

Hatters are held after Parkin's rush of blood

Luton Town 1 Notts County 1

HOTSHOT striker Sam Parkin apologised for a rush of blood to the head that cost the Hatters victory against Notts County on Saturday, writes Mark Wood.

The experienced striker inexplicably handled an innocuous corner early in the second half, moments after loan striker Chris Martin had given Luton the lead with his first goal for the club.

Parkin, 26, said: "It was a coming together. I didn't mean to handball it. If it had happened at the other end, we would have been appealing."

Super Sam, who suffered a cut to the head while challenging Notts County keeper Kevin Pilkington in the second half, also missed out on a glorious opportunity to win the match for Town with five minutes left when his header went too close to Pilkington.

He said: "Unfortunately I had the head gear on by that stage and couldn't generate much power. On another day the penalty wouldn't have mattered, it just means we have to win at Exeter."

However, he had nothing but praise for strike partner Martin who netted his first goal for the club.

He said: "I think Chris (Martin) has shown what he can do in the first four games and I thought it was only a matter of time before he would get his first goal."

"I'm sure he will go on and get many more goals as he has been smashing them in at training."

Parkin has been impressed with the squad that manager Mick Harford has been able to assemble and is confident they will be able to bounce back from Saturday's setback.

He said: "From the first day of pre-season you wouldn't have believed what kind of side we were able to put out for the first game of the season."

"Playing with the new lads, it's exciting. I think the fans are excited by the way we are playing."

"We haven't quite had the return of points."

"We could quite easily have had one out of nine."

"Every game at the moment is a

BAD DAY AT THE OFFICE: Luton striker Sam Parkin



must win. We've dropped another two points today.

"I think we all know we have enough in the dressing room to play in the league above with the quality we've got there."

"I'm sure we will generate enough points to have had a good season, but with the penalties, it's up to the gods."

"We will have to try and go to Exeter and come away with a good victory like we did at Gillingham."

And he admitted the players are desperate not to look at the table, bearing in mind Luton's 30 point deduction.

He added: "I think we all do and it's probably the same with the Bournemouth and Rotherham lads. We won't take any notice till Christmas time or after."

"It's important we need to turn the draws into victories."

Playing in their new kit, Asa Hall and Martin both mustered efforts in

the first 10 minutes, but dangerman Myles Weston signalled what was to come on 15 minutes when he got the better of Michael Spillane before firing over under pressure from the youngster.

With the game having got off to a scrappy start, Kevin Nicholls was a coat of paint away from giving the Hatters the lead on 20 minutes.

Parkin headed a cross back across goal and Pilkington was unable to gather under Martin's challenge. Rossi Jarvis then laid the ball off to Nicholls on the edge of the area, but the Luton midfielder was desperately unlucky to see his curling chip over the stranded Pilkington come back off the bar.

Town continued to press with Hall, Jarvis and Martin all having efforts, and the Hatters should have taken the lead in the last seconds of the half as they put together the best move of the game. Some fleet footwork from Mar-

tin put Parkin away and his ball found Lewis Emanuel in space, but he could only scoop his effort over the bar.

Luton got the second half off to a blinding start when Jarvis and Hall combined well to set Martin up and he made no mistake with a fierce drive across goal into the bottom right-hand corner.

Weston forced a corner soon after and it was then Parkin's moment of madness struck, Jamie Forrester keeping his cool from the spot to roll home the 53rd minute equaliser.

Martin and Weston continued to create opportunities at either end, but it was Parkin who twice went closest in the closing stages.

With 11 minutes left, he beat Pilkington to substitute Kevin Watson's beautifully floated cross, but had to watch it drop agonisingly over the bar.

And on 85 minutes he looked a dead cert to bury Nicholls' whipped cross from the left, but headed too close to Pilkington as Hatters were frustrated in their efforts to win all three points.

WHAT MICK MADE OF IT

FRUSTRATED Luton boss Mick Harford believes the Hatters may well be glad of the 'big point' they earned from the 1-1 draw with Notts County on Saturday. And he has laid down the gauntlet for his players to win in the West Country this weekend.

He said: "It's frustrating but there's things to work on. I think that will be a big point at the end of the season."

"We will have to go to Exeter and win - that's what I've told the players. It's three games undefeated."

On the game, Harford said: "We are going to have to learn to break teams down when they get bodies behind the ball and sit in and make it difficult for us."

"We need to learn to defend a bit better on the counter-attack. It was galling to get in the lead and give a stupid penalty away."

However, Harford says Sam Parkin has held his hands up to the handball which cost Luton the penalty.

Harford said: "He has apologised. You do things like that when you try and get to the ball."

The Luton boss admitted he was concerned that his side had yet to win a home league game this term, but it could have been very different if Parkin had taken a late chance to give the Hatters victory.

Harford said: "He was banged up and he said it got in his eye and maybe that's partly to do with it."

However, he was full of praise for goalscorer Chris Martin.

Harford added: "He deserves a goal. He has, in my opinion, been outstanding since he's been at the football club. He looks like he will score goals and he is a Mark Hughes type of player with the way he holds the ball up. Hopefully he will carry on scoring more."

O's move for Dean?

HATTERS: Leyton Orient boss Martin Ling has revealed he has been looking at Luton's out of favour winger Dean Morgan, but is unlikely to pursue his interest in the 24-year-old.

He said: "Dean was a player we watched, and while he can play on the left he is predominantly right footed."

"He did play well in the games we saw him in, but I don't think he would really give us what we are looking for on the left."

Hatters manager Mick Harford, though, has stated that Morgan could still play a role in a Luton Town shirt.

Morgan netted both goals in the reserves' 2-1 defeat of Colchester United last Tuesday and although he has not featured for the first team yet this season, Harford has not ruled him out of the reckoning completely.

He said: "Dean was outstanding in the reserves. We had a long chat before the game and he went into the game and scored a couple of goals."

"I've given him the opportunity to go and try and play his trade somewhere else if the opportunity came along."

"As such, the opportunity hasn't come along but if he can play and perform like he did in the reserves then, when he's fit, if I feel it's right for him to be in the team, then he'll be in the team."



STAR HATTER Chris Martin. Maiden goal and busy all-round showing.

There's a long way to go: the 2008/09 season in full

AUG	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos	DEC	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sat 9	PORT VALE	1-3	Parkin 35	7,149	24	Sun 28	LINCOLN CITY				
Sat 12	PLYMOUTH (LGCP)	2-0	Jarvis 15, Plummer 77	2,692		Jan 3	Chester City				
Sat 16	Gillingham	1-0	Parkin 3	5,339	24	Sat 10	ROTHERHAM				
Sat 23	NOTTS COUNTY	1-1	Martin 49	6,085	24	Sat 17	Darlington				
Sat 26	Reading (LGCP)	1-5	Charles 81	7,498		Sat 24	BRADFORD CITY				
Sat 30	Exeter City					Tue 27	Bournemouth				
SEP						Sat 31	BURY				
Sat 6	Macclesfield					FEB	GRIMSBY TOWN				
Sat 13	ALDERSHOT TN					Tue 3	Accrington				
Sat 20	Rotherham					Sat 7	Dagenham & Red				
Sat 27	CHESTER CITY					Sat 14	SHREWSBURY				
OCT						Sat 28	Port Vale				
Sat 4	Bradford City					MAR					
Sat 11	DARLINGTON					Tue 3	GILLINGHAM				
Sat 18	ACCRINGTON					Sat 7	EXETER CITY				
Sat 25	Grimby Town					Tue 10	Notts County				
Sat 2	Bury					Tue 14	Aldershot Town				
NOV						Sat 21	MACCLESFIELD				
Sat 8	BOURNEMOUTH					Sat 28	Morecambe				
Sat 15	Shrewsbury					APR					
Sat 22	DAGENHAM & RED					Sat 4	WYCOMBE				
Sat 29	ROCHDALE					Sat 11	Lincoln City				
Sat 6	BRENTFORD					Mon 13	CHESTERFIELD				
Sat 13	BARNET					Sat 18	Barnet				
Sat 20	WYCOMBE					Sat 25	ROCHDALE				
Sat 27	MORECAMBE					MAY					
Sat 4	Chesterfield					Sat 2	Brentford				