

Spillane is delighted to atone for mistake

WHAT MICK MADE OF IT

HATTERS boss Mick Harford hailed his courageous braves after their 1-1 draw against Bradford, but was again left to rue a defensive mistake.

He said: "We are disappointed we haven't come away with a victory today, in the way we have approached the game and the football we played, especially in the first half.

"At 0-0 you are always vulnerable. A long hopeful punt was misjudged by one of our defenders and they scored their goal.

"I think we showed a lot of character and courage to get the ball back on the halfway line and press for the equaliser.

"I thought the whole team was excellent in every department and it was just a hopeful punt down the middle. It was blowing a gale and there was a swirling wind.

"I think it would have been a travesty if we had lost today.

"I'm sure Stuart [McCall] got into his players at half time. They showed a lot of character the Bradford lads, especially when they went down to 10 men."

"On Luton's goal, Harford said: "They had one centre forward on the pitch and I decided to allow our full-backs to bomb on and Ed [Asafu-Adjaye] got in a telling cross.

"We created enough today to win the game.

"I've told the players I'm proud of the performance but disappointed to give the goal away."

Harford revealed that Sol Davis has hurt his hamstring and Lewis Emanuel tweaked his knee ligaments while going for a drop ball.

He said: "Lewis has opened his leg up and he has tweaked his ligament. Hopefully it's not too long out because we've got a bit of an injury problem at the moment."

"It was a bit of a war zone down there in terms of injuries. We came down here with 14 pros."

But he also had praise for Luton's bit-part stars who helped Town gain a valuable point.

Harford added: "I thought Jake [Howells] was excellent and first class in very difficult conditions.

"Paul McVeigh has been on the periphery. He has been waiting for his chance and training hard and working hard.

"It's pleasing that the people who have stepped up to the plate have played well and shown they can do a job."



Bradford City 1 Luton Town 1

WHOLEHEARTED centre-half Michael Spillane admitted he was a relieved man after netting Luton a late leveller at Valley Parade, writes Mark Wood.

The Norwich City youngster went from zero to hero as he recovered from a defensive howler that had handed 10-man Bantams the lead to grab a goal, and a point, for the Hatters with just four minutes left.

The 19-year-old said: "My heart went when I miskicked the ball. I don't know what I was doing.

"My head dropped but luckily I got one to make it 1-1.

"I thought we defended well until I made my silly mistake.

"We only had five minutes to go and we weren't going to sit back and take defeat so I ran forward.

"If the result is not going our way the gaffer wants us to push on.

"Lucky I got on the end of it otherwise the gaffer might not have been so happy. I just wanted to get my head on it and make up for the mistake."

And Spillane admitted that a lack of concentration is one of his frailties.

He said: "That's one of my main criticisms of myself. I lose concentration and that's what I did. Hopefully as I get older I will learn to concentrate for the full 90 minutes."

And Spillane could also see the lighter side of scoring his second goal of the season, which puts him just one strike behind leading scorer Sam Parkin.

He said: "I'm just a natural born goalscorer - or I've just been lucky I suppose."

Spillane was also full of praise for the fighting spirit of his team-mates, adding: "I don't think people realise how young our team is, especially compared to theirs.

"Compared to other teams we are really young. We've got all of our experienced players out.

"We all know about the points penalties. We all just want to win and get results and you can see it from the way we performed."



QUITE A DAY: Delighted Michael Spillane celebrates his equaliser with jubilant team-mates, above, and almost stabs home the winner, right



Despite missing senior stars Kevin Nicholls, Sam Parkin and George Pilkington, terrific Town bossed the first half.

The Hatters made a bright start, Rossi Jarvis forcing Rhys Evans to push his free-kick over the bar after just two minutes and Claude Gnaka heading over Lewis Emanuel's subsequent corner.

And Emanuel missed out on a glorious chance to give the visitors the lead on his birthday on 13 minutes. Some neat play by Chris Martin sent him clear, but Evans was quickly on to his heavy touch as Emanuel tried to beat his man inside the box.

Asa Hall's half-volley was easily saved by Evans on 18 minutes while Gnaka and the impressive Omar Daley both put in great crosses midway through the half that went unrewarded.

Martin's opportunistic 30-yard effort was well grasped by Evans with seven minutes left and ex-Hatter Paul McLaren managed City's only effort of the first half in stoppage time, but

his weak shot from the edge of the area was easily held by Conrad Logan.

The Bantams were much better after the break and Logan had to be at his very best just two minutes in to tip McLaren's venomous free-kick over the bar.

Just after the hour, Joe Colbeck saw his fierce effort deflected behind, while Logan did well to beat away captain Graeme Lee's firm header from the following corner.

Martin fizzed an effort well over on 67 minutes, while Daley burst through seconds later and forced a good low stop from Logan.

The game upped quickly through the gears as the action came thick and fast. Daley tumbled in the area at one end, while a Spillane effort from the edge of the area cannoned off the face of a home defender.

But the game turned in Luton's favour on 73 minutes when Paul Heckingbottom was shown a second yellow card for a reckless challenge on Martin. And it should have been even better when the referee played advan-

tage as Jarvis raced clear, but Paul McVeigh and Hall got in each other's way as they both went for his pull-back.

McVeigh then fired over and Gnaka hit a tame effort straight at Evans, before Bradford hit the Hatters with a sucker punch. A hopeful ball over the top caused havoc in Town's defence and Harry Worley could only head past the advancing Logan. Spillane got to the loose ball first, but could only slice the ball into the air and substitute Barry Conlon was on hand to slide the ball home.

Conlon then almost sealed victory when he thumped another effort straight at Logan with nine minutes left.

But out of the blue, Luton levelled with four minutes left. Ed Asafu-Adjaye put in a pinpoint cross from the right and Spillane was on hand to power home his free header from six yards out.

And Town almost grabbed victory in the last minute when substitute Ryan Charles' low free-kick was fumbled by Evans, but Spillane was unable to force the ball home.

STAR HATTER Michael Spillane. Took his goal like a natural striker.

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

AUG	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sat 9	PORT VALE	1-3	Parkin 35	7,149	24
Tue 12	PLYMOUTH (LGCP)	2-0	Jarvis 15, Plummer 77	2,682	
Sat 16	Gillingham	1-0	Parkin 3	5,339	24
Sat 23	NOTTS COUNTY	1-1	Martin 49	6,085	24
Tue 26	Reading (LGCP)	1-5	Charles 81	7,498	-
Sat 30	Exeter City	1-0	Parkin 47	5,328	24
SEP					
Sat 6	Macclesfield	1-2	Charles 90	2,349	24
Sat 13	ALDERSHOT TN	3-1	Spillane 17, Hall 89, Martin 90	6,462	24
Sat 20	Rotherham	0-1		4,095	24
Sat 27	CHESTER CITY	1-1	Hall 41	5,731	24
OCT					
Sat 4	Bradford City	1-1	Spillane 86	13,083	24
Tues 7	BRENTFORD (JP 2)				
Sat 11	DARLINGTON				
Sat 18	ACCRINGTON				
Tue 21	Grimsby Town				
Sat 25	Bury				
Tues 28	BOURNEMOUTH				
NOV					
Sat 1	Shrewsbury				
Sat 15	DAGENHAM & RED				
Sat 22	Rochdale				
Tue 25	BRENTFORD				
DEC					
Sat 6	BARNET				
Sat 13	Wycombe				
Sat 20	MORECAMBE				
Fri 26	Chesterfield				

DEC	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sun 28	LINCOLN CITY				
JAN					
Sat 3	Chester City				
Sat 10	ROTHERHAM				
Sat 17	Darlington				
Sat 24	BRADFORD CITY				
Tue 27	Bournemouth				
Sat 31	BURY				
FEB					
Tue 3	GRIMSBY TOWN				
Sat 7	Accrington				
Sat 14	Dagenham & Red				
Sat 21	SHREWSBURY				
Sat 28	Port Vale				
MAR					
Tue 3	GILLINGHAM				
Sat 7	EXETER CITY				
Sat 10	Notts County				
Sat 14	Aldershot Town				
Sat 21	MACCLESFIELD				
Sat 28	Morecambe				
APR					
Sat 4	WYCOMBE				
Sat 11	Lincoln City				
Mon 13	CHESTERFIELD				
Sat 18	Barnet				
Sat 25	ROCHDALE				
MAY					
Sat 2	Brentford				

Winger joins Town's Wolves reunion

HATTERS: Ex-Luton Town winger Carlos Edwards has joined Wolverhampton Wanderers on a three-month loan deal from Sunderland.

Edwards, 29, spent 20 months at Kenilworth Road before signing for The Black Cats for £1.4million in January 2007.

He now joins two other former Hatters in David Edwards and Kevin Foley at Molineux.