

Pilkington nails the ref's ballsy decision

WHAT WATSON
MADE OF IT



GRIT and hard work are behind the Hatters' resurgence according to first team coach Kevin Watson.

And while he felt Town's victory against Macclesfield was more than deserved, he admitted that he too was in the dark as to what the penalty that won Luton the game was given for.

"I said: 'I know Tom Craddock broke down the side and drove into the box. We couldn't really see from where we were standing what he gave it for.'

"The linesman had his flag across his chest. Nico came across and said it was handball.

"Perhaps there was a shove on someone's knee in who was going to tap in, but the linesman's seen something.

"We need a little bit of luck in the position we are in.

"I think we started the game very well, but Macclesfield did what a lot of teams seem to do when they come here and soaked up the pressure.

"The lads' attitude and endeavour was second to none."

Watson also revealed that Kevin Gallen was missing from Luton's line-up due to his daughter being ill.

He said: "Kevin Gallen's little girl isn't very well at all so our thoughts are with him and his family. He is a big miss."

Kevin has been playing out of his boots playing in a variety of positions. He looks when to take that extra touch."

And he admitted that the prospect of a Wembley appearance in the final of the Johnstone's Paint Trophy may be helping the Hatters to find that little bit extra.

He said: "Players are playing for shirts. I'm sure they will all want to play in that game and subconsciously a little bit more might be going in. Everybody wants to play at a Wembley final and only one can start."

"We keep saying we believe and a lot of people around the place believe we will get out of the mess we are in."

"We are not on a bad run. We now have everybody which is a headache for Mick as to what team he is going to pick."

And while he admitted Grimsby beating Gillingham 3-0 and Chester grabbing a last-minute equaliser at Bury was a kick in the teeth, he still backs the Hatters to beat the drop.

He said: "There are a few explosives flying around. No disrespect, we feel we are a better team than they are."

"It's another two points claved back and it's better than nothing."

"To go through what we've gone through and work and work the way they work is all credit to them."

And while Macclesfield did hit the bar, Watson felt Town were well worth their victory, adding: "Any team will get a chance, but from where we were standing they didn't carry much threat."

Luton Town 1 Macclesfield 0

SHOCKED defender George Pilkington praised the linesman for having 'the balls' to give the Hatters a controversial penalty that handed them victory on Saturday, writes Mark Wood.

Almost everyone inside Kenilworth Road was left baffled by the decision to penalise the stubborn Silkmen for handball midway through the second half, after a surging run by Tom Craddock.

The former Middlesbrough man then made no mistake from the spot, as he joyfully smashed home on 69 minutes to earn Luton back-to-back league victories for the first time this season.

And returning centre-half George Pilkington believes Town deserved their slice of good fortune, saying: "It was a bit of luck we needed in the box - the penalty has come our way."

"The last two teams have come here and made it difficult and we've tried to break them down on a pitch that doesn't really encourage good football."

"I think I was as shocked as everyone when he raised his flag, but fair play to him if he has got the balls to give it and raise his flag."

"They did make it difficult for us and had five at the back who were very good in the air."

"I think teams come here for a draw and a point because our front three are dangerous. We get the ball to feed and run at them."

"There's a lot of teams coming here, but we need to be better than them and break them down."

"Chances were always going to be few and far between and I think we knew at half time it would be a set-piece that would win it."

"It was a workmanlike performance from everyone."

Luton dominated the whole of the first half, but struggled to break Macclesfield down, as they missed the guile of veteran striker Kevin Gallen who was with his sick daughter.

Craddock was well off target early on, while Mark Bower looped an effort over the bar following Michael Spillane's volley from a corner.

Largely though it was a scrappy affair, with neither side able to impose themselves on proceedings.

Jon Brain turned Asa Hall's effort round the post, while Sam Parkin and Bower both went close.

Macclesfield, though, were inches away from breaking the deadlock on 32 minutes. A cross from the left caused Town's defence all kinds of problems, but luck was on their side as Nat Brown crashed his effort against the bar from just eight yards out as Luton were given an almighty reprieve.

Keith Keane's low effort was fumbled behind by Brain with five minutes of the half left, while from the resulting corner the Silkmen's keeper punched against his own bar.

A surging run from captain Nicholls almost broke the stalemate in first half injury time but, after a one-two with Parkin on the edge of the area, he could only poke harmlessly at Brain.

The visitors came more into it after the break with Gareth Evans warming Dean Brill's gloves and Emile Sinclair almost finding room in the box.

However, Town won it in mystifying circumstances on 69 minutes when Craddock's surging run and pull back resulted in a penalty for handball and the striker made no mistake from the spot.

Things became tetchy in the closing stages, but with both teams lacking quality, Town were easily able to hold on for all three points.

STAR HATTER Keith Keane. Town's terrier in the midfield.



SHOCKED: Centre-half George Pilkington admits surprise at penalty decision

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
Tues 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		
NOV					
Sat 1	Shrewsbury	0-3	-	6,188	24
Tue 4	Walsall (JP3)	1-0	Jarvis 90	1,844	-
Sat 9	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	-
Sat 22	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	Wycombe	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
Fri 26	Chesterfield	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, Wasili 37	6,053	24
Tue 27	Bournemouth	1-1	Hollis 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
Sat 28	Port Vale	0-0	-	1,033	24
Sat 31	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	5,630	24
Sat 21	MACCLESFIELD	1-0	Craddock 69	5,363	24
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				