

Hatters fightback prevents Millers' progress

BY CHRIS JACKSON

ROTHERHAM UNITED wasted a glorious opportunity to book their place in the FA Cup third round hat as they were pegged back by gritty Blue Square outfit Luton Town.

Goals from Adam Le Fondre and Stephen Brogan put the Millers in the driving seat cancelling out Tom Craddock's early spot kick but any hopes of a plum draw with the Premiership big guns were put on hold by Mark Nwkeji's late strike.

The home side were quick out of the blocks and after Tom Pope was felled outside the box, from the resultant free-kick, Brogan curled a delightful effort which had Kevin Pilkington backtracking nervously but the ball sailed narrowly over.

Fizzing

Then Gary Roberts's searching pass found Brogan, who cut inside before fizzing a low effort which stung the palms of Pilkington before Luton stunned the home side by breaking the deadlock with their first real attack of note on 20 minutes.

Following a quick counter attack, Adam Newton teased Mark Lynch before finding Claude Gnapek in space on the right, who cleverly top-kicked the ball before the lunge of Andy Nicholas, who unceremoniously brought him down leaving referee Paul Tierney no option but to point to the spot.

Craddock then showed great composure from 12 yards as he fired the ball straight into the heart of the Rotherham goal beating the dive of Andy Warrington.

The Millers responded in a positive vein and after Ryan Taylor curled a left footed effort wide, Ian Sharps's goal-bound header from Nicky Law's

ROTHERHAM 2

LUTON TOWN 2

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corner forced Newton into a last ditch clearance from near his own goal line.

At the other end, Luton almost extended their advantage when Newton found Craddock, who ghosted past Lynch with the minimum of fuss before firing a low effort which was arrowing towards goal before a last ditch block by Sharps.

However, Ronnie Moore's men got themselves back on level terms in the second minute of first half stoppage time thanks to hot shot Le Fondre's 15th goal of the season.

After Luton failed to clear Roberts's hopeful punt into the box, Taylor found Pope on the right who drilled an incisive centre which saw Le Fondre get a yard on his marker before stroking home past a helpless Pilkington from point blank range.

The home side were then rewarded for their dominance when they took a well deserved lead just past the hour mark.

Following a spell of pressure by the home side, Roberts showed great persistence to shrug off the attentions of his marker on the byline before swinging a delightful centre to the far post which saw Brogan climb highest to power a towering header into the roof of the net.

But Rotherham's joy was short lived as the non-league outfit bravely fought back to equalise soon after.

After a misplaced pass left Roberts exposed in the middle of the park, a hefty blocked tackle saw the ball fall kindly for Kevin Gallen, whose exquisitely timed through ball saw sub Nwkeji beat the offside trap before holding his nerve to fly the ball past the advancing Warrington.

In the dying minutes, Rotherham



STALEMATE: Rotherham's Stephen Brogan wins the ball from Luton player George Pilkington, *top*, while Millers forward Tom Pope is challenged by Luton player Alan White, *above left*, and breaks through the Luton defence, *above right*

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came within a whisker of booking their place in the next round when fine interplay between Le Fondre and Pope worked the opening for the marauding Danny Harrison.

However, he fired a rasping left footed effort which agonisingly whistled past the upright.

ROTHERHAM: Warrington, Lynch, Fenton, Sharps, Nicholas, Brogan, Law, Roberts, R Taylor (Harrison, 80), Pope, Le Fondre. Subs not used: Anerson, Broughton,

Green, Mills, Cummins, Joseph.
LUTON: K Pilkington; Blackett, White, G Pilkington, Murray, Nicholls, Keane, Newton, Gnapek (Nwkeji, 66), Gallen (Hall, 90), Craddock (Howells, 83). Subs not used: Gore, Jarvis, Asalu-Adjaye, Emanuel.
REFEREE: Paul Tierney (Lancashire).
ATTENDANCE: 3,210.