

# Win at last!

## SHEFF WEDS 0 LUTON TOWN 2

Andy MacKenzie reports from Hillsborough

HATTERS ended their four month winless streak away from home with victory at struggling Sheffield Wednesday last night.

Luton had not tasted success on the road since beating Cardiff 2-1 on October 1 before yesterday's clash.

But a Kevin Nicholls penalty and a super strike from Rowan Vine in the 56th minute saw Hatters end their woes away from Kenilworth Road and keep up the chase for a play-off place.

With injured trio Peter Holmes, Steve Robinson and Sol Davis still ruled out, Hatters kept faith with the same 11 that beat QPR in their last outing.

A lively opening saw the hosts start the brighter as Marcus Tudgay twice went close in the opening three minutes.

Firstly he dragged a 20-yard shot wide just 90 seconds in after Markus Heikkinen had half stopped Deon Burton and then he headed John Hills' swinging left-wing cross narrowly over the bar.

Not to be left out, Hatters then twice went close themselves with the game barely five minutes old.

Steve Howard drilled a 25-yard shot at David Lucas in the third minute after Vine had hassled Richard Wood into a mistake and Paul Underwood then saw a 12-yard effort hacked off the line by Hills following Nicholls' corner.

The open nature of the contest continued as Hills delivered another dangerous centre from the left for Wood to nod just wide in the 13th minute before Hills himself slammed a 25-yard effort inches over.

Enoch Showunmi was next to try his luck in the 18th minute as he brilliantly beat Burton O'Brien in the midfield and advanced into the area before seeing his cross-shot knocked behind by Wood.

O'Brien almost made amends a minute later as he slid in ex-Brentford man Burton, who saw his 16-yard effort deflect up and over Marlon Beresford off Heikkinen before the keeper recovered to save.

As the game finally settled down, the Owls were forced into an early change on the half-hour as Hills hobbled off with a hamstring problem and was replaced by Southampton loanee Leon Best.

The next chance did not come until the stroke of half-time when the suspiciously offside-looking Burton collected a pass on the edge of the area before curling wide.

## HATTERS



## SHEFF WEDS



Referee: Paul Armstrong (Berks)

Attendance: 23,965

Another long-range Wednesday effort heralded the first attempt of the second-half as Beresford watched Brunt's 30-yarder fly over in the 49th minute.

But it was Luton who took the lead three minutes later as Vine latched on to Howard's pass, beat Graham Coughlan on the touchline and then turned inside Wood before being felled as he ran past the Wednesday defender.

Nicholls coolly stepped up to blast home his sixth of the season from the spot, high into the top left-hand corner.

With confidence now flowing through Hatters' veins, Luton attacked again and should have made it two in the 55th minute when Howard slipped in Vine, only for the former Pompey man to tread on the ball as attempted to run in on goal.

Vine more than made amends a minute later, however, as Howard again turned provider for the 23-year-old to rifle home his fourth of the season in some style from the edge of the area.

That sparked the hosts back into action and Howard had to show his defensive attributes in the 64th minute.

Howard was soon back causing trouble at the other end as he again combined with Vine in the 71st minute, allowing his strike partner to wriggle past Frank Simek before seeing his dinked effort from a tight angle palmed away by Lucas.



ON THE BALL: Ahmet Brkovic in the thick of the action for Hatters at Hillsborough