

Battlers cancel each other out

Luton 1 Cheltenham 1

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STEVEN Gillespie's late strike helped Cheltenham earn a vital 1-1 draw against fellow strugglers Luton.

The hosts took the lead in the 24th minute when Sam Parkin headed home David Bell's corner from six yards.

Only a series of fine saves from Robins goalkeeper Shane Higgs kept Cheltenham in the game as the Hatters dominated the first half.

Higgs saved from Matt Spring in the 31st minute, Lewis Emanuel five minutes later and denied Paul McVeigh on the stroke of half-time.

The visitors livened up after the interval and only a superb save by Dean Brill prevented David Bird's 20-yard free-kick from levelling matters in the 55th minute.

Brill then blocked at the feet of Damian Spencer in the 65th minute and watched a Jeremy Gill 30-yarder whistle wide three minutes later.

Ashley Vincent somehow headed

Bird's cross over from a yard out in the 74th minute, but Gillespie finally found the net in the 81st minute, sliding home from an angle 12 yards out.

Keith Downing hailed his side's second-half comeback.

The Cheltenham boss said: "It was a battling performance with little quality but a lot of heart.

"You try and pick up points where you can and hopefully this will end up being a really big point for us.

"We are disappointed with the first goal because it was a free header but in the second half we went a bit stronger on things."

Hatters boss Mick Harford criticised Cheltenham's negative tactics but acknowledged the visitors got what they came for.

"They set their stall out and even when we went down to 10 men, they were still the most negative team," he said.

"I told the lads at half-time it would be a battle and that we would have to scrap. You have to be able to win ugly sometimes but we didn't do that."