

New manager to spill the beans on how club has been run for past two years

Harford sees Hatters hitting rock bottom

LUTON TOWN FC

LEAGUE ONE
HARTLEPOOL 4
Barker 30, (pen), 73, Thompson 61,
Porter 64
LUTON 0

TOM LEECH
at Victoria Park

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IT can't get any worse than this.

Manager Mick Harford promised to spill the beans about how the club has been run in the past two years as Luton's season from hell continued with yet another away defeat.

It seemed like too many players look resigned to League Two football next season.

Hopeless Hatters endured a nightmare second half mauling at the hands of Hartlepool that left manager Mick Harford questioning just what he's taken on.

Richard Barker put the home side ahead from the penalty spot but a three-goal blitz in 12 minutes of the second half gave Hartlepool the goals their possession deserved.

On-loan Alan Thompson, Joel Porter and another from Barker left Harford to comment on his club's plight: "That result's been coming for a while. The boys in the dressing room are very down. I have told the players in no uncertain terms that the performance today was unacceptable – at the end we were all over the place.

"We gave away free kicks in dangerous positions and went to ground on too many tackles. They were better than us and deserved their win but we were poor.

"I've said to the players – it's back to basics. We need to get a team shape together and start again. We must get that belief and passion back.

"I've got a lot to say about how this club has been run over the past two years but I'll hold my thoughts on the subject until next week.

"It's very difficult when you've only got one centre half in the squad. The team's always under pressure as the ball never goes back. It's hard, you need someone commanding in that position. There's too many strikers here and not enough centre backs."

After a disappointing performance against Swindon midweek, Harford made two changes in personnel and switched to a 4-5-1. Back into the fold came left back Sol Davis, who fell out of favour with the previous regime, for his first start of the season.

The recalled Davis was straight into the action 11 minutes in when he carved open Luton's one



DIGGING IN: Don Hutchinson battles for possession against his old club

and only chance of the half. Played through by David Bell, Davis reached the byline before cutting the ball back for Paul Furlong. It was just behind the striker but Furlong still went for goal, shooting just wide.

But from then on in it was all Hartlepool, a side managed by former Hatter Danny Wilson.

Anthony Sweeney tested Brill first with a low drive that was turned around the post. Minutes later the Luton 'keeper was called into action again, this time getting a strong arm to Thompson's well-struck free kick.

Sweeney turned provider when his swung in cross reached Barker whose header deceived his marker but not Brill who tipped over.

On the half hour the goal came with something of an inevitability. An incisive ball through cut Luton open as Pool swarmed forward. Chris Perry slid in and took all of

Porter and none of the ball giving away a penalty. Barker stepped up and sent Brill the wrong way.

Don Hutchinson's return to the Victoria Ground ended before the end of the half with Stephen O'Leary taking the ex-Hartlepool player's place in midfield.

With O'Leary switching to right wing, Luton lined up with a more familiar 4-4-2 at the restart but looked just as uninspired as they did with one up front.

It was difficult to see where the equaliser would come from and on 61 minutes it became impossible as 'Pool slammed in a second. Pool sub David Foley's dribble was stopped illegally and the referee awarded a free kick 30 yards out. Dead ball specialist Thompson stepped sending his effort screaming over the wall and past Brill who was well beaten.

Hartlepool caught Luton feeling sorry for themselves a minute later as things went from bad to

worse. The lively Foley burst through down the right shrugging off his marker before squaring it across a static Luton defence and Porter ghosted in to grab number three.

A rout was on the cards when Barker got his second and Hartlepool's fourth on 73 minutes courtesy of some slapstick defending. A long ball was hit up to Barker on the penalty spot who had Keith Keane and sub Alan Goodall either side of him. Outnumbered, Barker was still allowed time to take the ball down and turn as the defenders and goalkeeper collapsed and his tame shot slowly rolled over the line.

Barker looked embarrassed to claim it but the red faces belonged to the men in orange. The remaining minutes served as shooting practice to the home side who avenged their opening day defeat to the Hatters back in August.

stats corner

MAN OF THE MATCH

228 diehard Hatters fans

They travelled all that distance to watch a load of drivel

THE SQUAD

Brill; Jackson, Keane, Perry (Goodall 67m), Davis; Talbot, Robinson (Andrew 67m), Hutchison (O'Leary 31m), Spring, Bell; Furlong. Subs: Beresford, Parkin.

MATCH FACTS

SHOTS ON TARGET

HARTLEPOOL 8 LUTON 3

SHOTS OFF TARGET

HARTLEPOOL 10 LUTON 4

CORNERS

HARTLEPOOL 3 LUTON 6

OFFSIDE

HARTLEPOOL 4 LUTON 2

BOOKINGS

HARTLEPOOL 1

McCunnie 90

LUTON 2

Keane 78, Spring 90

REFEREE

NEIL SWARBRICK (LANCASHIRE)

ATTENDANCE

3,913

FOOTBALL LEAGUE ONE

Bournemouth	2	Nottm Forest	0
Brighton	3	Crewe	0
Bristol Rovers	3	Port Vale	2
Carlisle	2	Walsall	1
Gillingham	0	Cheltenham	0
Hartlepool	4	Luton	0
Leeds	0	Tranmere	2
Leyton Orient	2	Southend	2
Millwall	0	Doncaster	3
Swansea	2	Oldham	1
Swindon	1	Northampton	1
Yeovil	0	Huddersfield	2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Swansea	28	18	6	4	54	23	60
D'caster	29	14	8	7	44	28	50
Carlisle	28	14	6	8	41	29	48
Nott'm Forest	28	12	10	6	42	22	46
Walsall	30	11	13	6	36	26	46
Tranmere	30	13	7	10	35	29	46
Leyton O	30	12	9	9	37	41	45
Leeds (-15)	30	18	5	7	49	26	44
Southend	29	12	5	12	44	42	41
Swindon	28	10	10	8	37	33	40
North'on	30	10	9	11	36	40	39
Brighton	27	10	8	9	35	30	38
Yeovil	30	10	8	12	28	34	38
Oldham	28	9	10	9	29	26	37
Huddersf'd	28	11	4	13	29	42	37
Hartlepool	29	10	6	13	43	42	36
Bristol Rvrs	26	8	10	8	30	30	34
G'llingham	29	8	8	13	29	43	32
Cheltenham	28	8	7	13	22	36	31
Millwall	28	8	6	14	29	42	30
Crewe	30	7	9	14	27	46	30
B'mouth	30	8	5	17	37	54	29
Luton	29	9	7	13	31	39	24
Port Vale	30	5	6	19	28	49	21