

04/10 (sat)

CAMBRIDGE UTD 3

LUTON TOWN 1

ERRORS SIM SAD HATTERS

THE HATTERS were given an inhospitable welcome – and this time there was no stunning comeback.

It was Luton's first game in the competition – and with a League return their main aim will be to hope it is their last.

Highly rated, Chris Holroyd's first-half double added a few extra pounds to Cambridge's January transfer window adding price.

The team have now shared 18 goals in three meetings with the previous two matches featuring masterful survival.

Luton may have been unchanged from Tuesday when they ruthlessly disposed of League Two Rotherham, but they tumbled out of Van League's FA Cup equivalent after disintegrating in the first 36 minutes.

If they wanted this to be their one and only Trophy tie, their defensive horror show could not have been bemoaned. Manager Richard Money said: "You don't enter a cup if you don't intend on winning it. I'm disappointed."

"Our keeper has said that he's had nothing to do – but you can't defend your penalty box like we did."

"They have had three first-half crosses and scored three goals. That's not our problem. We responded in the second half, but not enough to turn it around."

Cambridge also refused to meet big players and named a stronger starting side than the one that drew at Exeter.

It took only six minutes for them to make their mark. Former Hatter Courtney Pitt's cross-shot arrived at the feet of Danny Crow and he side-footed the ball beyond

By Sam Elliot

Kevin Pilkington.

On the half hour, again from Pitt's assist, Holroyd was left unmarked by a lumbering Alan White and faced his header out of the keeper's reach.

It was White's fourth minute of a dreadful first 30 minutes and Pilkington, and fellow centre-half Shane Blackson let him know exactly what they thought of his concentration.

We've been here before. United were 2-0 up in September before losing 4-3. Luton held a two-goal advantage at Kenilworth Road before they imploded.

But it would have taken a daring gambler to back a repeat when, six minutes later, Wayne Natwell's low shot deflected into the path of Holroyd and goal number 17 of the season was tucked away.

Some Luton fans had already seen enough. Never had Christmas shopping on a Saturday seemed so appealing.

Keith Keane did his best gift wrap the excellent Robby Wilton as a fourth before the break – and Money took action as soon as that whistle blew.

Unsurprisingly he handed off both centre-backs, with forwards Tom Craddock and Matthew Barnes-Homer dappers into the mix.

Kevin Galvin wasted a route back into it on the hour, but when, after 88 minutes, Natwell headed Kevin Nicholls' free-kick beyond his own keeper, Luton grabbed a lifeline, but could not find a third comeback.

The riddled United manager Martin Ling said: "I'm delighted. We've had yet another ball bug go through the square. But we still put on a great first-half performance. We were professional in the second because we've seen that in that fixture you're never safe."



GOING THROUGH: Chris Holroyd, far left, scores Cambridge's second goal

PICTURE: NLP Photography

MATCH STATS

Cambridge Utd v Luton

5	SHOTS ON TARGET	3
3	SHOTS OFF TARGET	3
4	CORNERS	2
2	OFFSIDES	3
11	FOULS COMMITTED	18
1	YELLOW CARDS	1
0	RED CARDS	0

STAR MAN: Toddie Wilton (Cambridge Utd)

ENTERTAINMENT *****

FANCY FOOTBALL: Luton captain Kevin Nicholls shows a neat touch with his heel, but his skills weren't enough to inspire a Hatters' comeback