

Chucked away

GILLINGHAM 4 HATTERS 3

Carl Field reports
from the Priestfield Stadium

07/08
(JPT)

LUTON TOWN



Unused subs: Goodall, Charles

GILLINGHAM



Unused subs: Graham, Hamilton, Clohessy, Pugh

Referee: Clive Penton (Sussex) Att: 1,417 (101 Luton)

STAR HATTER: Paul Furlong – grabbed two goals and didn't deserve to end up a loser

second of the game.

And things got even better for Luton just a minute later, when Paul McVeigh surged into the box only to be brought down by Jupp.

Matthew Spring stepped up, and slotted the ball into the corner wide to Stillie's left to hand Luton a 3-1 half-time lead.

Gillingham might have felt slightly hard done by after going in two goals behind at the break and came out for the second half determined to make a game of it.

Knowing the next goal was crucial,



FREE-SCORING FURLONG: The Luton striker converts his first of the night to bring the scores level.

they set about Luton straight away.

On 74 minutes a Southall cross wasn't cleared by the Hatters defence, and Mulligan was able to get the ball across to Dickson who netted from close range.

Blackwell's reaction to the goal was to make a double substitution, with

Drew Talbot and Stephen O'Leary replacing Calvin Andrew and Don Hutchison respectively.

But Luton were rattled and with Gillingham sniffing blood, Dickson made them pay for some more hapless defending on 80 minutes, tapping in to complete his hat-trick and

level at 3-3.

And if that wasn't bad enough, things were about to get even worse.

This time it was Perry who was at fault as his misplaced pass found the grateful Bentley, who rushed in to round Brill and slot into an empty net.

HATTERS somehow contrived to chuck away a two goal lead and bid farewell to the Johnstone's Paint competition after some seriously slapdash defending last night.

Leading 3-1 at the break, Kevin Blackwell's side allowed home striker Chris Dickson to complete a hat-trick to bring the sides level before a Keystone Cops cock-up at the back handed the tie on a plate to Gillingham in the dying minutes.

From two goals up with 17 minutes left, Hatters collapsed as Dickson struck twice in quick succession.

And with three minutes left skipper Perry marred an otherwise powerful display with a woeful would-be back pass that found Bentley in acres of space and with time to round the keeper and score the winner.

Gillingham started the brighter of the two sides, and took the lead after 16 minutes with the Hatters defence at sixes and sevens.

Stone's dangerous right-wing cross deep to the back post found the unmarked Gary Mulligan, who neatly pulled back for the onrushing Chris Dickson to slide the ball into an empty net.

That lead didn't last long – Hatters were level ten minutes later, when Paul McVeigh slid in Paul Furlong, who rolled the ball past Derek Stillie in the Gillingham goal, and the ball trickled over the line for his seventh goal of the season.

Midfielder Dave Edwards was forced off just moments earlier holding his thigh, and was replaced by Ahmet Brkovic.

Brkovic provided the cross from the right on 43 minutes to set up Furlong, who prodded the ball over Stillie to put Luton ahead and grab his