

Brilliant penalty save can't stop the Shots

WHAT MICK MADE OF IT

Aldershot 2 Luton Town 1

LADY Luck deserted Dean Brill after his brilliant penalty save had kept the Hatters on level terms against the Shots, writes Mark Wood.

The rejuvenated 23-year-old stopper pulled off a brilliant full-stretch save to his right to deny Scott Davies' powerful spot-kick, after Sol Davis had given away the penalty with a clumsy challenge on John Grant after 15 minutes.

However, the ball rebounded straight to Davies who just squeezed his effort home despite Brill's best efforts.

The Luton keeper said: "I don't think it was a penalty, but it happens. You have got to try and save it. I did and I needed another bit of luck. It was unfortunate it went back to him."

"Everyone is expecting him to score."

"You save it and think you've got off here and it just bounces straight back to his feet."

"I got a foot to the rebound. It just bounced off the wrong way. It's just one of those things."

Both teams shared in a lively opening despite the 1pm kick-off at the Recreation Ground on Saturday.

Andy Sandell volleyed over early on, while Tom Craddock's fierce drive from a narrow angle seemed to flick the near post on its way wide.

Ian Henderson was a constant thorn in the Shots' side, but he could only warm Mikhael Jaimez-Ruiz's midriff before Davis' rash challenge handed the hosts the lead.

Town, though, continued to play the better football and Chris Martin blazed a free-kick wastefully wide before Craddock deservedly levelled 10 minutes before the break.

His tackle on the edge of the box fell kindly for the onrushing Henderson, but when he took a heavy touch and over-hit his cross the chance looked to have gone.

However, Asa Hall did well to pull



THWARTED: Lively Ian Henderson is best beaten to the ball by Shots keeper Mikhael Jaimez-Ruiz, right, while Ed Asafu-Adjaye challenges for the ball, above



the ball back and Craddock gleefully fired home.

Brill said: "The lads were unbelievable in the first half. I can't imagine how many chances we had."

"Some of the football we played was fantastic."

"We dominated the first half and were comfortable at the back."

"Even in the second half I didn't think they caused us that many problems."

However, Kirk Hudson restored the hosts' lead with a great strike just four minutes into the second half.

Lewis Chalmers' raking ball forward found its way through to Henderson on the right and he hit a wonderful first-time strike across the face of goal and into the bottom left-hand corner.

Brill said: "That's the way it's going at the moment."

"He put it in the right place. I don't know if it was a great goal."

"I'm always disappointed to let goals in, especially ones that kill games off like that. I did the best I could."

Davies sent a sizzling effort just wide on 56 minutes, while Craddock was just unable to get his shot away in the box, which seemed to happen just too often on the day.

Martin flicked a header straight at Jaimez-Ruiz, while Davies was allowed far too much space again on the hour mark, but his 30-yard drive cannoned off the bar and out.

Controversy reigned with 14 minutes left when the Hatters seemed to be denied a penalty.

Henderson went down in the box under a light challenge from Anthony

Straker, but somehow Luton were only awarded a free-kick on the edge of the penalty area which they duly wasted.

Brill said: "It looked close. The linesman's flagging like a lunatic whereas for their one in the first half he had given a goal-kick. It's inches."

Kevin Nicholls' quick free-kick produced a good opening for Michael Spillane with six minutes left, but the on-loan Norwich City defender could only loop his header over the bar.

In the dying moments, Sandell's corner kissed the face of the far post and Chalmers fired into the side netting.

Five minutes of stoppage time were added on, but the Hatters were unable to craft anything as the disciplined Shots held on for victory.

STAR HATTER Dean Brill. Great penalty save, deserved more.

DISGRUNTLED Town boss Mick Harford believes his side were denied a penalty in their 2-1 defeat at Aldershot because the linesman did not want to "undermine" the referee.

Luton were awarded only a free-kick when Ian Henderson tumbled in the box in the second half – one of two decisions the Hatters manager believes should have earned his side a penalty.

Harford said: "He never gave us a free-kick because it was a penalty. We still had enough possession in the second half to win the game but we took an extra touch in the final third and should have had two penalties with Ian Henderson and Chris Martin."

And Harford was left to lament his side's lack of a killer touch in front of goal and Sol Davis' rash challenge that handed the Shots a first half penalty.

He said: "We shouldn't have lost to Aldershot today in all fairness. The way we played in the first half we should have been out of sight."

"They were a little bit more competitive, thought, in the second half. We are just very, very disappointed in the dressing room. It was a stupid penalty we gave away. Brilly made a brilliant save and the lad has put it in from the follow-up."

"We got the goal which I felt we deserved before half time to get back on level terms."

"We just never got started and maybe there was a bit of complacency in the second half."

And Harford admitted the likes of George Pilkington, Kevin Nicholls and Lewis Emanuel were all likely to come back into the side for the visit of Grimsby last night. He added: "They will be in contention for Tuesday."

"They are players who have been injured for most of the season and we would like to bring them back into the team."

"I will pick a formation to suit the players that are available."

Nico and Mick set for their FA hearings

HATTERS: Both Luton manager Mick Harford and skipper Kevin Nicholls are set to have their disciplinary charges heard by the FA.

Harford was cited for misconduct following comments he made to referee Trevor Kettle and in the press after the 3-3 draw with Bradford City at Kenilworth Road in January. Nicholls, meanwhile, was charged with inciting the crowd after the final whistle – an offence the Hatters have strenuously denied.

Harford, who has pleaded guilty to his charges, is due to have his personal hearing on March 23 and Nicholls is set to have his during the same week.

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	24
Sat 16	Gillingham	1-0	Parkin 3	5,339	24
Sat 23	NOTTS COUNTY	1-1	Martin 49	6,045	24
Tue 26	Reading (LGCP)	1-5	Charles 81	7,498	24
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	24
Sat 11	DARLINGTON	1-2	Gnakpa 31	5,560	24
Tue 18	ACCRINGTON	1-2	Hall 34	5,492	24
Tue 21	Grimsby Town	2-2	Craddock 24, 90	4,021	24
Tue 25	Bury	2-1	Craddock 35, Roper 44	3,052	24
NOV					
Sat 1	BOURNEMOUTH	ABANDONED DUE TO SNOW			24
Sat 1	Shrewsbury	0-3		6,189	24
Tue 4	Walsall (JP3)	1-0	Jarvis 90	1,844	24
Sat 9	ALTRINCHAM (FA1)	0-0		3,200	24
Sat 15	DAGENHAM (FA1)	0-0	Davis 6, McVeigh 41	5,402	24
Tue 18	DAGENHAM & RED	2-1	(Luton won 4-2 on penalties)	2,397	24
Sat 22	Altrincham (FA1R)	0-0		2,901	24
Tue 25	Rochdale	0-2		5,248	24
Sat 29	BRENTFORD	0-1		4,111	24
DEC					
Tue 2	BOURNEMOUTH	3-3	OG 18, Gallen 56, McVeigh 83	6,773	24
Sat 6	BARNET	3-1	McVeigh 11, Martin 15, OG 68	5,536	24
Sat 13	Wycombe	0-0		5,567	24
Tue 16	COLCHESTER (JP4)	1-0	Gnakpa 30	2,636	24
Sat 20	MORECAMBE	1-1	Spillane 51	5,664	24

DEC	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Fri 26	Cheshfield	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	24
Sat 24	BRADFORD CITY	3-3	Hall 5, 90, Wasia 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	24
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
Sat 7	EXETER CITY	1-2	Craddock 39	6,460	24
Tue 10	Notts County	2-0	Martin 25, Craddock 45	2,886	24
Sat 14	Aldershot Town	1-2	Craddock 35	3,098	24
Tue 17	GRIMSBY TOWN	2-1	Bower 45+2, Hall 89	5,830	24
Sat 21	MACCLESFIELD				
Sat 28	Morecambe				
Sat 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				