

Battling Town keep unbeaten run alive

Hatters weather heavy pressure to secure point

OLDHAM 1 HATTERS 1

Carl Field reports from Boundary Park

HATTERS withstood a second half battering from Oldham Athletic to escape from Boundary Park with an unlikely point last night.

Luton produced a tremendous rearguard effort to hold out for a 1-1 draw, after Jaroslav Fojut had levelled the scores with a first half header.

But Oldham will feel they should have taken all three points in a game they dominated from start to finish.

Luton made three changes from side that won their FA Cup first round replay at Brentford 2-0 with top scorer Paul Furlong returning to lead the line at the expense of Drew Talbot, while Marc Wilson and Steve Robinson replaced Matt Springfield (flu) and injured veteran midfielder Don Hutchison.

Both teams had been enjoying good runs of late with Hatters five games unbeaten and Oldham six.

But it was the home side who were quickest out of the blocks, as they gave Town a torrid time right from the first whistle.

On two minutes Lee Hughes was allowed room to flash in a dangerous-looking low cross across the face of goal from the right-hand edge of the penalty area, which just needed a toe-poke to divert it past Dean Brill in the Luton goal.

Moments later Town launched their first attack and busy forward Calvin Andrew almost stole it in behind Oldham's defence but the danger was cleared.

Hughes was once again allowed too much time and space at the other end, but fortunately his shot lacked accuracy.

Andrew was the first name in the referee's notebook on five minutes for a rash challenge on home skipper Neal Eardley.

Sadly the game was marred by Andy Haines' propensity to brandish yellow cards.

The Latics continued to push forward and Brill did well to gather

DANGER MAN:
Calvin Andrew goes close for the Hatters last night



Picture: Gareth Owen

OLDHAM



Unused subs: Bell, Hazell, Kalala, Wolfenden

LUTON TOWN



Unused subs: Keane, McVeigh

STAR HATTER: Dean Brill. Some important stops.

Referee: Andy Haines Attendance: 4,251 (176 Luton)

Another Kilkenny cross brought an acrobatic effort from McDonald that went wide of the post, while the dangerous midfielder then forced a brave block from Brill on 55 minutes.

Mark Allott's venomous long-range effort then flew over the bar two minutes later as the Latics continued to batter Town's defence.

Hughes shot inches wide on 64 minutes, while centre-half Stefan Stam should probably have scored with a flashing header.

Oldham created chance-after-chance, and Brill did brilliantly deny Hughes with his legs on 73 minutes.

Town could not even muster one effort on goal in the second half, while Oldham twice went close in the dying moments.

McDonald fired an effort into the side netting with seven minutes left, while Fojut produced a great last-ditch tackle to deny Hughes at the death.

Craig Davies' fizzing cross along the six-yard box on 15 minutes.

Second's later Davies produced a carbon copy, and although Brill fumbled at the first time of asking he reacted quickly enough to collect the ball at the feet of the onrushing Hughes.

Neil Kilkenny then slid in an inch-perfect ball for Gary McDonald on 27 minutes, but Brill was equal to his effort.

Hatters were struggling to create anything and the hosts duly took the lead five minutes later.

Chris Taylor's through ball split Luton's defence and Davies sped through before coolly rounding

Brill and guiding the ball into the empty net.

However, it took Town less than a minute to register a surprising leveller, albeit against the run of play.

David Bell floated a free-kick into the box and the unmarked Fojut rose highest to divert the ball past a helpless Mark Crossley.

The goals seemed to slow the game down and the half ended in rather scrappy fashion.

The second half started in almost identical fashion to the first, with Oldham dominating possession, as almost all of the football seemed to be played in Luton's half