Bizarre assistance is costly for Hatters

Southend 3 Luton Town 1

HATTERS have sought clarification from the FA regarding the fielding of players who are under 16 after Femi Orenuja appeared for Southend in the second round of the FA Cup on Saturday, writes Mark Wood.

The 15-year-old made a late appear-

ance as a substitute in the home side's 3-1 victory and, although he made lit-tle difference to the outcome, the visitors felt aggrieved that they had been urs felt aggrieved that they had been denied the opportunity to name Jean-philip Yamfam in their squad for the first round clash with Altrincham. Hatters have written to Soho Square in search of an explanation and expect to hear a response today (Wednesday).

Despite this, Southend, aided by some bizarre officiating, were worthy winners at Roots Hall as they made their higher division status pay.

A virtuoso performance from on-loan West Ham winger Junior Stanis-las inspired the Shrimpers to victory, but in truth, it was an FA Cup tie filled with incident.

Linesman Thompson had a hand in both Stanislas' first goal and Michael Spillane's equaliser, but United upped a couple of gears to ease home as the Hatters missed out on a potentially money-spinning third round tie at Stamford Bridge.

Southend got off to a lively start and almost took the lead after just two minutes. Alex Revell found space in the box and his drive across the face of the goal was just turned round the post by Conrad Logan. The hosts went close again on 12

minutes following a foul from Ian Roper. Stanislas stepped up to take the free-kick and his curling effort rustled the side netting with Logan

Town were happy enough soaking up the pressure and looking to hit their hosts on the break. Loan striker Chris Martin warmed Steve Mildenhall's gloves with a low drive on 20 McVeigh's 35-yard effort was easily



GET THINGS STARTED: Kevin Watson propels the ball forward as Luton go on the attack during the 3-1 FA Cup defeat at Roots Hall on Saturday

saved after Ian Roper's header had sent the Irishman into space.

sent the Frishman into space.
United though, boasting plenty of pace in their line-up, always looked dangerous and, on 28 minutes, they went close again. Kevin Betsy's through ball set Revell clear again, but the striker's effort from a narrow

angle was beaten away by Logan.
Seconds later, Spillane saved the
Hatters' bacon. Simon Francis led the
United break and the ball eventually
fell to Francis Laurent, but the Frenchman's effort was excellently blocked by the Luton centre-half.

And the hosts took the lead with a hugely contentious refereeing decision on 34 minutes. Betsy raced clear

and tangled with Spillane and Roper, causing the linesman to raise his flag. Roper was then penalised and booked for a foul in the ensuing action – only for linesman Thompson to continue flagging before ceasing his sig-

tinue liagging before ceasing his signals before speaking to referee Penn.

From the resulting free-kick,
Stanislas curled home an excellent
25-yard effort home into the bottom
right-hand corner.

right-hand corner.
With seven minutes of the half left, both sides went close. Ravell could only poke Betsy's pull-back wide of the mark, while Jake Howells slashed an effort well wide when well-placed on the edge of the area.

In the closing stages of the half,

Jean-Francois christopne hashed an effort just over, while Southend went close again seconds later when Fran-cis streaked down the right. His well-directed cross completely dissected Luton's defence but Lau-rent and Revell were just unable to cost on the and of it.

get on the end of it.

Southend started to go for Luton's jugular in the second half as the visitors were forced to weather wave after wave of attack.

George Pilkington finally made his long-awaited return as a 51st-minute replacement for Roper before good work by Claude Gnakpa enabled Asa Hall to fire an effort wide of the target on 50 minutes and the statement of the statem

Hall to fire an effort wide of the target on 58 minutes.

Johnny Herd should then have doubled the Shrimpers advantage on 63 minutes. Some fine footwork carried the left-back into the Luton box and his firm low effort forced a good one-handed stop out of Logan.

The impressive Stanislas sent a sizzling effort well over with 16 minutes left, while Revell fired an effort well wide moments later.

Late substitute Orenuia saw an

Late substitute Orenuja saw an effort deflected well over with 11 minutes left and, from the resulting corner, more controversy ensured as Thompson flagged for Luton's equal-ising goal. McVeigh whipped a corner into the box and after Gnakpa just

ising goal. McVeigh whipped a corner into the box and after Gnakpa just missed his header in the box, Spillane turned it goalwards.

Laurent appeared to hack it off the line but Thompson seemed to possess X-ray vision as he peered through the crowd to spot that the ball had crossed the line and raised his flag.

However, Hatters delight was shortlived as the Shrimpers re-took the lead five minutes later. Laurent roasted Howells down the right before delivering a pin-point cross for Stanislas to plant a simple header past the helpless Logan.

And substitute James Walker made sure of victory for the hosts in the very last minute. Former Hatter Anthony Grant squared the ball into the box and, although Walker's first ouch let him down, he kept his composure before firing home to send Southend into the him down.

WHAT MICK MADE OF IT



GRAVEN-FACED Hatters boss Mick Harford was incandescent at referee Andy Penn after seeing his Hatters side crash out of the FA Cup at the second round stage at Roots Hall on

round stage at Roots Hall on Saturday.

Harford was furning at the way the West Midlands official failed to acknowledge the decision of his assistant linesman Marvin Thompson in the lead up to the Shrimpers' first goal.

He said: "The linesman flagged for a foul on our player and the referee decided to ignore him for whatever reason. "They talk about communication between referees and linesmen and referees and mangers but that's just a blatant obstruction of not abiding to the rules in my opinion.

opinion.
"We felt we were coping with them no problem and playing the better football, but that was the turning point."
Harford also admitted that he was distraught that Town are now out of the cup, especially after they had hauled themselves back on to level themselves back on to level

He said: "We are disappointed to be going out of the FA Cup.
"You know how we feel about that because, for varying reasons, we wanted to be in the next round!"

next round."
"We got back to one each and
maybe through a bit of naivety
we let them have too much
space in midfield and didn't
have enough to see it out.
"We got done with a sucker
punch for the third, but it was

the second goal that disappointed me."

disappointed me."
Harford revealed that striker
Drew Talbot was ruled out of the
encounter with a slight
hamstring injury, while lan Roper
was substituted after twisting an

However, he was pleased with the return of both Geroge Beavan and Lewis Emanuel to

He added: "I was delighted to see George and Lewis back in action, although slightly earlier than we wanted to. "Some minutes on the pitch

will help us and make them

stronger."
Shrimpers boss Steve Tilson, though, had no qualms about his side's first goal or the result. He said: "It was a comfortable win and it should have been more comfortable than it was.
"The linesman did put his flag.

up. For what he put his flag up, I

up. For what he put his hig yards don't know. "The referee was 10 yards away and didn't see anything, so I couldn't see what he put his flag up for. "For whatever reason the referee and him didn't

STAR HATTIER Conrad Logan. A couple of fine saves kept Town in it

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

AUG	Opponents	Score	Scorers	7,149	24
Sat 9	PORT VALE	1-3	Parkin 35	2,682	-
Tue 12	PLYMOUTH (LGCP)	2-0	Jarvis 15, Plummer 77	5,339	24
Sat 16	Gillingham	1-0	Parkin 3	6,085	24
Sat 23	NOTTS COUNTY	1-1	Martin 49	7,498	10-10
Tue 26	Reading (LGCP)	1-5	Charles 81	5,328	24
Sat 30	Exeter City	1-0	Parkin 47		
SEP				2,349	24
Sat 6	Macclesfield	1-2	Charles 90	6,462	24
Sat 13	ALDERSHOT TN	3-1	Spillane 17, Hall 89, Martin 90	4,095	24
Sat 20	Rotherham	0-1		5,731	24
Sat 27	CHESTER CITY	1-1	Hall 41		
OCT				13,083	24
Sat 4	Bradford City	1-1	Spillane 86 Martin 39, 55 (won 4-3 on pens)	2,029	-
Tues 7	BRENTFORD (JP2)	2-2	Martin 39, 55 (Won 4-3 on pens)	5,560	24
Sat 11	DARLINGTON	1-2	Gnakpa 31	5,492	24
Sat 18	ACCRINGTON	1-2	Hall 34	4,021	24
Tue 21	Grimsby Town	2-2	Craddock 24, 90	3,052	24
Sat 25	Bury	2-1	Craddock 35, Roper 44		24
Tues 28	BOURNEMOUTH		ABANDONED DUE TO SNOW		-
NOV	BOOMINEMOOTH			6,188	24
Sat 1	Shrewsbury	0-3		1,844	-
Tue 4	Walsall (JP3)	1-0	Jarvis 90	3,200	-
Sat 8	ALTRINCHAM (FA1	1 0-0	Malab 41	5,402	24
Sat 15	DAGENHAM & RED		Davis 6, McVeigh 41	2,397	24
Tue 18	Altrincham (FA1R)	0-0	(Luton won 4-2 on penalties)	2,901	24
Sat 22	Rochdale	0-2		5,248	24
Tue 25	BRENTFORD	0-1		4,111	
Sat 29	Southend (FA2)	1-3	Spillane 80		24
DEC	Southerid (FAZ)		- W- 56 McVeigh 83	6,773	24
Tues 2	BOURNEMOUTH	3-3	og 18, Gallen 56, McVeigh 83	1	Bullion
Sat 6	BARNET				
-	DARNET	2000	and the same of th		

DEC	Opponents	Score	Scorers	All	103
Sat 13	Wycombe				
Tue 16	COLCHESTER (JP4)			100 CO 10	
Sat 20	MORECAMBE				
Fri 26	Chesterfield				
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	101111				
Tue 3	GILLINGHAM				
Tue 3	EXETER CITY				
Sat 7 Tue 10	Notts County				
Tue 10	Aldershot Town				
Sat 14 Sat 21	MACCLESFIELD				
Sat 21	Morecambe				
Sat 28	William				
APR	WYCOMBE				
Sat 4	Lincoln City				
Sat 11	CHESTERFIELD				
Mon 13	Barnet				
Sat 18	ROCHDALE				-
Sat 25	HOCHDALE				