

Dull in Hull

HULL CITY 0 LUTONTOWN 0

Andy MacKenzie reports from the KC Stadium

HATTERS couldn't make it an early season's hat-trick of away wins in Yorkshire as they fought out a gritty draw with rock-bottom Hull.

Town had to defend well against determined if slightly disjointed hosts and couldn't quite find the attacking flair to add to away day victories already gained at Sheffield Wednesday and Barnsley.

Skipper for the night Marlon Beresford was grateful to keep his first clean sheet in 10 league games particularly after a super double save two minutes from time and after Stuart Elliott had a goal disallowed for a foul at the death.

Luton handed a first league start of the season to Saturday match-winner David Bell as part of three changes to the side that beat Birmingham at the weekend.

Richard Langley and Dean Morgan also came in with Carlos Edwards (flu), Steve Robinson (tonsillitis) and Lewis Emanuel (hamstring) all sidelined.

Hull, meanwhile, made five changes to the side that lost 2-0 to Burnley in their last outing.

In a nervy start from both sides, Luton created the first opening in the seventh minute when Morgan worked his way to the by-line on the left and squared low for Bell to prod a six yard effort that was instinctively blocked by home keeper Bo Myhill.

Hull soon settled and had a great chance to take the lead five minutes later when Leon Barnett missed his attempted clearance from Criag Fagan's through ball and Jon Parkin ran clean through, only to see his shot bounce away off Beresford's legs.

After Elliott had thumped a 25-yard free-kick into the Hatters wall after quarter of an hour, the Tigers' former Leeds and Manchester City man Danny Mills came perilously close to giving his side the lead three minutes later.

The full-back received the ball on the right, beat Morgan and cut inside Sol Davis before unleashing a low angled left-foot drive that was hacked off the line by Kevin Foley.

A minute later Foley was on hand to clear another goal-bound effort away after Nick Forster turned inside Markus Heikkinen and struck at goal from 20 yards.

Rowan Vine did manage to offer some relief from the pressure when he took Foley's long 22nd minute pass and worked an opening on the left-hand side of the Hull penalty area before firing wide from 18 yards.



Ref: Graham Laws (Tyne & Wear)
Attendance: 14,895

But the hosts kept coming and Fagan was next to threaten when his low half-volley on the edge of the area after Heikkinen's half-clearance whistled just past the post.

Elliott tested Beresford with a 20-yard free-kick in the 25th minute before Luton worked a fine opening two minutes later when Bell took Foley's pass and did superbly to race into the penalty area and cross for the incoming Vine who lost his footing at the vital moment when he seemed set to net.

Forster fired over on the stretch from a Mills' flick-on just after the half-hour mark and O'Leary steered a tame 20-yard effort at Myhill two minutes later after Vine had dummied Foley's pass.

As the hosts' frantic style of play lost momentum Luton got a grip on proceedings and Sam Parkin might have been more alert five minutes before half-time when Bell headed dangerously across goal after Morgan had tricked his way past two defenders and produced a teasing cross from the left.

The second-half was uneventful until Hull stepped up their workrate and saw Danny Coles volley at Beresford on the stretch just before the hour before Parkin won a high challenge with the Town stopper in the 66th minute, only to hit the rebound over the bar as Luton players ran back to cover.

Parkin, who had been quiet throughout for Luton, finally got involved in the 71st minute when he got on the end of Bell's cross, only to loop his header wide from 15 yards.



Picture: DAVE RICHARDSON

BATTLE STATIONS: Luton and Hull fight it out in last night's match at the KC Stadium