

WHAT MICK MADE OF IT



THE Hatters dominated Lincoln from start to finish according to manager Mick Harford, but he was once again left to lament their profligacy in front of goal.

Town had more than enough chances to win the game on Harford's return to Sincil Bank, but there was no glorious homecoming for Big Mick whose side showed no signs of any Wembley hangovers.

He said: "The emotions of Wembley are still lingering around the town and the football club and coming to play after the Lord Mayor's Show is very difficult and I think the players handled it well. We were comfortable from start to finish. They never looked like scoring and they never really threatened us. No disrespect to Lincoln their keeper was their best player, side showed no signs of any Wembley hangovers."

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However, he was left to lament a result that did neither team any favours, with the Imps needing victory to maintain their play-off dream and Town needing to triumph to aid their attempts to maintain their League status.

Harford continued: "It's a poor result for both teams. Lincoln needed to win and we needed to win. We got a clean sheet which is fantastic – which we asked for – and we got in some fantastic positions time after time."

"In different circumstances it's a good result, but the position we are in Q&Q is not good enough. We would have liked to test the goalkeeper a little bit more when we got into those areas, but the final ball and the final shot wasn't quite clinical enough."

And while other results went their way, Harford said he was only really concerned by his own side's performances.

He said: "We've just got to do what we can do. We just need to turn our possession into goals."

"The performance was up there with some of the best performances this season."

On Chris Martin's decision to try and play Tom Craddock in on Rob Burch late in the game, rather than go for goal, Harford said: "You can't play the game for them and from the position he was in he thought it was the right thing to do."

And he was equally sympathetic to the excellent Keith Keane, who missed a gilt-edged opportunity for the Hatters late in the first half.

Harford said: "It's just got tangled up in his feet and he doesn't find himself in that position often."

Harford was also delighted with the reception he got from the Sincil Park crowd, as it was at Lincoln where he started his career. He added: "It was fantastic, they're nice people. It's different from when we were with the new stand. This is where I learned my trade really."

"I was here three years and it was a fantastic time in my life."

Keane red-faced as he fluffs big chance

Lincoln City 0 Luton Town 0

EMBARRASSED midfielder dynamo Keith Keane admitted he could do with some extra shooting practice after spurning a great opportunity to give Luton victory at Sincil Bank on Saturday, writes Mark Wood.

The in-form midfielder put in an all-action display for the Hatters, dominating the midfield and spraying an array of great passes, but was left to rue a great chance that got away at the end of the first half.

He said: "I feel a bit embarrassed. I should have scored that. I didn't think Tom Craddock would get the ball to me. I don't get to practice shooting in training so I will have to ask the gaffer to have a couple of goals."

But he did admit he is in a rich vein of form at the moment, saying: "I just tried to carry on from Sunday. I don't like to play well one game and then wait another five."

"At the minute I feel I'm in a bit of form and I need to keep that going."

Mark Bower also hit the bar and Craddock missed a gilt-edged opportunity late on as the Hatters missed out on a great opportunity to make up ground on relegation rivals Chester and Grimsby who both lost.

Keane added: "Obviously it's a bit of a kick in the teeth because if we had won we would have claimed three points. Any other day we could have won two or three nil."

"Everybody played well, but another day the strikers would have put them away and we could have won."

"I think the lads are gutted because we have played well and dominated them for the whole game."

"The fans should have been happy today because they saw both teams go at it. I thought the fans, apart from the goals, got their money's worth today."

Cup-tied trio David Livermore, Bower and Kevin Gallen were all



SHOOT ON SIGHT: Chris Martin had a couple of good efforts for the Hatters but couldn't break the deadlock

recalled and Town looked solid throughout.

Chris Martin thumped just wide on eight minutes, but Luton suffered a big blow when Lewis Emanuel was stretched off on 19 minutes with a knock to his delicate left knee.

Scott Kerr hacked a dangerous Gallen cross just past his own post, while Dany N'Guessan should have done better when his fired just wide as both teams strived to break the deadlock.

Lincoln captain Kerr thrashed a ferocious effort into the side netting after good work by Geoff Horsfield, while Martin replied in kind, drilling a low effort just the wrong side of the post on 32 minutes.

Keane should have given Town the lead five minutes before the break after good work by Craddock, but he fluffed his effort from just seven yards out.

First half injury time saw Ben Wright twice go close, with George

Pilkington denying him with a great tackle and Livermore heading off the line.

The Hatters broke quickly with Gallen picking out Michael Spillane at the far post with a pinpoint cross, but the on-loan defender headed wastefully wide with Craddock and Keane well placed for a knock-down.

Town were inches away from taking the lead three minutes after the restart. Kevin Nicholls' corner was flicked on at the near post by Livermore, but Bower's delicate header rebounded off the bar and out.

A flowing Martins move ended with Craddock stroking a tame effort at Burch, while the Imps countered with a route one move that ended in Horsfield flashing an effort inches wide.

Both teams enjoyed chances, with Janos Kovacs threatening for the hosts with a series of headers, Luton

substitute Claude Gnaka fizzed a long-range effort wastefully wide and Kerr sent a dreadful free-kick well over the bar.

Dean Brill made his only real save when Sam Mullarkey's shot from the edge of the area deflected off Spillane, while Asa Hall's through ball released Craddock at the death, but the youngster waited too long and Kovacs somehow got back to get his chance in.

Imps keeper Burch joined the home side's attack as they threatened with a series of corners and free-kicks in injury time, but he couldn't make a difference and when Martin and Craddock broke at the death Town had one last chance, but a misplaced pass, when Martin should possibly have audaciously gone for goal, allowed Cheshire referee Scott Mathieson to blow for full time.

STAR HATTER Keith Keane. Superb passing and great tackling.

Can they finish in style? – the 2008/09 season so far.....

AUG	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sat 9	PORT VALE	1-3	Parkin 35	7,149	24
Sat 9	PLYMOUTH (LGCPC)	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 (LGCPC)	1-5	Charles 81	7,498	24
Sat 30	Exeter City	1-0	Parkin 47	5,328	24
SAT					
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		5,095	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	Gnaka 31	5,492	24
Sat 18	ACCRINGTON	1-2	Hall 34	4,021	24
Tue 21	Grimsby Town	2-2	Craddock 24, 90	3,052	24
Tue 25	Bury	2-1	Craddock 35, Roper 44		24
Tues 28	BOURNEMOUTH		ABANDONED DUE TO SNOW		
NOV					
Sat 4	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	-
Sat 22	Rochdale	2-1	(Luton won 4-2 on penalties)	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	Gnaka 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, Wasiu 37	6,083	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)	4-1	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
Tue 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	5,830	24
Sat 21	MACCLESFIELD	2-1	Bower 45+2, Hall 89	5,363	24
Tue 24	Morecambe	2-1	Martin 43, Gallen 59	2,599	24
Sat 28	ROTHAM	2-4	Martin 42, Hall 70	5,975	24
APR					
Sun 5	SCUNTHORPE (JP1)	3-2	Martin 32, Craddock 70, Gnaka 95	55,378	-
Sat 11	Lincoln City	0-0		4,664	24
Mon 13	CHESTERFIELD	0-0		6,494	24
Sat 19	Barnet				
Tue 21	WYCOMBE				
Sat 25	ROCHDALE				
MAY					
Sat 2	Brentford				