



BLOCKED: Hatters keeper Dino Seremet saves Tranmere's penalty for a second time, only for Ryan Taylor to net from the rebound to give Rovers the lead.

Saved by flick of a Coyne!

TRANMERE 1 HATTERS 1

TOWN boss Mike Newell hailed his Aussie saviour Chris Coyne after the centre-half preserved Luton's unbeaten league run at Prenton Park on Saturday.

The 25-year-old's bullet header 14 minutes from time gave courageous Hatters a point after a spot of penalty bother in the first-half to keep them seven points clear at the top.

Rovers may feel aggrieved that they didn't win the game, but the result proved Luton's new found resilience away from home this season.

And Town players were all the more delighted to snatch a draw having fallen behind in farcical scenes just after the half-hour mark when goal-keeper Dino Seremet made two superb penalty stops, only to still concede.

Curtis Davies' 27th minute foul on overlapping full-back Ryan Taylor earned the hosts a spot-kick. But with usual penalty-taker Taylor having received treatment, referee Tony Bates refused to allow him back on to the

Chris' header earns a point

field until after the kick was taken. Iain Hume stepped up and saw his low drive brilliantly blocked by Luton's Slovenian, who was making his full league debut. But, on the advice of his assistant, referee Bates ordered the kick to be retaken due to Seremet moving before the ball was kicked.

Taylor, back on the field, saw his kick saved, but prodded in the rebound, which by now was in the 32nd minute.

Luton boss Mike Newell said: "Our players didn't feel there was any contact for the penalty. Referees have to give decisions on what they see, but I felt he was just poor in general.

"Their goal was annoying and frustrating, particularly when they've ordered the penalty to be retaken.

"It's petty stuff because Dino wasn't two yards off his line and it was a great

save. Sometimes when penalties are given and they're not clear-cut, keepers tend to save them and we didn't feel that should have been a penalty."

On Coyne's performance, Newell added: "It was a great cross and a fantastic header. But Coyne was magnificent for us at the back. I thought he was outstanding all game."

In a bad-tempered affair with four bookings apiece for each side, Tran-

mere created the clearer chances. Hume blasted off-target in the 15th, 22nd and 71st minutes, Dave Beresford saw a header held by Seremet in the 37th minute and substitute Calvin Zola wastefully shot over in the 71st minute and wide in the 90th minute with just Seremet to beat on both occasions.

Danny Harrison, in for the injured Jason McAteer, also tested Seremet in injury time as Hatters hung on.

MIKE NEWELL'S VERDICT



"IT was important we didn't concede the three points to them and lose our grip at the top.

"We're delighted with the way we fought back. They just don't want to get beaten and the second-half performance proved that.

"It's the biggest test for us so far, but we've come through it.

"We felt we needed a bit more quality going forward in the second-half.

"We passed it around better than they did in the second-half, but they always had a threat and when (Iain) Hume started playing in the last 15 minutes he posed us problems.

"They started the game better and looked like they were really up for it. They closed us down well, but we felt we had enough to get something here.

"We're on a great run and we hope it continues."

STAR HATTER



CHRIS COYNE: The Australian centre-half was a tower of strength in a battling Hatters defensive display.

The 25-year-old overcame yet another bloodied nose to out-muscle opponent Eugene Dadi, who was substituted before the hour.

And Coyne showed his importance at the other end of the field, heading home in style to keep Luton's unbeaten record intact.

Foley and Keane calls

HATTERS teenager Kevin Foley, right, will miss Luton's Friday clash against Hartlepool due to Republic of Ireland under 21 duty.

The 19-year-old has been called up to Don Givens' Eire youth squad for the clash with France in Troyes, also being played on Friday.

Teammate Keith Keane will also miss Luton matches later this month after being named in the Republic of

Ireland under 19 squad for a European mini-tournament in Cyprus.

Ireland are due to play host country Cyprus, Andorra and Russia between Sunday, October 17 and Saturday, October 23.

It means Keane will be unavailable for Luton's games against Huddersfield Town on Saturday, October 16, Walsall on Tuesday, October 19 and Hull on Saturday, October 23.

