

HOW-ZAT!

Head man Steve rescues a point for in-form Hatters



HOW'S THAT: Edwards congratulates Luton goal hero Howard last night

STEVE HOWARD'S double strike took unfancied Luton into the top three of the Championship in a thriller at Kenilworth Road.

The big Geordie striker netted two headers as Mike Newell's side leapfrogged bitter rivals Watford to stay on course for an automatic promotion push.

But they might have had more had Paul Sturrock's plucky Wednesday been more willing to lie down and take the punishment that is normally due a side rock-bottom in the table.

Owls fought back thanks to strikes in each half from Graeme Lee and David Graham and were within sight of a first away triumph of the season.

But Howard rescued Luton in a game they largely dominated.

Luton boss Mike Newell said: "We've always said that if we put the ball in the right areas, Steve Howard will score goals at this level.

"He's a real handful. He's a marked man most of the time and isn't always treated fairly by referees - but he took the headers well.

"People have been asking me why we're doing better than Hull and Sheffield Wednesday this season. Without trying to be arrogant, it is because we are better than them. I think we should have won tonight."

Newell's side were rewarded for their lightning-quick start with an early opener.

Skipper Kevin Nicholls' free-

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kick from the right was met by Howard's thunderous diving header into the top corner.

But in the 13th minute Chris Brunt's corner looped off the head of Lee and was allowed to drift into the top corner by Hatters goalkeeper Marlon Beresford.

It was more than the Owls deserved but after just one win all season they were grateful for any good fortune coming their way.

Then the game exploded into life in the space of a few frantic second-half minutes when first

Wednesday took the lead only for Luton to equalise soon after.

In the 63rd minute Graham (left), criticised by Sturrock earlier this week, latched on to Lee Peacock's flick-on and drilled a powerful low shot past Beresford.

But four minutes later Luton were level.

Nicholls swept in a perfect cross and Howard scored his second header of the night when he stooped ahead of John Hills to guide the ball home.

Sturrock said: "We're off the bottom for 24 hours but it's more important that we scored two goals after only scoring four all season.

"A draw was a fair result. Any team would find it hard at Luton because they pummel you with their crosses. After a bad start we responded well."

