

LUTON TOWN 3 ROCHDALE 3

By Stuart Hammonds

RICHARD MONEY vowed to rid Luton of its air of negativity after classy Rochdale fought back from a 3-0 half-time deficit to leave his new side once again down on their luck.

Kenilworth Road has witnessed many cup classics over the years, and this was one of them - even if the final outcome wasn't what the locals expected as Joe Thompson netted a late double to book a Spotland replay next week.

Money brought Steve Basham in for his first start since August 22 and was rewarded with the striker's first two goals in an orange shirt, either side of a delightful Adam Newton strike.

And even though the side second in League Two proved too strong as Hatters tried to hold out, ex-Walsall boss Money was only looking at the positives.

"It was a fantastic cup tie," he said. "Anybody who left that stadium and doesn't think that way needs to have a serious look at themselves.

"I'm disappointed that we haven't gone through and that we weren't able to capitalise on a really good first half performance.

"There appears to be an awful lot of negativity around this football club. I understand why that's the case. A lot's happened to this club over the last two years and it's my job to try to drag people out of that mode.

"I hope that first half performance went a long way to doing that.

"I guess people will go away saying 'Same old Luton - good in the first half, crap in the second'. That's not true. We were not poor in the second half.

"We just got absolutely over-run by a terrific team, but we had our chances. Their keeper's made three good saves."

Rochdale bossed the early possession stakes, but found themselves three down inside half-an-hour as the Hatters finished clinically.

It started in the fourth minute when Andy Burgess nutmegged Jason Kennedy before releasing Kevin Gallen, who teed up Newton on the left to cross for Basham to nod home.

Rochdale still popped the ball around calmly, but after Shane Gore - in the Hatters' goal after Mark Tyler was injured in the warm-up - saved from Gary Jones and Chris O'Grady,



PERFECT PLACING: Steve Basham scores with a header for Luton

09/10 (FAC)

PICTURE: Gareth Owen

I'LL ELIMINATE THE NEGATIVE

Money promise to Hatters

Luton broke again.

Burgess was the creator again, his superb pass inside right-back Rory McArdle allowing Newton to expertly chip Kenny Arthur as the crooked Dale keeper staggered off his line.

Arthur's back injury wasn't helped by having to pick the ball out of the net for a third time when

Basham doubled his haul after Marcus Holness failed to clear Claude Gnaka's cross.

Keith Hill's side were handed a lifeline just before the hour, however, when McArdle's goalbound header brushed Craig Dawson's chest on its way past the impressive Gore.

Then it was down to Thompson to

ruin Luton's day, with the right-winger's 87th and 89th minute strikes sandwiching a golden chance for home sub Tom Craddock.

"I thought Luton played some excellent football," said Hill. "We've got a replay to come against a very good side, but it's just nice to still be in the hat."

MATCH STATS

LUTON v ROCHDALE

6	SHOTS ON TARGET	10
4	SHOTS OFF TARGET	7
7	CORNERS	6
2	OFFSIDE	4
11	FOULS CONCEDED	10
2	YELLOW CARDS	0
0	RED CARDS	0

STAR MAN: Andy Burgess (Luton)
ENTERTAINMENT: ★★★★★