

Sam hands point to County

HERO TURNS VILLAIN WITH A PENALTY BLUNDER AFTER MARTIN'S GREAT SOLO GOAL PUT HATTERS IN THE DRIVING SEAT

LUTON TOWN FC

LEAGUE TWO

LUTON TOWN

Martin 49

NOTTS COUNTY

Forrester 53 (pen)

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LAST weekend's hero Sam Parkin was this weekend's zero as he handed visitors Notts County an unlikely point.

Hatters' possession finally paid off through Chris Martin's superb solo effort early in the second half but Parkin – whose goal at Gillingham secured Luton's first three points of the season – gave away a needless penalty with a blatant handball.

Jamie Forrester converted the spot kick with the Magpies' first shot on target and despite some half chances late on Hatters had to settle for a point.

Before the game County boss Ian McParland admitted he really didn't want to be playing psyched-up Luton Town at the moment and in this mood it was clear to see why.

The Hatters were in a rush to get ahead and had all the early pressure. Only the width of the crossbar kept them from the opener 20 minutes in.

Magpies' goalkeeper Kevin Pilkington fumbled Martin's close-range shot and the ball ran to Rossi Jarvis on the edge of the box.

The winger heard the call from his captain and sensibly left it for Kevin Nicholls whose delicate chip over Pilkington dropped straight onto the bar and was hacked away by the County defence.

Nicholls was his tough tackling self which boosted the crowd no end. But he showed his softer side midway through the half when two meaty challenges from himself and midfield partner Asa Hall left two County players writhing on the floor.

Both were perfectly legitimate tackles but as the referee waved play on the middle of the pitch looked like a scene from Platoon so Nicholls kindly put the ball out.

Pacy winger Myles Weston aside, George Pilkington and Michael Spillane were comfortably dealing with the County attack. Unfortunately at the other end Pilkington was hardly troubled by long range efforts from Hall, Jarvis and the recalled Lewis Emanuel.

England cricketer Monty Panesar took his seat for the second half but was soon up on his feet to hail Martin's first goal in a Luton shirt three minutes later. The on-loan Norwich striker had it all to do when Hall laid the ball off for him at the edge of the area.

But he cut inside his marker



MY BALL: Sam Parkin gets his head to the ball but later he was to hang his head in shame as he conceded the equalising penalty

and opened his body up to curl a shot inside the bottom right hand corner.

County's response was quick – nearly as fast as Weston who skinned the Luton right side before firing a shot that aided with a deflection, hit the outside of the post.

From the resulting corner the Magpies were back on level terms. Parkin jumped with County defender Michael Johnson and clearly handled. Gasps of astonishment came from the home crowd but it was as clear as day.

Forrester duly despatched the spot kick and although Brill dived the right way it squirmed under him.

On 79 minutes Parkin had a chance to atone for his previous mistake when substitute Kevin Watson sent a teasing cross into the box that Pilkington was lured into coming out to claim. Parkin got there first and looped a header over the stranded keeper and inches over the bar.

The collision left Parkin having to wear a bandage for the

remainder of the match but he still saw a clear route to goal with five minutes left. Nicholls was provider, again sending a perfectly flighted ball into the six yard box

that the Luton striker headed downwards. Only a great save from Pilkington could prevent Luton making more of a dent on the minus 30 points.

The stats

FOOTBALL LEAGUE ONE

Saturday

Acc'ton Stanley	2	Macclesfield	0
Barnet	0	Brentford	1
Bournem'th	0	Exeter	1
Bradford	2	Rochdale	0
Bury	2	Morecombe	1
Dag & Redbr'ge	1	Port Vale	1
Darlington	1	Gillingham	2
Grimsby	0	Chesterfield	1
Luton	1	Notts County	1
Rotherham	3	Chester	1
Shrewsbury	1	Aldershot	0
Wycombe	1	Lincoln City	0

THE SQUAD

Luton: Brill; Gnakpa, Pilkington, Spillane, Davis; Jarvis, Nicholls, Hall, Emanuel; Parkin, Martin.
Subs: Logan, Keane, Roper, Watson, Plummer.

LEAGUE TWO TABLE

TEAM	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1 SHREWSBURY	3	2	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	1	0	6	9
2 BRADFORD	3	2	0	0	4	1	1	0	0	2	0	5	9
3 BURY	3	2	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	3	1	4	9
4 DAG & RED	3	1	1	0	7	1	1	0	0	3	1	8	7
5 WYCOMBE	3	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	2	0	3	7
6 BRENTFORD	3	1	0	0	4	0	1	0	1	1	1	4	6
7 ACTON ST	3	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	2	0	3	6
8 CHESTERFD	3	0	0	1	1	3	2	0	0	4	1	1	6
9 PORT VALE	3	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	0	4	2	0	4
10 GILLINGHAM	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	3	2	0	4
11 ROCSDALE	3	1	0	0	3	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	4
12 ALDERSHOT	3	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	4
13 EXETER	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	2	1	0	4
14 DARLINGTON	3	0	1	1	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	-1	2
15 NOTTS COUNTY	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	-1	2
16 MORECAMBE	3	0	0	1	1	3	0	1	1	2	3	-3	1
17 GRIMSBY	3	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	4	-5	1
18 LINCOLN CITY	3	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	2	0	2	-4	0
19 BARNET	3	0	0	2	1	4	0	0	1	1	3	-5	0
20 MACCLESFIELD	3	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	6	-8	0
21 CHESTER	3	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	1	9	-10	0
22 ROTHERHAM	3	2	0	0	4	1	1	0	0	3	1	5	-8
23 BOURMOUTH	3	0	1	1	1	2	0	1	0	1	1	-1	-15
24 LUTON	3	0	1	1	2	4	1	0	0	1	0	-1	-26

Post match...

LUTON boss Mick Harford refused to heap the blame on Sam Parkin after the striker's handball gave County a share of the spoils.

"To coin a phrase 'he's put his hands up' and apologised," said Harford.

"We still had chances to win it though. We huffed and puffed but didn't finish."

Harford was more concerned with his side's inability to break down a very defensive away side – a tactic he believes other teams will adopt.

"We're going to have to learn to break teams down here," he said.

"I think we deserved to win overall chances created. It was galling to lose points to a stupid penalty."

"County sat one in front of the back four and we were a bit narrow in midfield. That's why I sent Kevin Watson on as I felt we'd stopped passing. But to be fair, County defended well and we never really found the final ball."

"That said, I think at the end of the season we'll look at this as a valuable point."

On goalscorer Chris Martin, the manager believes the young striker's first in a Luton shirt won't be his last.

"Chris deserved his goal. He's been outstanding since he came to the football club. It looks like he's going to score goals. I think of him as a Mark Hughes-style player in that he holds the ball up well and has an eye for goal."

Despite no home win in the first two games at Kenilworth Road Harford was looking on the bright side as his team sits on minus 26 points.

"It is concerning but I've told the lads – we'll have to go to Exeter and win. It is still three games undefeated."

MAN OF THE MATCH



George Pilkington

Deserved a clean sheet for steely performance

MATCH FACTS

SHOTS ON TARGET

LUTON 6 NOTTS COUNTY 2

SHOTS OFF TARGET

LUTON 6 NOTTS COUNTY 8

BOOKINGS

LUTON: Martin 44, Nicholls 68

NOTTS COUNTY: Johnson 63

REFEREE: Anthony Bates (Staffs)

ATTENDANCE: 6,085