

Davies tames timid Lions

THE MINUTES THAT MATTERED...

12th Warren Feeney scores his first Hatters goal at Kenilworth Road when Jamie Vincent half clears Paul Underwood's long ball and Feeney lashes home from 20 yards.

46th Hatters caught out straight after the break as Dean Morgan is dispossessed by his own corner flag by Marvin Elliott, who crosses for Ben May to stroke home a sloppy equaliser.

75th A slick Hatters move sees Kevin Nicholls free Feeney down the left, who lays off for Underwood to cross for a Steve Robinson diving header that is saved by Marshall.

78th The winner comes as Nicholls' right-wing free-kick falls loose after a challenge between Ahmet Brkovic and Dave Livermore and Curtis Davies is on hand to fire home.

PLAYER WATCH: Enoch Showunmi



Minutes on pitch: 67
 Passes to Luton: 13
 Passes to Millwall: 3
 Pass completion: 81 per cent
 Tackles won / lost: 3 / 6
 Headers won / lost: 6 / 2
 Free-kicks won / con: 0 / 1
 Efforts on / off target: 0 / 0
 Efforts blocked: 0
 Dribbles ball retained / lost: 1 / 1
 Offsides: 0
 Yellow / red cards: 0 / 0
 Crosses: 1

VERDICT: Enoch Showunmi continued to deputise for the suspended Steve Howard, but found the going tough against the massed ranks of Millwall defenders.

The Nigerian did well to last for as long as he did as he was playing through the pain barrier.

And he did have moments of joy with his best moment coming in the 54th minute when he latched on to Dean Morgan's flick-on, ran to the by-line and squared for Steve Robinson to have a shot smartly saved by Andy Marshall.

NEWELL'S VIEW: "Enoch was playing with an injured instep which is never easy."

"We're down to the bare bones a bit striker wise, which is why we ended up with Chris Coyne and Ahmet Brkovic up front at the finish."

"Enoch was a doubt and we've forced him to play really."

"He'd had a painkilling injection and played through the pain like a lot of the lads do and we appreciate that."

HATTERS 2 MILLWALL 1

HATTERS fans were treated to a rendition of Simply The Best from winger Carlos Edwards' wife Teresa before kick-off.

And the song proved to have a suitable choice of title as Town continued their surge up the Championship, albeit with a slightly tired-looking performance against the toothless Lions.

Curtis Davies fired home a close-range winner 12 minutes from time after Ben May had cancelled out Warren Feeney's first Luton goal at Kenilworth Road in the first-half.

Davies' strike – his first of the season – may have added a few extra pounds to his price tag ahead of today's transfer deadline. But boss Mike Newell said: "I wouldn't have thought Curtis would be going anywhere unless someone knows something I don't."

"We've had offers but nothing near our valuation of him and I'm not trying to start an auction because we want to keep him here. We've had serious interest in him and of course we wouldn't stand in his way if someone came in."

"But it needs to match our valuation and while I think someone will end up paying that, I don't think it will be before Wednesday."

With Hatters kicking-off early on police advice, the win left them top of the table for three hours before Sheffield United and Reading also picked up victories later in the day.

It also gave Luton less recovery time after their 2-0 Saturday win at Leicester and it showed as Town at times struggled to break down rock-bottom Millwall who came with a damage limitation plan clearly in evidence.

Town started well enough and Steve Robinson fired just over in the ninth minute before Luton raced into the lead three minutes later.



Visiting defender Jamie Vincent could only half clear Paul Underwood's long ball and Feeney took one touch before expertly driving a low right-footed effort into the bottom corner from 20 yards.

But after that, Luton struggled to unlock the massed Lions defence and instead it was the visitors who levelled 40 seconds after the break following a disastrous lapse in the home rearguard.

Marvin Elliott dispossessed Dean Morgan near the corner flag and crossed for May to convert as Luton were caught cold with Newell observing: "We didn't deal with it in the corner and handed them a goal, it's as simple as that."

"For every goal you concede there is always a reason, and there was a big reason why we conceded that one."

Ahmet Brkovic had a headed goal from a Kevin Nicholls free-kick disallowed for offside immediately after, before Newell was moved to enforce an unusual attacking substitution.

With Steve Howard suspended, Rowan Vine injured, Calvin Andrew out on loan and Enoch Showunmi playing with a pain-killing injection, Town fans enjoyed the rare sight of substitute Chris Coyne playing as a make-shift centre-forward in place of the gangly Nigerian from the 67th minute onwards.

Steve Robinson twice went close as Town pushed on before Nicholls' free-kick caused havoc in the penalty area and Davies gleefully fired the winner.



Picture: Gareth Owen

FOCUSED: Goalscorer Warren Feeney holds off Millwall's Mark Phillips

MIKE NEWELL'S VERDICT



"WE'RE pleased with the win because we didn't think we were at our best today."

"The lads looked really tired which is only to be expected after seven games in a month."

"I don't know why they keep piling these fixtures up. Anyone who has played the game knows how difficult it is to recover after a match."

"You're still playing Saturday's game by the

time Monday comes around and it was even harder for us as we had a 12 o'clock kick-off."

"We huffed and puffed but we didn't play anything like we did in the first four matches."

"People come to games expecting to see decent football, but it's not always possible to provide it. It's not easy, but it's the same for everyone and you have to get on with it."

STAR HATTER



STEVE ROBINSON: An all action midfield display from the hard-working Irishman.

Robinson was tireless as he chased and harried in the centre of the field alongside skipper Kevin Nicholls.

While he helped out in tracking back, he was also busy supporting the Town forward line when he could and was unlucky with goalbound efforts saved in the 54th and 75th minutes.

Town end interest in Obodai

HATTERS have ended their attempts to sign Ajax midfielder Anthony Obodai – after his wife became involved in the proceedings.

The 23-year-old, who played for the Dutch side against Luton in last season's friendly at Kenilworth Road, held talks with Town boss Mike Newell at

the end of last week. But complications with obtaining a visa for Obodai caused the potential free transfer to be called off.

Newell said: "We've scrapped that. We spoke to his agent, but then had a fax from someone else claiming to be his agent."

"We were then told he was having domestic problems, but that his wife would get round to

signing his visa eventually. I don't know if his agent was trying to tout him round or what, but I smelt a rat."

"We also can't be having someone's missus controlling what goes on at this club."

With Hatters withdrawing their interest, Obodai has now signed for Sparta Rotterdam on a two year deal instead.