



**LUTON TOWN**
Brkovic 72

1

**SHEFFIELD UTD**
Tonge 90

1

05/06

Aft: 10,248 Rating: ★★/★★★

By **PAUL IRELAND**

SHEFFIELD UNITED boss Neil Warnock watched his side grab a last-minute equaliser at Kenilworth Road – then admitted he couldn’t wait for the season to end.

The Blades have cruised into the Premiership as runners-up to Reading, but Warnock has had his share of run-ins along the way and, despite Saturday’s game having its fair share of controversial moments, Warnock wasn’t about to start another row.

A last-gasp Michael Tonge free-kick cancelled out Ahmet Brkovic’s opener for the home side as the game ended all-square – but the earlier award of a penalty to the Hatters would have had Warnock fuming in days gone by.

But not this time. In fact, Warnock even conceded Luton had deserved the points.

He said: “You can’t say much about that game and I’m glad the season’s nearly over.

“Luton deserved to win and I’m pleased with a point. It was hard work and everybody’s tired now because it’s such a long season.

“That’s the sort of resilience we’ll need next season. Phil Jagielka’s had a dreadful virus this week and he looked tired today.

“I didn’t enjoy it out there. The highlight of my day was putting sun cream on at half-time – it was really hot out there.”

Luton boss Mike Newell agreed his side deserved to win and said the result showed why the Hatters had missed out on the play-offs.

He said: “That pretty much sums up our season. We’ve had the better of the game again and created the better chances – we had the game won again, so it’s frustrating.

“I know they’ve got nothing to play for with already being promoted, so they may have taken their foot off the pedal, but we still had them beaten with a minute to go.

“I’m pleased with the performance, especially with the team we had out and players playing out of position. I’m pleased with the appetite of the players to still be going after 45 games.

“But it’s disappointing to concede in the last minute like we’ve done so many times this season.”

In a scrappy first half, the best chance fell to Sheffield United in the 40th minute. Chris Morgan found Ade Akinbiyi inside the area, but Leon Barnett cleared his low drive off the line.

ALL SMILES: Sheffield United’s Keith Gillespie, right, congratulates scorer Michael Tonge

PICTURES: Max Flego

LUTON TOWN

PLAYER RATINGS

MARLON BERESFORD 7/10

A spectator for most of the game, but couldn’t do anything about goal

CARLOS EDWARDS 5/10

Worked hard but was let down by his number of stray passes

ENOCH SHOWUNMI 6/10

Looked a threat but his final ball wasn’t up to scratch

AHMET BRKOVIC 7/10

Solid display and some great crosses from the right

STEVE HOWARD 6/10

Not one of his better days but linked play well

KEITH KEANE 7/10

A solid display, joined in as much as he could going forward

DEAN MORGAN 8/10

The creative spark in much of Luton’s play

PETER HOLMES 7/10

Did the simple things well until being replaced

LEON BARNETT 8/10

Strong at the heart of defence, didn’t put a foot wrong

ROWAN VINE 7/10

Will rue the penalty miss which ultimately cost his side

WARREN FEENEY 7/10

Lively up front, always looked a threat on the ball

SUBSTITUTES

KEVIN NICHOLLS - Came close 7
DAVID BELL - Looked good 7

PADDY KENNY 8/10

Excellent show, two great saves in the first half

CHRIS MORGAN 5/10

Worked hard, but gave away penalty with a clumsy tackle

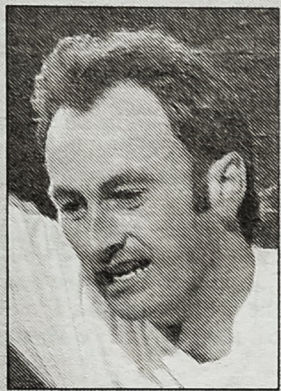
PHIL JAGIELKA 5/10

Well below the high standards he’s set all season

MICHAEL TONGE 6/10

Not one of his better displays but came up with a great free-kick

TONGE'S LEVELLER THWARTS HATTERS



OPENER: Brkovic

	DEFENSIVE BLOCK	DEFENSIVE CLEARANCE	SHOT ON TARGET	SHOT OFF TARGET	FOULS COMMITTED	FREE KICKS WON	CAUGHT OFFSIDE	CROSSES		DEFENSIVE BLOCK	DEFENSIVE CLEARANCE	SHOT ON TARGET	SHOT OFF TARGET	FOULS COMMITTED	FREE KICKS WON	CAUGHT OFFSIDE	CROSSES
Keane	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	Unsworth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Howard	-	1	-	1	3	1	-	-	Luckett	1	2	-	-	3	-	-	-
Barnett	-	2	1	2	2	-	-	-	Morgan	1	-	-	-	4	1	-	-
Edwards	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	2	Gillespie	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1
Morgan	-	1	-	1	-	2	-	3	Armstrong	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-
Holmes	-	-	1	-	3	1	-	-	Tonge	-	-	1	1	-	2	-	-
Showunmi	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	Jagielka	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	-
Brkovic	-	1	2	-	-	1	-	4	Geary	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1
Vine	-	-	2	2	-	2	1	-	Dyer	-	-	1	1	1	2	2	-
Feeney	-	-	-	1	1	5	-	-	Akinbiyi	-	-	-	2	1	1	2	1
SUBSTITUTES									SUBSTITUTES								
Nicholls	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	Short	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bell	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	Forte	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1

KEEPER: Beresford 3 saves (3 Catch)

46% POSSESSION 54%

KEEPER: Kenny 7 saves
(5 Catch, 1 Parry, 1 Punch)

Barnett then came close to scoring himself with a powerful header at the far post after a fine cross from Dean Morgan, but Paddy Kenny was on hand to parry the ball to safety.

The game came to life after the break as, within eight minutes, the home side were awarded a spot-kick.

Chris Morgan brought down Rowan Vine and, after consulting his linesman, referee Ray Olivier pointed to the spot. After Vine had dusted himself off to take the penalty, he blasted the ball over the bar.

Warnock said: "The referee said he didn't think it was a penalty, but the linesman made his mind up for him."

Vine's blushes were spared in the 72nd minute as the Hatters took the lead. Dean Morgan flicked on David Bell's cross and Ahmet Brkovic was on hand to head the ball beyond Kenny.

Kevin Nicholls then struck the bar for the hosts as they were unable to grab the all-important second and in the 90th minute they were dealt the ultimate sucker-punch.

A quick United break came to a halt as Steve Howard brought down Chris Armstrong and up stepped Michael Tonge to find the bottom corner and snatch a share of the spoils for Warnock's Premiership-bound side.

STAR MAN: DEAN MORGAN
(Luton Town)



FLYING: United's Chris Armstrong is sent tumbling

SHEFFIELD UTD

PLAYER RATINGS

KEITH GILLESPIE 7/10

Excellent display fitting in at right-back

CHRIS ARMSTRONG 6/10

Had an early chance in the first half but otherwise was quiet

DAVID UNSWORTH 6/10

Was solid in the first half, surprising he didn't reappear

DEREK GEARY 6/10

Good first half but went missing after the break

CHRIS LUCKETT 7/10

Accomplished display at the back as Luton poured forward

ADE AKINBIYI 6/10

Didn't create much - not a Premiership striker on this display

BRUCE DYER 5/10

A poor display, wasn't a surprise to see him hauled off

SUBSTITUTES

CRAIG SHORT 5; SIMON FRANCIS 5; JONATHAN FORTE 6

**'It's disappointing
that we conceded
in the last minute
yet again'**

Mike
Newell

**'The highlight of
my day was putting
sun cream on at
half-time'**

Nell
Warnock