

Hatters rated

Kevin Pilkington: 6.5 – Didn't have much to do. One good save at the death.

Keith Keane: 7 – Started slowly, but made some important challenges and gave Town some solidity at the back.

George Pilkington: 7 – Not his best performance and exposed once or twice, but a good foil for Kovacs.

Jonas Kovacs: 8 – Strong and commanding. Took confidence from his debut strike.

Freddie Murray: 7 – In and out of the game but provided some real quality at times in the second half.

Adam Newton: 7 – Missed a great chance to add a third but was busy all over the pitch.

Kevin Nicholls: 7 – Looked out of sorts at first, but seemed to be boosted by Hatch's introduction.

Asa Hall: 7 – Much more involved in the middle, played a full part and scored a great second goal.

Claude Gnaka: 5 – Not at the races and didn't get into the game before he was forced off through injury.

Kevin Gallen: 6.5 – Linked up well enough and had his chances but didn't make the difference Hatch did.

Tom Craddock: 7.5 – One of his best games on the left. A constant menace and deserved a goal.

Matthew Barnes-Homer (sub): 8 – Pace and power made a real difference. Tonight with him and Hatch we saw the future.

Liam Hatch (sub): 8 – How the Hatters have missed him. Brilliant in the air and a real handful for the opposition.

Jake Howells (sub): 6 – Not long on the pitch, but got involved playing in central midfield and helped see the game out.

Kovacs starts in style

DEBUTANT Janos Kovacs delivered the killer blow as Town claimed a well-deserved 2-0 victory against Histon at the Glass World Stadium last night.

The centre-half will steal the headlines after scoring Town's first, but it was the introduction of fit-again Liam Hatch at half time that made all the difference.

His physical presence and high workrate galvanised Luton in the second half and Town richly deserved their second goal from Asa Hall that sealed victory.

Histon almost made a dream start after just 25 seconds as Luton were saved by the woodwork in the opening moments for the second game running.

Nathaniel Knight-Percival burst down the left and put a teasing cross in behind Town's defence. One Histon player missed out but Bradley Hudson-Odoi picked up at the far post only to slam his shot against the bar.

Having started slowly, the Hatters then wasted a gilt-edged opportunity on eight minutes. Newton's low cross was prodded goalwards by Gallen, but Tom Craddock's first-time effort was high and wide when he should have done better.

by Mark Wood

01582 798517 mark.wood@jpress.co.uk

The Stutes were giving Town a torrid time and went close again soon after. Gareth Gwillim put in a tantalising cross but Danny Wright was just unable to connect from inside the six yard box.

After a lull the Hatters started to work their way back into the game and went close just after the half-hour. Keith Keane dug out a dangerous cross from the right but Gallen's deflected effort span just wide.

Nicholls' then launched a crossfield ball that found Craddock who played in Freddie Murray on the overlap. He did well to pull the ball back across the area but Adam Tann did enough to get in his challenge on Gallen.

Reinvigorated, the Hatters had more than one chance to find the net on 34 minutes. Gallen's through ball found Newton who did well to beat his man and skip past the keeper, but the angle was too tight for him to get his shot in.

The winger's first cross found sub Matthew Barnes-Homer, but his effort was repelled, while

Newton's second effort found Gallen at the far post, but his shot trickled just wide of the post.

It was the Stutes that ended the half strongest and they could have grabbed one before the break when Wright turned George Pilkington and exposed Kovacs' lack of pace only to loft his effort over the bar.

However, Town burst into life in stoppage time, with Craddock, Barnes-Homer and Keane all threatening, but they couldn't find the net as the two sides went in all square.

Town brought on Hatch in place of Gallen at half time as the target man made his first appearance since the beginning of October.

Hatch's introduction gave Luton a real boost as they started to take the game to the Stutes and they got their reward on 52 minutes when Nicholls whipped in a great corner and Kovacs swooped in to head home at the near post.

And Luton thought they had doubled their lead 13 minutes later when Hatch rose highest to head home another Nicholls corner, but the big man was harshly penalised for a foul on Danny Naisbitt in the Histon goal.

Craddock and Barnes-Homer then combined in a fluent move moments later, but Newton's slide-rule strike flashed past the post.

With Histon chasing an equaliser the game opened up and Town began to open their hosts up and got a well deserved second on 73 minutes.

Hall again pushed forward and when Barnes-Homer chested the ball into his path, he made no mistake as he stroked home into the bottom corner from 18 yards.

And the visitors should have made it three with seven minutes left when Barnes-Homer and Newton combined beautifully to put the winger through one-on-one with Naisbitt, but the Histon stopper saved well with his feet.

Hall's header dropped just wide in the last minute and Max York managed Histon's only shot on target in injury time when his long range bullet strike was well saved by Kevin Pilkington, but it made little difference as Town cantered to victory.

HATTERS: K Pilkington, Gnaka (Barnes-Homer 28), G Pilkington, Kovacs, Murray, Newton, Nicholls (Howells 77), Keane, Hall, Gallen (Hatch 46), Craddock.