

No joke for Shrimps as Luton take points

08/09

A CELEBRATION of Eric Morecambe failed to bring much sunshine to Christie Park on Saturday as the Shrimps saw their 12-match unbeaten run come to an end.

A day that began with smiles aplenty as both sets of fans celebrated the life of the town's favourite son ended with frowns for Morecambe as Kevin Gallen's offside-looking 59th minute goal saw the Shrimps slide to their first defeat since January 27.

The former QPR striker looked yards offside as he diverted the ball past Barry Roche to give Luton a third successive win and keep their slim survival hopes alive for a few more weeks at least.

Shrimps' boss Sammy McIlroy vented his anger at the linesman at the end of the game but also admitted that Luton were denied a perfectly good first half goal when Asa Hall was adjudged to have fouled a Morecambe defender.

McIlroy said: "The lads were devastated to lose their unbeaten record especially to a goal that looked well offside. But at the same time I didn't see much wrong with the goal they had disallowed, so I suppose things evened themselves up."

He added: "I was disappointed with both their goals and we didn't look as strong defensively as we have in recent weeks but I can't be too hard on the players."

Morecambe 1

Luton Town 2

Coca-Cola League Two

by derek quinn

sport@lmnews.co.uk



ERIC LOOKALIKE: A Shrimps fan at Christie Park for the tie with Luton Town where Eric Morecambe was a director.

"They have done us all proud in recent weeks and we will now look to lift their spirits for the Darlington game next week."

The Shrimps began the game with Mark Duffy given his Football League debut in place of Neil Wainwright who failed a late fitness test and the former Southport man showed some moments of promise, especially when played wide.

Morecambe started well with Wayne Curtis firing wide before

they took the lead on 21 minutes. Michael Twiss swung over a free kick to the far post and Stewart Drummond rose superbly to head past Dean Brill from eight yards out.

Twiss almost undid the Hatters again seconds late when his surging run carried him past Mark Bower and into the box, but he just overran the ball with Luton's defence at sixes and sevens.

Luton looked to hit back almost immediately with Hall seeing his goal chalked off but the Hatters showed great spirit to get the upper hand. Winger Tom Craddock was a constant threat and he gave the Shrimps an early warning with a fine run and shot that forced Barry Roche into a decent save.

Luton stuck to their task well and again went close on 32 minutes. Nicholls and Gallen combined well to release Hall into the box, but his driven cross was turned over the bar by Drummond's flailing leg.

But the visitors' pressure paid off on 42 minutes when from another dangerous Kevin Nicholls cross Chris Martin nipped in front of Adam Yates to head past Roche.

Martin almost added a quick-fire second in injury time when he squeezed a shot between Roche's legs but Drummond was on hand to clear off the line.

Luton's dominance continued at the start of the second half when Brill's long throw released Craddock on the right and the former Middlesbrough man beat three defenders before forcing a brilliant full-stretch stop from Roche.

Martin then seemed certain to score at the far post with the goal beckoning, but Garry Hunter flung himself in the way.

Gallen ended the Shrimps' resistance.

MORECAMBE: Roche, Artell, Bentley, Yates, Adams, Duffy, Hunter, Drummond, Twiss, Howe, Curtis (O'Carroll 84), Howe
Subs not used: Subs: Edge, McLachlan, Taylor, McStay
Referee: C Oliver 6/10 - Some very strange decisions - for both sides - from a normally excellent official.
Attendance: 2,599.
Star man: Garry Hunter - have his all in attack and defence.



!CORE! Drummond scores for Morecambe with a header.