

Much-needed lift for Sky Blues

Coventry1

Luton0

By ANDY TILLEY

COVENTRY returned to winning ways at the Ricoh Arena as Dele Adebola's headed goal proved sufficient to secure three points at visiting Luton's expense.

Adebola netted his sixth goal of the season from close-range in the second half as the Sky Blues drew a line under a winless streak of four Championship games and recorded their first home win since beating Watford a month ago.

And it had been the hosts who were first on the offensive as central defender Robert Page, returning from suspension, was the first to go close before Gary McSheffrey blazed over the visitors' bar when clear on goal in the fifth minute.

But the Hatters' riposte came before the 10 minute mark when a Kevin Nicholls set-piece found Chris Coyne free at the back post, although once the header had travelled back across the face of goal, Steve Howard could only volley wide when unmarked three-yards out.

At the other end, McSheffrey and Jamie Scowcroft impeded each other as they tried to meet a cross from Stephen Hughes before Claus Jorgensen was marginally wide with a 27th minute free kick from 20-yards.

Kevin Foley fired over for the Hatters from a free kick, before Peter Holmes sneaked behind the Sky Blues defence but he could only ripple the side netting with his shot on the turn 10 minutes before the break.

Luton boss Mike Newell replaced Dean Morgan with Keith Keane for the second half but the visitors soon found themselves behind when Adebola was gifted the easiest of point-blank headed finishes.

But Marton Fulop, the Hungarian goalkeeper signed by Coventry on three months' loan from Tottenham, was soon forced into emergency measures as he dived to his right and spectacularly tipped away Ahmet Brkovic's 20-yard tilt.

Next, Adebola bounded clear of Marcus Heikkinen on the break to set up Micky Doyle but Luton keeper Marlon Beresford's legs blocked the Irishman's shot.

And Beresford was at full-stretch to collect a toe-poked effort from a falling Adebola. Luton's best second half opportunity came and went with Howard heading over from 12-yards.

Calm approach pays off for Adams

MICKY Adams believes the victory over Luton will go a long way to restoring damaged confidence at the Ricoh Arena.

He said: "The players are a talented bunch who should be higher up the table than they are so there's been a certain amount of criticism levelled at me and the players but we can deal with that — we're big boys.

"But they have been kicked in the teeth recently in terms of decisions and results going against us and confidence has been a fragile thing.

"So at half time we just told the players to have a little bit more confidence in their ability."

Luton boss Mike Newell pinpointed the Hatters' sluggish start to the game and the performance of referee Mick Thorpe as major factors in their downfall.

He said: "We took that referee to the FA last season over a particular matter and proved him wrong. But we've had him twice this season and not a single decision off him.

However, I was very disappointed with the way we started the game and when you do start games badly, it's difficult to turn it around."