



4937 COMEBACK KIDS MAKE MICK PROUD

WE'VE DONE IT:
Luton players
celebrate their
amazing victory



THE NLP STAR MATCH

LUTON TOWN'S under-fire players produced one of **THE** great comebacks to see off Cambridge in a seven-goal thriller and ease the pressure on manager Mick Harford.

The Kenilworth Road boss had described the 3-0 midweek defeat at Wrexham as the worst performance in Hatters' history.

Two-nil down at a pulsating Abbey Stadium and reduced to ten men by Liam Hatch's second yellow card in 13 first-half minutes, they seemed to be on their way to a new low.

But after seeing two goals from Kevin Gallen, a Rossi Jarvis wonder strike and another from Jake Howells secure three points, Harford backed his troops once again.

Asked if it was Luton's greatest-ever recovery, he replied: "It's definitely up there with any comeback. We asked the players at half-time to do a job. I felt we were undeservedly two goals down and maybe undeservedly a man down, but we were."

"It was a quite ferocious game in terms of the velocity and the tempo. There were a lot of tackles flying in and Liam was unfortunate to get two yellows."

"Everyone will be talking about the second half and the comeback. Someone has just asked me: 'Where has that performance come from?'"

"I believe it has always been in them. I've got belief in this group of players and they showed their spirit, work-rate, effort and commitment - allied with ability, as you saw in Rossi Jarvis' goal."

"There's a lot in there and there's a lot more to come."



By Stuart Hammonds

Luton had started in a style their manager would have liked, tearing into challenges and adopting a shoot on sight policy.

It was against the run of play that the home side went ahead, Mark Beesley teeing-up Courtney Pitt for a near-post finish.

The Hatters continued to probe, but were undone again when Alan White was deemed to have fouled Anthony Tonkin in the box on 32 minutes.

Hatch picked up his first booking for dissent towards referee Robert Madley, and Holroyd scored from the spot.

Hatch saw red two minutes before the break for a foul on Paul Carden, but whatever Harford said at half-time did the trick.

Gallen lashed in from close range within three minutes, but the real turning point came when Madley failed to show a second yellow to Claude Gnaka for dragging Holroyd down.

U's boss Martin Ling called it "the biggest decision of the day", and Harford substituted the defender before the free-kick could be taken.

"We were 2-1 up at the time and they should have gone down to nine men," Ling added. "Mick knows the score because he took him straight off. He's not stupid."

On the hour, Jarvis waltzed onto a one-two with Gallen and curled a beauty into the top corner, then Wayne Hatswell sold Danny Potter short with a back-header and Howells fired home after Potter had parried Gallen's shot.

Within three minutes, United were back on terms when Holroyd poached his 11th of the season from six yards.

But the Hatters were on their game for the gaffer, and secured a deserved win after Brian Saah was penalised for holding onto Shane Blackett at a corner. Gallen sent Potter the wrong way, to send Harford and his Hatters home happy.

MATCH STATS CAMBRIDGE v LUTON

9 SHOTS ON TARGET	8
1 SHOTS OFF TARGET	8
2 CORNERS	6
0 OFFSIDE	1
15 FOULS CONCEDED	16
1 YELLOW CARDS	3
0 RED CARDS	1

STAR MAN: Kevin Gallen (Luton): ATT: 4,870
ENTERTAINMENT: *****
REF RATING: Robert Madley 4/10

CAMBRIDGE (4-4-2): Potter 7, Gleeson 7, Saah 6, Hatswell 6, Tonkin 7, Willmott 6 (Crow 76, 5), Carden 6, Reason 7, Pitt 7 (Ives 76, 6), Beesley 6 (Phillips 76, 5), Holroyd 6. Subs not used: Coulson, Parkinson.
LUTON (4-4-2): Tyler 7, Gnaka 6 (Raynscliffe 52, 6), White 8, Pilkington 7, Murray 7, Newton 6, Jarvis 6, Hall 7, Howells 7, Hatch 4, Gallen 6 (Craddock 62, 5). Subs not used: Gore, Charles.



IN THE NET: Rossi Jarvis scores for Luton

PICTURES: Gareth Owen



U'S PAY PENALTY

Lacklustre United go to sleep as Hatters sneak in for victory

HATTERS SHOW THEY HAVE THE RIGHT STUFF

THE VERDICT

IS THIS the game that turns Luton Town's season and sends them back into the League at the first time of asking?

In times of adversity, a manager looks for strength of character to come to the fore and Mick Harford's players showed plenty of that.

In fairness, the Hatters haven't had that bad a start. Two defeats in 12 games isn't exactly relegation form, and their ninth-placed position at kick-off could have turned into second by winning their game in hand.

But at one-down on 25 minutes, the travelling fans called for their legendary ex-striker to "sort it out".

That is when a group of them weren't trying



to get at home support on the Habbins terrace, with police reinforcements called almost taking the gate above 5,000.

As Liam Hatch made his way to an early shower, non-playing captain Kevin Nicholls was escorted from the stand after a verbal spat with a home fan.

Nicholls' middle-finger gesture as he was led away was unnecessary, but if anything, Harford would have told the rest of his players to metaphorically flash an extra digit as they returned to the pitch.

They certainly did with the way they responded.