

KEVIN NICHOLLS



# NICHOLLS PEGS BACK WOLVES

Luton .....1  
Wolves .....1

By MIKE McGRATH

**LUTON skipper Kevin Nicholls drilled a late leveller to earn his high-flying side a deserved point against promotion rivals Wolves.**

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The Hatters were celebrating 100 years at Kenilworth Road but the day was in danger of being spoiled by Carl Cort's first half opener against the run of play.

Steve Robinson had hit the bar and it looked as though Mike Newell's side would be frustrated until Nicholls struck from the edge of the area with 12 minutes left.

It was fair reward for the hosts, who had the better chances and possession as their impressive start to the season continued.

Despite starting poorly, it was Wolves centre back Gabor Gyepes who had the first chance of the game when he headed wide powerfully from a Darren Anderton corner.

But it was the hosts who had the better of the opening exchanges, Warren

Feeney appearing to be brought down in the penalty area when forced wide by Michael Oakes — but referee Lee Probert did not penalise the keeper.

Feeney was then brought down on the edge of the area by Mark Kennedy after 10 minutes, and Steve Howard failed to direct his free header at the far post from the floated free kick.

The next chance arrived after 19 minutes, this time Oakes produced a marvellous save to stop Ahmet Brkovic's header which looked certain to find the bottom corner.

Against the run of play, Wolves took the lead after 25 minutes through Cort. Anderton, sitting in front of the Wolves defence, sent Kennedy down the right and Cort applied a simple close-range finish when the cross found him at the back post.

Carlos Edwards' frustration minutes after the goal earned him a booking for a foul on Scotland hero Kenny Miller, who was taken off with what appeared a recurrence of a hip injury.

Kennedy was also booked — the Wolves skipper kicked the ball away after conceding a corner — and from the resulting set-piece Howard went close with a header.

Chris Coyne also went close with a header, with 10 minutes of the half remaining, but Rohan Ricketts

cleared off the line.

Feeney was booked for diving in the area just before the break, with Robinson hitting the bar with a header soon after.

Cort should have doubled the lead in first half stoppage-time when he was sent through by Ricketts but planted his shot wide of Marlon Beresford's post.

Hatters boss Newell remonstrated with the officials at the break and was in the stands for the second half as his team continued to put pressure on the visitors after the interval.

Paul Underwood had a shot deflected wide after 50 minutes, and when he crossed a minute later, Oakes was forced to save from Feeney's header.

Anderton was taken off for Seyi George Olofinjana on the hour mark, but Glenn Hoddle's men continued to be pressed by the hosts — Markus Heikkinen heading wide from a free kick. Joleon Lescott also having to bravely block a close-range effort from Brkovic.

The leveller came 12 minutes from time, Nicholls drilling home after Edwards had pulled the ball back to the edge of the area.

Substitute Enoch Showunmi had a chance to grab all three points but mis-kicked in the area — and it remained 1-1, with Olofinjana also going close.

## Newell not impressed with the referee's performance

MIKE Newell was furious with referee Lee Probert after getting sent to the stands during the draw with Wolves.

The Luton manager said: "I was sent to the stands for kicking the ball at him in an aggressive manner and pointing to where Carlos Edwards was booked.

"It didn't leave the ground so I don't know what 'aggressive manner' is. He takes the ball at half time so I'm passing the ball back to him."

Newell added: "It's always a decent result to come from a goal down to get a point, we've had the better of the game in every game we've played, so we're delighted because Wolves are a team who are people's favourites to get out of this league.

"You have to ride your luck at half time, which we did, and we certainly had more clear-cut chances. We looked stronger and fitter at times."

Wolves boss Glenn Hoddle

was pleased with the draw against a team who play with little width on their narrow pitch.

"It's a good point in the context of the 90 minutes," he said.

"We knew they were going to be tight on us, they work that to their favour.

"I thought our back four stuck to their task well, as did Michael Oakes in goal, we allowed them to put too many balls in our box but we dealt with them."