



Down: Luton Town's Rowan Vine suffered from this hard tackle

Vine's early strike gives Bradford an ever bigger headache to worry about

BRADFORD CITY0

LUTON TOWN1

Vine (10)

BY OLIVER LAWRENCE

BRADFORD CITY'S dismal home run now stretches to 10 games without a win after a Rowan Vine strike gave table-topping Luton the upper hand in a hard-fought contest.

Mike Newell's Hatters kept themselves on course for the Championship, but they had to survive a late scare when a rasping Steven Schumacher shot rebounded off the inside of a post.

It would have been some reward for a more-spirited second half City effort, but in truth they were always chasing the game after a remarkable opening.

After only three minutes Bradford full-back Lewis Emanuel under-hit his back pass and when the dangerous Ahmet Brkovic nipped in to go round keeper Paul Henderson a penalty looked on the cards.

Brkovic's tumble led to referee Uriah Rennie pointing straight to the spot, but it incensed Henderson and his colleagues who vented their fury at the Luton man.

When the ugly melee subsided Brkovic and Emanuel both went in the book and Henderson threw himself full-length to brilliant push away Kevin Nicholls' low penalty.

The Hatters poured forward and in their next attack a superb through ball from skipper Nicholls sent Vine darting clear, but his goal-bound drive was tipped round the post by Henderson.

As City wobbled Vine struck after 10 minutes with a vicious 22-yard effort which flew passed Henderson and nestled in the City net via the far post.

Brkovic then wasted another good chance when his dipping shot went over the bar and a minute later Bantams' midfielder Lee Crooks should

BRADFORD		LUTON
53	Possession %	47
2	Corners	3
3	Offsides	5
16	Fouls	16
3	Yellows	1
0	Reds	0
10	Shots On	3
6	Shots Off	5
1	Hit Woodwork	0

BRADFORD: Henderson 7, Atherton 6, Wetherall 6, Bower 6, Emanuel 7, Summerbee 8, Schumacher 7, Crooks 7, Morrison 7 (Muirhead 75), Cooke 7 (Forrest 75), Windass 6.

NEXT GAME: BLACKPOOL (A) 22/02

LUTON: Beresford 7, Davis 6, Coyne 7, Davies 8, Foley 7, Neilson 7, Robinson 7, Brkovic 7, Nicholls 7, Vine 7 (Showunmi 72), Howard 7.

NEXT GAME: WALSALL (H) 22/02

have done better with their first sight of goal.

Striker Andy Cooke battled to win the ball on the ground in the Luton box, but when it rolled into Crooks' path his 10-yard drive was dragged wide of the mark.

With Nicholls driving from midfield, Luton looked capable of extending their advantage, but City dug in and almost clawed their way back into the game after the break.

Referee Rennie waved away two strong penalty shouts for handball and Cooke tested Beresford with an angled drive.

The Hatters still carried a threat up front and substitute Enoch Showunmi almost created the vital second when his charging run caused panic in the City defence only for midfielder Steve Robinson to blaze his shot over the bar.

Luton's promotion challenge has come off the back of a 13-game unbeaten run, but Newell conceded that had been lucky to come away with the three points.

"We've defended well because we weren't on our game and as I've said we rode our luck," he said.

City boss Colin Todd refused to throw in the towel and said his side would keep battling for a play-off spot.

"We matched them in the second half without getting the rewards," he said.