

Honours even in battle of new-boys

05/06

Luton2
Sheff Wed2

STEVE Howard grabbed a brace for high-flying Luton who had to settle for a draw against a strong Sheffield Wednesday side in an entertaining encounter at Kenilworth Road.

Howard scored a goal in each half but the Hatters found themselves frustrated against the Owls, who first levelled through Graeme Lee, before David Graham briefly put them ahead in the second half.

Luton have exceeded expectations so far this season, having come through some difficult opening fixtures to go into the match with an impressive 17 points from nine games in the Championship.

In contrast Wednesday — who were promoted along with Luton last season — have so far struggled and currently find themselves languishing near the foot of the table.

The Owls' performance belied their lowly position, but it was the in-form

Hatters who took the lead almost straight after kick-off when a foul by Glenn Whelan led to a free kick for the home side in the first minute.

Kevin Nicholls sent the ball into the area where striker Howard powered home a trademark header.

But Sheffield Wednesday responded in superb fashion 13 minutes later when a powerful shot by Lee Peacock led to a corner for the Owls.

Chris Brunt swung the ball in to the near post only for it to be flicked away from goal but Lee instinctively threw his head at the ball to send a well-placed header into the back of the net.

But the Owls were in danger of falling behind again soon after when some good work by Luton led to Warren Feeney breaking free of the defence.

As he reached the edge of the box, the former Stockport man bent a shot towards the far post that was just pushed away to safety by David Lucas.

As the half wore one, both Nicholls and Brunt tested the respective keepers as either side looked capable of grabbing a second goal.

And in 38th minute, Luton came incredibly close to regaining the lead when a header by Steve Robinson almost crept into the far corner of the goal, only for Lucas to superbly push the ball round the post.

The quick tempo of the first half gave way to possession football in the early stages of the second period, with both sides passing the ball about without really creating anything in the final third.

The dangerous Brunt fired a powerful free kick on goal that Marlon Beresford had to palm to safety while Luton's first attempt on goal in the second half did not materialise until just before the hour when Nicholls' long-range effort went high over the bar.

Peacock should have done better in the 61st minute when he superbly controlled a long-range pass to run through on goal only to send his shot just wide of the post.

But two goals in two minutes finally brought the half to life.

It was Wednesday who deservedly went in front in the 63rd minute with

Graham latching on to a good through-ball to shoot beyond Beresford.

The Owls were stunned, however, when Luton responded immediately and from a Nicholls cross, Howard got between the defenders to nod home.

The goal brought Luton to life and Wednesday were lucky not to have gone behind four minutes later when some good football by Luton led to Dean Morgan playing a low cross to Feeney.

The lively striker seemed certain to score, only for Lucas to make an incredible save and push the ball behind to safety.

The Hatters continued to attack as Robinson's long-range effort just whistled over the bar before Chris Coyne rattled a header against the outside of the post from a corner.

Owls substitute Lee Bullen forced a save from Beresford five minutes from time, while Luton created a number of half-chances but they were unable to find the winner and had to settle for a share of the spoils.