



LUTON TOWN 0

RUSHDEN & D 2



Tomlin 84, Byrne 90+4

# SPARKLING



By Sam Elliott

THE NLP  
STAR  
MATCH

THE HATTERS may be in the Money, but Rushden surely will be soon as their sparkling Diamond stole

the show.

Luton's Manager-in-waiting Richard Money was introduced to the crowd before the match but opted for a watching brief and allowed Alan Neilson one final game in charge.

But one of Non-League's hottest properties Lee Tomlin, who was being watched by a host of Football League clubs, ruined Money's view of his new charges as appalling Luton fell apart in front of the incoming boss.

A final six-minute blitz with late goals from Tomlin and substitute Mark Byrne left Money with an early headache to contend with as the boos rang around Kenilworth Road.

Star of the show Tomlin will surely be on his way in January with Rushden certain to cash in.

Luton Coach Kevin Watson said: "We've had a long meeting in the dressing room and we've aired a few things with Richard.

"The second half was not good enough and for some reason we dropped 40 per cent. It's a disappointing way to hand over.

"He sat upstairs and he made a few decisions but we were very easy to play against after half-time and that isn't good enough."

Luton did provide an early spark for the new boss when after six minutes Tom Craddock was put through by Kevin Nicholls with most inside

## MATCH STATS LUTON V RUSHDEN

|    |                  |    |
|----|------------------|----|
| 8  | SHOTS ON TARGET  | 5  |
| 4  | SHOTS OFF TARGET | 7  |
| 8  | CORNERS          | 7  |
| 2  | OFFSIDE          | 3  |
| 16 | FOULS CONCEDED   | 18 |
| 1  | YELLOW CARDS     | 2  |
| 0  | RED CARDS        | 0  |

STAR MAN: Lee Tomlin (Rushden)  
AIF: 7.101

ENTERTAINMENT: \*\*\*\*\*  
REF RATING: Andy Bennett 5/10

LUTON 4-4-2: Tyler 6, Asadu-Adajaye 6, White 6 (Murray 75, St. Praxington 7, Howells 7, Newton 6, Nicholls 6, Hill 6 (Burgess 60, 58, Jarvis 5 (Gratias 71, 66, Craddock 5, Gallen 6, Subs Not Used: Gorn, Charles.

RUSHDEN: 4-5-1: Abbey 7, Corcoran 7, O'Leary 7, Stuart 8, Robinson 7, Porter 7, Tomlin 8 (Pattison 86, 66, Cousins 7 (Byrne 57, 71, Terry 6, O'Connor 7 (Akinag 77, 66, Farrel 6, Subs Not Used: Roberts, Mills.

# LEE DAZZLES SAD LUTON

## Plenty to ponder for Money



DONE IT: Rushden players celebrate after their late win at Kenilworth Road

fans expecting the offside flag.

The assistant referee's arm didn't go up and Craddock was clear but inexplicably went for the small gap between goalkeeper Nathan Abbey and his near post instead of going across goal. His shot hit the post.

Craddock did find the net later, but the goal was ruled out as strike-partner Kevin Gallen had strayed offside and interfered with play.

With 20 minutes gone the former Luton keeper Abbey made a complete hash of a clearance. The ball fell to Gallen 30-yards out, only for him to miss with his lobbed effort. But it was far from one-way traffic.

Neil Cousins's cross was missed by Ed Asadu-Adajaye and found Tomlin who was inches away from scoring. Abbey kept denying Craddock and the former Middlesbrough attackers' miserable first half was complete when he was booked for attempting to fist the ball into the net from a corner. Even that went over.

Rushden were always in charge of the second half as Town's failure to put together two decent halves of football showed again.

Luton goalkeeper Tyler was tested three times from distance with Aaron O'Connor at the heart of the action.

Lifeless Luton got what their negativity deserved in final minutes.

First, substitute Byrne's shot was spilled by Tyler. Tomlin was waiting for the loose ball but his effort found advertising boards instead of the net.

Tomlin was involved again six minutes from the end, and this time scored. Luton skipper Nicholls, the last man, slipped on the halfway line and Tomlin stole the ball from under his feet. With the Hatters hopelessly outnumbered he raced clear and slotted into Tyler's far corner.

Byrne lobbed home after Max Porter's raking ball to seal the points in classy style in time added on.

## THE VERDICT

JUSTIN EDINBURGH was happy to make the most of Luton's second-half Halloween horror show.

Rushden's fourth straight win was mainly thanks to Lee Tomlin - the player the manager says has a "Premiership touch".

And the manager isn't expecting to keep the 20-year-old attacker for too much longer.

He said: "Some of my players have never played in front of this many people before but I'm pretty sure Lee will be every week before too long.

"He is an exceptional talent and he can go a very, very long way. He could play in the Championship now and he was simply great today.

"To say someone can go and play in the Premiership is a big call but he is hungry enough.

"Ideally someone will buy him and loan him back to us. They can give us all the money up front too if they like!"

Former Tottenham defender Edinburgh added: "I don't think we believed in ourselves first half. The second period we have shown everyone what we're capable of.

"Consistency is key now."