and recent fixtures have always been incident-packed. Yesterday's game was given added spice with the inclusion of ex-Luton striker Tony Thorpe in attack for Rangers.

Thorpe, a former fans' favourite, jumped ship at the start of the season when the Hatters went into administration just a week after the player had told the media the squad had to stick together in the club's hour of need.

His decision to join Luton's bitter rivals still rankles with the fans, who jeered his every touch when the sides met at Kenilworth Road.

Nothing had changed as the 3,000-strong away support kept up a volley of verbal abuse from the kick-off.

For Luton a disjointed opening 20 minutes was made worse with an injury to Underwood, the left-sided utility man limping off to be replaced by Peter Holmes.

It triggered a spate of substitutions forced on manager Mike Newell in the first half.

Just after 30 minutes midfielder Paul Hughes was involved in a crunching tackle that left him writhing on the floor. His place was taken by striker Adrian Forbes, just back from a long-term injury.

Minutes later Luton made their final substitution when Underwood's replacement



■ Sign says it all: Top man Enoch Showunmi who got Luton's equaliser

Holmes failed to run off a leg injury and was replaced by Kevin Foley.

Newell had hoped to leave Forbes and Foley on the bench while they regain full fitness.

In between the flurry of substitutions, QPR had the best chance on 24 minutes when winger Martin Rowlands' stinging shot from outside the box was kept out by a one-handed save from Morten Hyldgaard.

But the Dane could do nothing about the

opener a minute before the break when Kevin Gallen cut back a cross for Furlong, unmarked six yards out, to head home. It was a bitter pill as moments earlier a looping header from Emmerson Boyce had been cleared off the line.

QPR, last season's beaten play-off finalists, seemed to be in control as the reshuffled Hatters struggled to get to grips with the pace of the game.

But driven on by the inspirational Kevin Nicholls in midfield Hatters showed signs of life and on 50 minutes Showunmi's 30-yard volley was just beaten away by Rangers' keeper Lee Camp.

On the hour, Luton had their best spell, featuring two long-range shots from Nicholls which were again kept out by Camp as the visitors searched for an equaliser.

It duly arrived 15 minutes from time. From Brkovic's up-and-under Forbes and Showunmi gave chase to put central defenders Arthur Gnohere and Clarke Carlisle under pressure. Neither could deal with the situation as the ball fell to Showunmi, who hooked a volley from just inside the area past Camp – a great finish.

The final, frantic minutes tested Luton severely but rookie Davies and the ever-reliable Boyce restricted Rangers to a few half chances and Rangers never seriously looked like winning the game.

LUTON TOWN: Hyldgaard; Keane, Davies, Boyce, Neilson; Nicholls, Robinson, Hughes (Forbes 34m), Underwood (Holmes 18, Foley 36); Brkovic, Showunmi, Subs not used: Brill (gkpr), Mansell

Referee: Andy D'Urso (Essex)

GOALSCORERS:  
QPR: Furlong (45)  
Luton: Showunmi (75)

SHOTS ON TARGET  
QPR: 6  
Luton: 4

SHOTS OFF TARGET  
QPR: 6  
Luton: 1

CORNERS  
QPR: 15  
Luton: 4

OFFSIDE  
QPR: 5  
Luton: 7

BOOKINGS  
QPR: McLeod (74), Rowlands (85)  
Luton: -

ATTENDANCE: 17,695

**HATTERS STAR MAN:**  
**KEVIN NICHOLLS**  
Immense in midfield spurred Hatters on

## Division Two results

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

## How they stand

|               | P  | W  | D  | L  | F  | A  | Pts |
|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| Plymouth      | 39 | 22 | 12 | 5  | 75 | 33 | 78  |
| QPR           | 38 | 19 | 14 | 5  | 69 | 37 | 71  |
| Bristol City  | 39 | 19 | 11 | 9  | 50 | 32 | 68  |
| Swindon       | 38 | 18 | 10 | 10 | 62 | 46 | 64  |
| Brighton      | 39 | 18 | 9  | 12 | 57 | 40 | 63  |
| Bournemouth   | 38 | 16 | 11 | 11 | 49 | 39 | 59  |
| Port Vale     | 38 | 17 | 8  | 13 | 60 | 52 | 59  |
| Luton         | 37 | 15 | 13 | 9  | 57 | 49 | 58  |
| Hartlepool    | 38 | 15 | 12 | 11 | 60 | 50 | 57  |
| Wrexham       | 38 | 16 | 7  | 15 | 44 | 48 | 55  |
| Barnsley      | 39 | 12 | 16 | 11 | 44 | 46 | 52  |
| Sheffield Wed | 39 | 13 | 12 | 14 | 43 | 50 | 51  |
| Colchester    | 38 | 13 | 11 | 14 | 39 | 48 | 50  |
| Blackpool     | 38 | 13 | 10 | 15 | 46 | 52 | 49  |
| Tranmere      | 38 | 11 | 15 | 12 | 45 | 51 | 48  |
| Rushden & D   | 39 | 13 | 8  | 18 | 57 | 62 | 47  |
| Oldham        | 38 | 9  | 16 | 13 | 53 | 53 | 43  |
| Chesterfield  | 39 | 10 | 12 | 17 | 43 | 62 | 42  |
| Peterborough  | 39 | 9  | 14 | 16 | 45 | 50 | 41  |
| Brentford     | 39 | 11 | 8  | 20 | 43 | 63 | 41  |
| Grimsby       | 39 | 10 | 11 | 18 | 49 | 72 | 41  |
| Stockport     | 39 | 8  | 16 | 15 | 51 | 63 | 40  |
| Notts County  | 39 | 9  | 10 | 20 | 43 | 65 | 37  |
| Wycombe       | 39 | 5  | 16 | 18 | 43 | 64 | 31  |



■ Somewhere among the Hatters' fans is goalscorer Enoch Showunmi