WHAT MICK MADE OF IT

MIFFED Hatters boss Mick Harford was certain Town were denied a cast iron penalty – and with it the chance of all three points at Saltergate on Boxing Day.

Fit-again striker Tom Craddock was sent tumbling in the area in the second half, only to be shown a yellow card for diving.

Harford said: "I thought there were some outstanding performances in today's game.

"Tom Craddock looked like he hadn't been away. He is disappointed in the dressing room because it was a blatant penalty. We might have had a penalty if we were at home. If we had been at Kenilworth Road it would have gone in our favour."

And although he was pleased by his side's performance he was left disappointed by the result. He continued: "We believe it's two points lost. I think we were the better team and created a lot of chances, especially in the first half.

"We never got the first goal and when you have all that possession and camp yourself in the other team's half you leave yourself open to the break.

"I was delighted but the goals conceded were disappointing.

"I think second half we have controlled the game, especially for the first 20 minutes of the second half. We got the goal and got back in the game and looked comfortable.

"Asa Hall's header was a fantastic save from their keeper, but the big man [Ian Roper] has popped up with the equalising goal. He is a tower of strength, heads everything and boots everything.

"We deserved more than a draw in my opinion. We are six unbeaten, but out of those six there are too many draws.

"The players have just said themselves we must win our home games and carry on this unbeaten run to 10, 15 and hopefully 20 games."

On the returns of Craddock and Lewis Emanuel after injury, he said: "Tom wants to be a footballer, he works hard. His movement is good. Lewis has worked hard in training. He played a short period of time against Bournemouth and just needs to strengthen his knee."

Picture by Gareth Owen

ROPES TO THE RESCUE: Ian Roper heads home for Luton deep into injury time

HATTERS RATED

Conrad Logan: 7 – Not a lot to do and no real chance with the goals.
Keith Keane: 8.5 – Back to his best as he ran the show.
Ian Roper: 8 – At fault for the first goal, but redeemed himself.
Michael Spillane: 7 – Switched well from centre-half to right-back but injury curtailed his afternoon.
Rossi Jarvis: 7.5 – One of his better performances in the middle and showed plenty of fight.
Asa Hall: 8 – Commanding in the air and made a real impression.
Lewis Emanuel: 7.5 – Easily got back into the groove.
Tom Craddock: 8 – Looked like he'd never been away. Missed chances but scored a great goal.
Kevin Gallen: 8 – Showed great strength and touch throughout. Really pulls the strings up front.
Paul McVeigh: 7.5 – Grew into the game. Started slowly but so keen to get involved.
Jake Howells: 7.5 – Not at his most effective, but still a danger in a more advanced role.
Claude Gnakpa (sub): 7.5 – Cut great swathes down the right and seemed to have a real hunger.
Chris Martin (sub): 6 – Not really on long enough to make a mark.
Drew Talbot (sub): 6.5 – Got in the mix a few times.

Ratings by Mark Wood

CHESTERFIELD

Unused subs: Carson, Askham

LUTON TOWN

Unused subs: Brill, Beavan

Referee: David Webb (County Durham)

Attendance: 4,243 (Luton 805)

how the game unfolded

	Spireites	Hatters
Shots on target	4	6
Shots off target	2	2
Hit woodwork	0	0
Corners	0	3
Free-kicks	11	14
Offsides	3	5

Tom has a point to make

Chesterfield 2 Luton Town 2

EXCITING on-loan Middlesbrough striker Tom Craddock made an instant impact on his return to Luton's starting line-up at Chesterfield on Boxing Day, *writes Mark Wood*.

The Hatters battered the Spireites throughout, but got caught with two sucker punches, and needed an Ian Roper header deep into injury time to salvage a draw after Craddock, 22, had cancelled out Chesterfield's first.

Chesterfield were also aided by referee Dave Webb's controversial decision to book Craddock for a dive rather than give the Hatters a stonewall penalty midway through the second half with the scores locked at 1-1.

And Craddock, who is delighted to finally be fit again after a long lay-off with a groin injury, was adamant he should have had a spot kick.

He said: "It was really frustrating being injured but it was important to get myself back fit and come back and help the team.

"We've done well in the last couple of games and we've picked up four points in the games I've been back.

"To be fair I felt pretty fresh on Boxing Day and I felt a little bit tired against Lincoln.

"I got booked for diving but he definitely caught me on Boxing Day. But it's just that type of thing in football and hopefully next time I will get it."

Luton produced a beautiful move on 12 minutes that should have allowed Paul McVeigh to give Town the lead. Kevin Gallen and Craddock combined sublimely to create the opening, but McVeigh could only thunder straight at Tommy Lee.

Asa Hall's firm header was then beautifully threaded by Gallen on 20 minutes, but Craddock could only drag his effort horribly wide with only Lee to beat.

Craddock and Gallen combined well again on 37 minutes later, but again the Middlesbrough man could only hammer well wide of the mark.

With two minutes of the half left Town went close again. Rossi Jarvis dug out an excellent cross on the right but Michael Spillane could only send his header straight at the sprawling form of Lee.

Totally against the run of play Chesterfield snatched the lead on the stroke of half time.

Centre-half Roper stumbled and Ward managed to shrug off Emanuel to race on to a long ball over the top before firing home past the exposed Conrad Logan.

Emanuel smacked a free-kick from the edge of the area straight at Chesterfield's defensive wall three minutes into the second half, before lively Luton deservedly levelled on 56 minutes.

McVeigh's wonderful chip over the top was seized on by Craddock and his snapshot from seven yards out left Lee with no chance.

Ward almost undid Luton again on 61 minutes when Roper's rebounded header fell kindly for him, but Logan did well to parry his effort.

The game's big talking point arrived on 71 minutes when Craddock and McVeigh exchanged passes and the striker was seemingly scythed down by Aaron Downes.

However, County Durham referee Webb deemed Craddock to have dived and awarded the Spireites a free-kick and Craddock a yellow card.

Ward once again proved Town's nemesis with eight minutes left when he did well to spread the ball to substitute Scott Boden, who kept his cool to beat Logan from eight yards.

Boden was almost in again with four minutes left and only some desperate defending from Roper and Keane kept him out.

Lee easily saved Craddock's header in the closing stages before producing a fabulous flying stop to turn Hall's header, bound for the top right-hand corner, over the bar.

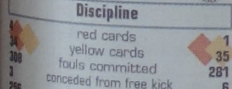
Deep into injury time though Town snatched a dramatic equaliser. A dangerous Jake Howells corner was whipped into the Spireites' six-yard box and Roper rose highest to head home into the bottom left-hand corner as Town got just reward for a battling performance.

Chester v Luton

Discipline

4	red cards	1
300	yellow cards	35
3	fouls committed	281
256	conceded from free kick	6
5	fouls suffered	283
5	scored from free kick	5

Top League Scorer



Ryan Lowe — Chris Martin

10	league goals	5
23	games played	22
0.43	goals/game	0.23

How Goals Scored & Scorers

17	team total	team total	14
Ryan Lowe	shots	Chris Martin	
8		4	
5	team total	team total	8
5 players	headers	Sam Parkin	
1		3	
1	team total	team total	2
Ryan Lowe	volleys	Hall, McVeigh	
1		1	
1	team total	team total	2
Ryan Lowe	penalties	McVeigh, Craddock	
1		1	
1	team total	team total	2
Kevin Ellison	free kicks	Charles, Gallen	
1		1	

earlier this season

1-1

Hall 41 McManus 77

attendance 5,731 referee Sarginson

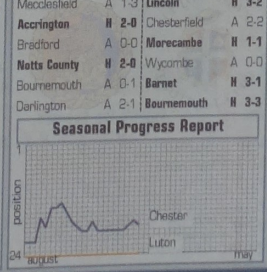
Logan, Spillane, Gnakpa, Worley, Davis, Pugh, Emanuel, Keane, Jarvis (Charles 81), Hall, Martin — Danby, Kelly, Vaughan, Linwood, Vaughan, Roberts, Lowe, Ellison (Taylor 60), Hughes, Mozika (Barry 67), McManus (Harris 90)

booked	Martin, Spillane	booked	McManus
sent off	none	sent off	Roberts
att on target	5	corners	11
att off target	6	offsides	2
hit woodwork	0	fouls	12
att on target	6	corners	6
att off target	6	offsides	4
hit woodwork	0	fouls	12

Last 6 Results

opponents	h/a	score	opponents	h/a	score
Mecclesfield	A	1-3	Lincoln	H	3-2
Accrington	H	2-0	Chesterfield	A	2-2
Bradford	A	0-0	Morecambe	H	1-1
Notts County	H	2-0	Wycombe	A	0-0
Bournemouth	A	0-1	Barnet	H	3-1
Darlington	A	2-1	Bournemouth	H	3-3

Seasonal Progress Report



League Two Table

Team	Pld	W	D	L	For	Agt	Pts
Wycombe	23	12	10	1	31	13	46
Brentford	22	11	8	3	29	15	41
Bradford	23	11	6	6	40	27	39
Dagenham	22	11	4	7	45	23	37
Shrewsbury	23	10	7	6	38	20	37
Bury	23	10	6	7	34	25	36
Exeter	22	10	6	6	31	26	36
Darlington	22	9	8	5	35	23	35
Rochdale	22	9	8	5	36	27	35
Aldershot	23	10	4	9	33	34	34
Gillingham	23	9	7	7	32	33	34
Lincoln	23	8	6	9	27	25	30
Chesterfield	23	7	7	9	37	35	28
Macclesfield	23	8	3	12	29	37	27
Port Vale	23	8	2	13	24	37	26
Morecambe	23	5	10	8	25	34	25
Notts County	23	5	9	9	25	35	24
Chester	23	6	5	12	30	36	23
Accrington	22	6	4	12	25	44	22
Rotherham	22	10	6	6	30	23	19
Barnet	23	4	7	12	26	47	19
Grimsby	23	2	8	13	19	42	14
Bournemouth	23	2	8	13	25	44	7
Luton	23	7	8	8	30	33	-1