

Brammer completes Stoke turnaround

Stoke.....2
Luton.....1

DAVE Brammer's last-gasp goal earned battling Stoke victory over early season high-flyers Luton.

Stoke were a goal down at the interval but hit back through Marlon Broomes before Brammer sealed the points with a 30-yard piledriver.

The home side won two free kicks in the opening couple of minutes. Both were taken by Carl Hoefkens but neither posed any threat for the Luton defence.

Luton hit back swiftly, though, with Steve Howard getting on the end of an Ahmet Brkovic cross, only to send his fifth minute header wide of the target.

The visitors threatened again just two minutes later, but Stoke goalkeeper Steve Simonsen was equal to Howard's curled effort from 20-yards.

More pressure then paid off for Luton as they took a ninth minute lead. Dean Morgan took his goal with aplomb, taking his time before coolly firing past Simonsen to give his side an early boost.

As Luton continued to push, Morgan was again involved as his inswinging corner was cleared at the far post by John Halls.

Simonsen had to be on his toes midway through the first half to keep out a 20-yard free kick from Kevin Nicholls, awarded following a foul on Steve Robinson by Hoefkens.

Stoke found themselves increasingly under the cosh as the first half wore on, with Morgan at the heart of Luton's best work.

But the visitors then found themselves a man down when Howard, Luton's top scorer last season, was dismissed for violent conduct after 25 minutes following a foul by Michael Duberry.

Luton were forced into a change at the interval with Sol Davis replacing the injured Morgan.

But they continued to dominate proceedings early in the second half despite playing with 10 men.

However, Stoke opted to make a change just before the hour mark with Kevin Harper replacing Martin Kolar and two minutes later they were on level terms.

Harper played a key role in the build-up to the goal as his cross was headed on by Mamady Sidibe and Broomes was on hand to net from the edge of the area.

Luton, clearly hoping that a change would prove equally inspired, brought on Enoch Showunmi for Warren Feeney after 64 minutes and Carlos Edwards for Brkovic five minutes later.

But it was Stoke who almost went ahead after 71 minutes when Brammer's shot from distance hit the woodwork.

Another chance for the home side went begging with 12 minutes to go, Sidibe heading Brammer's free kick over the crossbar from close-range.

But Brammer had the final say with a spectacular last-gasp winner.



Someone's not telling the truth

LUTON manager Mike Newell hit out at referee Andy D'Urso for sending off striker Steve Howard following an alleged spitting incident.

Newell said: "He sent him off for spitting at their number two Carl Hoefkens, but the number two said he didn't know anything about it.

"I have looked Howard in the eyes and he said he didn't spit. I know he is telling me the truth and the referee was wrong.

"The decision cost us big

time. We were the better side with 10 men and were well in charge with 11."

However, City boss Johan Boskamp said: "I didn't see anything but Hoefkens said he was spat at. I can't say any more about it.

"What I do know is that Luton were the better side for an hour and we were very lucky to win the game.

"They played better football than us and only four of my players performed to the best of their ability."