

It would have been different, says Ed

WHAT MICK MADE OF IT



THE Hatters showed promotion-chasing Exeter City too much respect as they faltered to a 2-1 home defeat.

Defiant Luton boss Mick Harford believes they gave the Grecians too much space, but roared that he and his side would "never give up" in their bid to beat the drop.

He said: "It was difficult to come back from two goals down, which I was disappointed with – a cross into the box and a free header and a midfield runner.

"They had decent possession in the first half, but we showed them a little bit too much respect and stood off them a little bit.

"Even when they had that possession we created six or seven decent chances.

"We should have made their keeper work harder.

"We got a goal back and I felt we deserved it.

"In all fairness, Exeter got bodies back and defended deep and we never really tested their keeper second half."

Harford believes his side didn't deserve to lose the game and asserted that he still believes it is possible for them to avoid relegation – even though they keep blowing their chances of making up ground on those above them.

He said: "Never give up. I still believe it.

"I'm certain we can do it, but those type of results don't help. "It's a disappointing result, but the performance wasn't bad."

"We just didn't seem to get that break.

"It was a big game to lose. We seem to get to a point where we feel we are in with a chance of doing something and default at the wrong time.

"I felt the players didn't deserve to lose the game.

"I'm disappointed for the players. I've had my career.

"They are a good, honest, hard working bunch who give 100 per cent.

"A result like that will knock the stuffing out of them for a couple of days."

He vowed that his players would bounce back and, with the likes of captain Kevin Nicholls and influential defender George Pilkington nearing returns plus the incentive of a Wembley final, he believes there's still life in Luton yet.

However, he admitted they could have done with an extra midfielder of late, even though Kevin Gallen has performed well in that role.

Harford added: "Obviously Nice and (Rossi) Jarvis are injured at the moment.

"I've tried to get someone in in the week.

"We have lacked that other body in midfield that we have tried to plug, but without success."

Luton Town 1 Exeter City 2

BAD loser Ed Asafu-Adjaye was left to rue the woodwork as the Hatters were twice denied by the bar in the first half as they lost 2-1 at home to Exeter City on Saturday, writes Mark Wood.

Fine first-half efforts by Chris Martin and Sam Parkin were both repelled by the frame and, had they gone in, the young right-back thinks the outcome could have been very different.

The 20-year-old said: "We are very disappointed and wanted to win. We had chances and hit the bar twice in the first half and had more chances.

"It's just a shame the ball didn't go in the net.

"We would have gone in at 2-2 and that would have lifted us even more.

"The lads are disappointed to lose the game. I personally hate losing – it's not a good feeling.

"I think the lads will bounce back from it. It's only a couple of days and then we've got the next game.

"There's still a lot of games to play and a lot of points to play for and we will keep going."

Asafu-Adjaye, who is enjoying a run of good form, was disappointed, though, that the Hatters were unable to turn the game around.

He added: "The spirit was good throughout, even though we were 2-0 down. I don't think our shape or how we were playing dealt with the way they were for the first 20 minutes. At the end of the first half we started to deal with it and play with our strengths against their weaknesses."

Unchanged Luton got off to the worst possible start when Keith Keane misjudged Liam Sercombe's excellent fourth-minute cross and unmarked Adam Stansfield thumped

home his header from inside the six yard box.

Martin was then hugely unlucky five minutes later when his 25-yard effort shuddered the top of the bar on its way over.

Ian Henderson with a shot and Tom Craddock with a header then tested Paul Jones, before City stung Town again on 29 minutes.

Some neat passing set Alex Russell in the clear and, although Dean Brill got a hand to his shot across the face of goal, Sercombe was on hand at the far post to fire into the roof of an open net.

Stansfield went close again seconds later when he outmuscled Keane, but Luton got a lifeline with six minutes left when Kevin Gallen's brilliant cross-field pass put Henderson away on the right. He kept his feet under pressure in the box, before pulling the ball back for Craddock to stroke home through a crowd of players.

The action came thick and fast in the closing moments of the half and Steve Basham should have restored Exeter's two-goal lead immediately. A long ball over the top set the distinctly offside-looking striker clear but his tame shot bobbed harmlessly to Brill.

And Luton were desperately unlucky not to equalise on 41 minutes when the woodwork denied them for a second time. The impressive Asafu-Adjaye chiselled in a great deep cross from the right, but a stretching Parkin could only rattle the crossbar with Jones well beaten.

Chances were limited in the second half as the Hatters failed to break down City.

Town finally threatened in the last three minutes when Craddock and Parkin combined to put in the onrushing Keane, but the captain could only toe poke just wide.

Substitute Michael Spillane then sent in a great cross in the dying seconds, but Ryan Charles' flick header drifted just wide.

STAR HATTER Ed Asafu-Adjaye. Won almost everything.



FORLORN HOPE: Tom Craddock fires home, but it proved to be in vain

Can they escape relegation? – the 2008/09 season so far...

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
Tue 7	BRENTFORD (JP2)	2-2	Martin 39, 55 (won 4-3 on pens)	2,029	-
Sat 11	DARLINGTON	1-2	Gnakpa 31	5,560	24
Sat 18	ACCRINGTON	1-2	Hall 34	5,492	24
Tue 21	Grimsby Town	2-2	Craddock 24, 90	4,021	24
Sat 25	Bury	2-1	Craddock 35, Roper 44	3,052	24
Tues 28	BOURNEMOUTH		ABANDONED DUE TO SNOW		24
NOV					
Sat 1	Shrewsbury	0-3		6,188	24
Tue 4	Walsall (JP3)	1-0	Jarvis 90	1,844	-
Sat 8	ALTRINCHAM (FA1)	0-0		3,200	-
Sat 15	DAGENHAM & RED	2-1	Davis 6, McVeigh 41	5,402	24
Tue 18	Altrincham (FA1R)	0-0	(Luton won 4-2 on penalties)	2,397	-
Tue 25	Rochdale	0-2		2,901	24
Tue 25	BRENTFORD	0-1		5,248	24
Sat 29	Southend (FA2)	1-3	Spillane 80	4,111	-
DEC					
Tues 2	BOURNEMOUTH	3-3	OG 18, Gallen 56, McVeigh 83	6,773	24
Sat 6	BARNET	3-1	McVeigh 11, Martin 15, OG 88	5,536	24
Sat 13	Weymouth	0-0		5,567	24
Tue 16	COLCHESTER (JP4)	1-0	Gnakpa 30	2,638	-
Sat 20	MORECAMBE	1-1	Spillane 51	5,664	24

DEC	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Tue 26	Chesham	2-2	Craddock 56, Roper 90	4,243	24
Sun 28	LINCOLN CITY	3-2	Martin 31, 33, Roper 50	6,643	24
JAN					
Tue 13	Chester City	2-2	Martin 22, Emanuel 27	1,652	24
Sat 17	Darlington	1-5	Martin 30	3,319	24
Tue 20	Brighton (JP5F1)	0-0		6,127	-
Sat 24	BRADFORD CITY	3-3	Hall 5, 90, Wasiu 37	6,053	24
Tue 27	Bournemouth	1-1	Hollands og 11	5,230	24
Sat 31	BURY	1-2	Hall 36	5,545	24
FEB					
Sat 14	Dagenham & Red	1-2	Henderson 58	2,310	24
Tue 17	BRIGHTON (JP5F2)	1-1	Craddock 2 (won 4-3 on pens)	8,711	-
Sat 21	SHREWSBURY	3-1	Craddock 15, Parkin 35, Hall 73	5,661	24
Tue 24	Accrington	0-0		1,033	24
Sat 28	Port Vale	3-1	Hall 43, Gallen 52, Martin 63	5,689	24
MAR					
Tue 3	GILLINGHAM	0-0		5,739	24
Tue 10	EXETER CITY	1-2	Craddock 39	6,460	24
Tue 10	Notts County				
Sat 14	Aldershot Town				
Tue 17	GRIMSBY TOWN				
Sat 21	MACCLESFIELD				
Sat 28	Morecambe				
Tue 31	ROTHERHAM				
APR					
Sun 5	SCUNTHORPE (JP final)				
Sat 11	Lincoln City				
Mon 13	CHESTERFIELD				
Sat 18	Barnet				
Tue 21	Wycombe				
Sat 25	ROCHDALE				
MAY					
Sat 2	Brentford				