

Sol savours his rare strike in Hatters win

WHAT MICK MADE OF IT

Luton Town 2
Dagenham & Redbridge 1

A FIRST-EVER goal in front of the Kenilworth Road end by Sol Davis helped inspire the Hatters to only their second home league win of the season, writes Mark Wood.

Davis' first-half strike was only the third goal of his career, but it took a brilliant Paul McVeigh volley and a battling second half rearguard effort to ensure the Hatters took the points against a game and dogged Dagenham & Redbridge side.

On his goal, Davis, 29, said: "I don't remember a lot about it."

"I picked up the ball on the wing, I saw Chrisy [Martin] coming towards me, I went the other side, he gave it back to me and I hit it as hard as I could and thankfully it went in."

"I don't often get a chance to score so when I do it's nice to put them away."

"We've gone on to win it so the lads are very happy."

"They've got the music on in the changing room and a few of the lads are dancing about a bit at the minute."

And he hopes that this win will be the spur that sees the Hatters claw back all of their minus points and sets them on their way to safety.

He said: "We've been a bit hit-and-miss this season but we are starting to pick up now."

"We need the points desperately. You are down when you get beaten and you look at the table and it's still minus points."

"We know we are getting there. I don't tend to look at the table just in case it does get you down. We just try and win every game we can."

"I've had more than enough of my fair share of downs with the relegations and off the field stuff. To even think about putting ourselves out of the league it is not a nice feeling and I don't even want to think about it."

The Daggers got off to a decent start with two corners in the early moments causing Hatters' defence trouble. Paul Benson was just unable to bundle the first home, while Scott Griffiths' drive from the edge of the



AS RARE AS HENS' TEETH: Sol Davis strokes home his third goal for the Hatters

area forced a good save from Conrad Logan.

But Luton hit straight back to take the lead on six minutes. Davis played a lovely one-two with Chris Martin on the edge of the area and kept his cool to slot the ball past Tony Roberts.

Debutant Kevin Gallen dragged a great chance just wide on 13 minutes. Michael Spillane should have doubled the hosts' advantage two minutes later. Keith Keane's beautiful reverse ball put Spillane in the clear, but the young defender could only fire straight into the body of Roberts.

Having been forced on to the back foot, Luton's back line finally caved in on 33 minutes. The Daggers had forced a succession of corners throughout the half and, when Town failed to clear the danger, Magnus Okuonghae was on hand to poke home from just a few yards out.

Town, though, battered the visitors in the closing stages of the first half. Kevin Nicholls' floated free-kick was easily saved by Roberts, while the

Daggers keeper did well to deny Gallen with his feet on 35 minutes after he had cleared the ball straight to Martin.

Martin's endeavour created a great chance for McVeigh three minutes later, but he could only poke limply at Roberts, although he did appear to be tripped in the box as he chased after the rebound.

Town deservingly re-took the lead with four minutes of the half left when Martin took full advantage of Mark Arber's slip. His pin-point cross picked out McVeigh who classily volleyed home into the bottom left-hand corner.

Jake Howells and Davis then combined beautifully on the left, but Martin could only glance the cross just wide, while Gallen was just unable to connect with a Martin cross that fizzed across the face of goal seconds later, with McVeigh sliding his effort into the side netting.

However, the visitors almost levelled again in first half injury time

when Claude Gnaka was penalised for pulling on the edge of the box, but Sam Saunders' free-kick whizzed just over.

The second half was far quieter. Howells produced a fine run down the left on 51 minutes before laying the ball into space on the edge of the box, but Keane and McVeigh left it to each other and the chance went begging.

Howells then curved in another glorious cross on 56 minutes, but a sliding McVeigh could once again only find the side netting.

In the closing stages, substitute Asa Hall was then just unable to connect with Rossi Jarvis' cross, while Gallen's appeals for a penalty were turned down when he was toppled in the area.

Gallen then should have sealed victory and capped his debut with a goal with two minutes left.

Jarvis' ball put the veteran striker clear but Roberts once again denied him with a fine stop.

Saunders thundered wide in injury time but Luton clung on for all three points.



HATTERS boss Mick Harford admitted that the easing injury crisis at Kenilworth Road is helping to buoy his team after seeing Town battle to an invaluable 2-1 victory against Dagenham & Redbridge.

He said: "You look at the bench and we've got players to put on. We've got players out on the pitch who are still not 100 per cent but I feel they've got to play."

But with other players now fit and waiting in the stands, he is sure his squad is strong enough to cope with the busy schedule that lies ahead.

He said: "The games are going to come thick and fast, Saturday, Tuesday, Saturday, Tuesday."

On the game, he said: "It was a must-win game in terms of our results at home and the situation we are in."

"I've got to take my hat off to Dagenham & Redbridge, they are a tremendously hard-working team and made it difficult from start to finish."

"We created lots and lots of chances. We thought maybe the score at half time flattered them. We came under pressure at the death when they threw bodies forward and the boys handled it well."

"I'm delighted for the players and they put in a lot of effort and deserved it. They are an honest bunch and the fans were behind them today. We deserved a victory I thought. It was a good overall team effort."

Harford singled out the performances of striker duo Chris Martin and Kevin Gallen for praise.

On the signing of Gallen, he added: "I've known Kevin for years. He has got a great pedigree and a clever brain."

"At home, teams sit upon us and there's no space to play and Kevin can get in the holes and create chances for himself and others. Overall, I was pleased with the football and the way we defended against tough opponents."

Langley set to join the Pirates' crew

HATTERS: Bristol Rovers say they are hoping to be able to offer ex-Luton Town midfielder Richard Langley a deal in the near future.

The Jamaican international, 28, who left Kenilworth Road in the summer, has been training with the League One club and impressed during a recent reserve team victory over Cheltenham Town.

Pirates boss Paul Trollope said: "Richard has integrated well with the group of players here and he has got quality. We are hoping that somewhere down the line, we may be able to do something with him."

STAR HATTER

Chris Martin. At the heart of everything Town did well

All over by Christmas? The 2008/09 season so far...

				Att	Pos					Att	Pos
AUG	Opponents	Score	Scorers			DEC	Opponents	Score	Scorers		
Sat 9	PORT VALE	1-3	Parkin 35	7,149	24	Tue 16	COLCHESTER (JP4)				
Tue 12	PLYMOUTH (LGCP)	2-0	Jarvis 15, Plummer 77	2,682	-	Sat 20	MORECAMBE				
Sat 16	Gillingham	1-0	Parkin 3	5,339	24	Fri 26	Chesterfield				
Sat 23	NOTTS COUNTY	1-1	Martin 49	6,085	24	Sun 28	LINCOLN CITY				
Tue 26	Reading (LGCP)	1-5	Charles 81	7,498	-	JAN	Chester City				
Sat 30	Exeter City	1-0	Parkin 47	5,328	24	Sat 3	ROTHERHAM				
SEP						Sat 10	Darlington				
Sat 6	Macclesfield	1-2	Charles 90	2,349	24	Sat 17	BRADFORD CITY				
Sat 13	ALDERSHOT TN	3-1	Spillane 17, Hall 89, Martin 90	6,462	24	Sat 24	BRADFORD CITY				
Sat 20	Rotherham	0-1		4,095	24	Tue 27	Bournemouth				
Sat 27	CHESTER CITY	1-1	Hall 41	5,731	24	Sat 31	BURY				
OCT						FEB					
Sat 4	Bradford City	1-1	Spillane 86	13,083	24	Tue 3	GRIMSBY TOWN				
Tues 7	BRENTFORD (JP2)	2-2	Martin 39, 55 (won 4-3 on pens)	2,029	-	Sat 7	Accrington				
Sat 11	DARLINGTON	1-2	Gnaka 31	5,560	24	Sat 14	Dagenham & Red				
Sat 18	ACCRINGTON	1-2	Hall 34	5,492	24	Sat 21	SHREWSBURY				
Tue 21	Grimsbury Town	2-2	Craddock 24, 90	4,021	24	Sat 28	Port Vale				
Sat 25	Bury	2-1	Craddock 35, Roper 44	3,052	24	MAR					
Tue 28	BOURNEMOUTH		ABANDONED DUE TO SNOW			Tue 3	GILLINGHAM				
NOV						Sat 7	EXETER CITY				
Sat 1	Shrewsbury	0-3		6,188	24	Tue 10	Notts County				
Tue 4	Walsall (JP3)	1-0	Jarvis 90	1,844	-	Sat 14	Aldershot Town				
Sat 8	ALTRINCHAM (FA1)	0-0		3,200	-	Sat 21	MACCLESFIELD				
Sat 15	DAGENHAM & RED	2-1	Davis 6, McVeigh 41	5,402	24	Sat 28	Morecambe				
Tue 18	Altrincham (FA1R)	0-0	(Luton won 4-2 on penalties)	3,397	-	APR					
Sat 22	Rochdale					Sat 4	WYCOMBE				
Tue 25	BRENTFORD					Sat 11	Lincoln City				
DEC						Sat 18	CHESTERFIELD				
Sat 6	BARNET					Mon 13	Barnet				
Sat 13	Wycombe					Sat 25	ROCHDALE				