



LUTON TOWN 2
Hall 19, Wright 24

HATTERS PUT



UP AND UNDER: Luton's Tom Craddock tries a chip from distance



09/10
By Stuart Hammonds

THE NLP STAR MATCH

CARETAKER- Alan Neilson praised his side for the "professional" job that took Luton above Tamworth and back into the play-off places.

First-half goals from Asa Hall and debutant Ben Wright proved enough for the Hatters, who parted company with manager Mick Harford after fans called for him to go at the end of Tuesday's defeat by Stevenage.

Neilson, a former Tamworth player, said: "A week in football is a long time. I said to the boys that last week at Cambridge was a high, Tuesday was a low, Wednesday even lower."

"We were all off Thursday and we had to get on with it on Friday - and they've all gone out and put a performance in. It's called being professional."

Luton showed their positive intent from the off, firing four attempts on goal in the opening five minutes.

Wright, signed on Tuesday and who Harford had jokingly blamed for losing him his job, was at the centre of it all.

The opener came when his fellow Peterborough loanee Liam Hatch played him into right side of the box. Wright's back-heel was intercepted, but the loose ball fell once more to Hatch, who set up Hall to finish from ten yards.

Five minutes later the advantage was doubled - and Wright was deservedly on the end of it.

Wright laid it off to Hatch on halfway, then made a long run

MATCH STATS

LUTON v TAMWORTH

7 SHOTS ON TARGET	5
5 SHOTS OFF TARGET	5
3 CORNERS	5
2 OFFSIDE	2
13 FOULS CONCEDED	7
1 YELLOW CARDS	0
0 RED CARDS	0

STAR MAN: Ben Wright (Luton)

ATT: 6,297

ENTERTAINMENT: ★★

REF RATING: Mike Bull 7/10

LUTON TOWN (4-3-1-2): Tyler 7; Asa; Adje 7; Onyiah 63, 66; White 7; Piskington 7; Murray 6; Newton 7; Jarvis 6; Nichols 6; Hall 7; Hatch 7; Craddock 98, 6, 13 Wright 3; Charles 81, 5; Subs not used: Blackett, Howells.

TAMWORTH (4-5-1): Alcock 7; Tait 7; Biscoe 7; Smith 7; Blackwood 7; Rodman 8; Spensh 6; Lytle 86; Pritchard 6; Shaw 6; Russell 6; N Wright 7; Subs not used: Wyde, Lake-Gaskin, Andrews, Forsterling.

PICTURES: Gareth Owen

TAMWORTH 1
Rodman 59



TROUBLES BEHIND THEM

New boy Wright leads the way



MOMENT OF PASSION: Asa Hall is mobbed after scoring the opener at Kenilworth Road

around him, eventually getting the return pass in the area.

Checking inside onto his right foot, Wright attempted to curl into the top corner. Tait blocked, but as the ball landed back at his boot, the ex-Hampton man went for a repeat and bent it exquisitely past Danny Alcock.

By half-time the game appeared over, but the Blue Square North champions have proved nothing if not hard to beat on their return to the top-flight, and they dragged themselves back into it just before the hour.

Tom Shaw's free-kick was flicked

on by Nick Wright and Alex Rodman stabbed in from close range.

Moments later the England C winger had another shot blocked by Nicholls, and from the resulting corner he volleyed straight at Mark Tyler.

Newton and an off-form sub Tom Craddock should have extended the Town lead, before Bradley Pritchard spurned a glorious headed opportunity to level things from another pinpoint Shaw set-piece.

The Lambs, always neat in possession and increasingly threatening, continued to probe - but the equalis-

er never came and Luton breathed a sign of relief.

"It's on the back of a loss, but even so I'm proud of them," said manager Gary Mills. "It's the biggest game a lot of them have played in, in terms of stature, size of crowd, Luton - and they are young."

"You could see a little bit of that in the first half, but as daft as it sounds, sometimes as a manager these things have to happen."

"At half-time I spoke to them, told them what I wanted them to do and I was proud of them second half. I thought they were incredible, which they have been all season."

THE VERDICT

A TURBULENT week, ended with three points for managerless Luton - just about!

The Hatters had been in complete control, with man-of-the-match Ben Wright and Liam Hatch causing problems for the Lambs' defence.

Hatch had done little to help keep Mick Harford in a job, picking up four yellow cards - three for dissent - in less than 150 minutes of pitch time.

But gone was any element of indiscipline as he proved the perfect foil for his Peterborough pal.

Both came up through the real grassroots, playing Kent and Southern League football respectively before getting a chance in the pro game. Perhaps these are the kind of players Hatters need?

Gary Mills' side could have lost by five or six once they conceded early goals.

But having taken aboard his call to play, they grew into the game and reinforced a growing reputation as one of the more pleasing on the eye BSP sides.

Mills joked they were in for heading practise tomorrow after Bradley Pritchard wasted a great chance late on. It could, and should, have made a bad week worse for Luton.