

Relief for new boss Harford as Hatters snatch injury time equaliser

Super sub Sam sends out a timely reminder

LUTON TOWN FC

LEAGUE ONE
LUTON TOWN 1
Parkin 90
LEEDS UTD 1
Huntingdon 27

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FORGOTTEN man Sam Parkin came off the bench to rescue a point for Luton in a fiery encounter to mark Mick Harford's first home game in charge of the Hatters.

Harford has already seen his team lose twice on the road since he took over but this hard-earned point against promotion candidates Leeds felt like a win when Parkin scored in added time.

United had gone ahead in the first half through Paul Huntingdon but the second period descended into a glorified game of head tennis as both sides launched long balls forward.

All looked lost as the clock ticked down but at the death Parkin got on the end of an Alan Goodall cross to send a bullet header past Leeds' goalkeeper Casper Ankergrén.

Since signing for the club last season Parkin has been blighted by an ankle injury and his new boss was happy to see him back.

"Sam's had a rough time," said Harford. "He made a good contribution and capped it with a goal to give us a point we fully deserved."

"I'm disappointed not to win to be honest. It was a very scrappy game but Leeds are a competitive team. Credit to the players – they cross the white line, all we can do is prepare them."

"We've only got one recognized centre half at the club but our defending was brilliant today."

"It's a start for us, for me in my Luton Town managerial career and the club as a whole. I hope it's the catalyst for more. There's 19 games left with 57 points to play for and if we play like that we'll stay up."

"The effort and commitment was first class and the fans were excellent. We've got Swindon here on Tuesday and if we can pick up points at home and sort out our away form we'll survive."

From the first minute Luton set out to make it a happy homecoming for Harford and when Matt Spring hit long range effort it deflected off a Leeds player and seemed goal-bound. Ankergrén stayed rooted to spot but the ball trickled wide.

After Adam Boyd at Leyton Orient last week another Luton flop turned super striker appeared against his former employers.

Tresor Kandol didn't cover himself in glory during his short spell at Kenilworth Road but the forward is reborn at Leeds and when he broke



LEADING THE LINE: Paul Furlong in action for Hatters against Leeds yesterday



OVER THE MOON: Scorer Sam Parkin

free of Keith Keane Luton fans must have feared the worst. However Kandol chose to lob the on-rushing Dean Brill and instead cleared the crossbar.

Leeds eventually did take the lead

26 minutes in through Huntingdon. Captain Chris Perry gave away a free kick on edge of area which was curled to near post by Peter Sweeney. Huntingdon connected with a well placed glancing header but the left back soured the goal by stupidly goading the home support and rightly received the game's first booking.

It appeared that Huntingdon's opener had blown the cover of a dozen or so Leeds fans who had snuck into the Luton end.

They were forcibly shown the exit doors by stewards as the temperature of the game rose on and off the pitch.

The second half started at the same high speed tempo as the first but lacked the skill.

Luton found themselves lowered to Leeds' long ball tactics and the game suffered as a consequence.

On 68 minutes Dean Morgan was introduced and the winger had a chance to show United what they missed out on.

Morgan was supposed to join the Yorkshire side last week after the two clubs agreed a fee but the deal collapsed over personal terms. Leeds' loss was Luton's gain as Morgan came on fired up.

Another substitute on 75 minutes punctuated the boredom on the field as Luton welcomed back Parkin.

The striker's time at Luton had been injury plagued since his move from Ipswich and the home crowd showed their appreciation.

At the other end Kandol could have stolen the headlines two minutes later when clean through he had only Brill to beat. But the former Hatter blew his chance, blazing over from 15 yards.

Just as he had in the beginning Spring threatened the United goal with a long shot but this time flashed his effort wide.

With 90 minutes up Morgan fizzed a cross into the area for Paul Furlong who glanced his header wide. That seemed to be that as Hatters were facing up to a fourth straight defeat until Parkin made his mark.

From almost an identical move to his strike partner Furlong's moments before Parkin rose highest to nod in from Goodall's left wing cross.

"It's a massive relief," said a beaming Parkin afterwards. "I've had two years of hardly any football. I think it was clear for everyone here to see how much it meant to me. Hopefully there's a few more to come."

stats corner

MAN OF THE MATCH



KEITH KEANE

Defender grows in confidence with every performance

THE SQUAD

Brill, Jackson, Keane, Perry, Goodall; Currie (Morgan 68m), Spring, Robinson, Talbot (O'Leary 83m); Andrew (Parkin 75m), Furlong. Subs not used: Beresford, Hutchison.

MATCH FACTS

CORNERS

LUTON 1 LEEDS 7

OFFSIDE

LUTON 8 LEEDS 3

SHOTS ON TARGET

LUTON 1 LEEDS 5

SHOTS OFF TARGET

LUTON 6 LEEDS 8

BOOKINGS

LUTON 0

LEEDS 2

Huntingdon (28) Ankergrén 79

REFEREE

Mike Dean (The Wirral)

ATTENDANCE

9,297

FOOTBALL LEAGUE ONE

Friday, January 25

Cheltenham	1	Carlisle	0
Doncaster	0	Swansea	4
Northampton	2	Leyton Orient	0

Saturday, January 26

Luton	1	Leeds	1
Port Vale	1	Bournemouth	3
Tranmere	2	Yeovil	1
Walsall	2	Gillingham	1

FOOTBALL LEAGUE ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Swansea	26	17	5	4	52	22	56
Notts Forest	26	12	9	5	42	20	45
Carlisle	26	13	6	7	39	26	45
Walsall	28	11	12	5	35	24	45
Leeds	28	18	5	5	49	23	44
D'caster	27	12	8	7	39	28	44
Leyton O	28	12	7	9	35	39	43
Tranmere	28	11	7	10	31	29	40
Southend	27	11	4	12	41	40	37
Yeovil	28	10	7	11	26	30	37
Swindon	26	9	9	8	35	32	36
Brighton	25	9	8	8	32	29	35
North'ton	28	9	8	11	34	39	35
Oldham	26	8	10	8	26	24	34
Hartlepool	27	9	6	12	39	40	33
Gillingham	27	8	7	12	29	41	31
Huddersf'd	26	9	4	13	26	42	31
Bristol Rvrs	24	7	9	8	26	27	30
Cheltenham	26	8	6	12	22	35	30
Crewe	28	7	8	13	26	42	29
Millwall	26	7	6	13	28	39	27
B'mouth	28	7	5	16	35	53	26
Luton	27	9	7	11	31	34	24
Port Vale	28	5	5	18	24	44	20