

Hall-mark strike from midfielder

Eastbourne Borough 0 (0)
Luton Town 1 (1)

EXPECTANT Hatters midfielder Asa Hall admitted he could have had a hat-trick as Town ground out a 1-0 victory at Eastbourne Borough on Saturday, writes Mark Wood.

It was the 23-year-old midfielder's sixth strike of the season, but he was left to curse in-form keeper Danny Knowles who prevented him from making even greater strides to his 15-goal target for the campaign.

Hall said: "I nearly had a hat-trick today. He pulled off two great saves, but to get the important goal is brilliant.

"I need to get on a little but of a roll now."

Hall's goal was a trademark daisy-cutter and he admitted he always tries to think about how he finishes.

He said: "Any goal is great. I would take a tap in, but from outside the box is a bit special.

"I always try and hit them low and in the corner. Everyone wants to put them in the top corner from 40 yards."

The goalscoring midfielder was pleased with the result and believes that a big victory is coming.

He continued: "It's fantastic. We have come with the mentality to get goals and keep the lead as long as we can.

"I think it's going to be more comfortable at some point."

The rangy midfielder also revealed that he thinks the Hatters have finally come to terms with the challenge of the Blue Square Premier.

He said: "We are learning what teams are all about. We have got to compete and win our battles first and foremost.

"After the Ebbsfleet game it's given everybody a wake-up call. We all want to try and win every single game, which is possible. If we can do that for a few weeks the table will look very interesting."

And he believes Luton have got a big enough squad to cope with the wealth of games coming up, adding: "It keeps everyone on a roll and everyone on their toes.

"We've got a great squad. The gaffer is really pleased to pick from the players he has got with strength in numbers."

Town made a great start to their first-ever game at Borough's Langney Sports Club home and almost snatched the lead after just two minutes.

Matthew Barnes-Homer squeezed the ball through for the overlapping Tom Craddock who put in a great low cross, but Hall's low effort was well saved by keeper Knowles.

And it was Knowles who again came to the home side's rescue just three minutes later. Kevin



POWER AND CONTROL: Asa Hall drives home Luton Town's winning goal

Nicholls' lovely cross picked out Hall at the far post whose header back across goal was headed goalwards by Craddock, but Knowles threw himself superbly to his left to save one-handed.

Eastbourne looked lively on the counter-attack though, and only a great block by George Pilkington prevented Liam Enver-Marum from testing Mark Tyler.

But Town deservedly took the lead on nine minutes with a fine Hall strike.

The goalscoring midfielder received the ball 25 yards out and he buried a firm effort low into the bottom left-hand corner.

Town failed to clear a corner on 11 minutes, but Marc Pullan didn't connect properly and his effort was easily saved by Mark Tyler.

Hall almost made it two midway through the half but his stooping header from a Nicholls corner was blocked by Knowles.

The action was fast and frantic, but both sides lacked that extra little bit of composure that could

have made all the difference.

Jamie Taylor whistled a shot wide after a surging run for the Sports, while Claude Gnackpa also flashed a shot wide of the mark after showing some nice control in the box.

As his confidence grew, the Frenchman displayed increasing Gallic flair, sending a powerful drive just over on the stroke of half time, while Enver-Marum forced a good save out of Tyler with his feet.

Eastbourne started the second half positively, Joe Benjamin toe-poking just wide after 25 seconds.

The game became stretched in the second period, but Luton rarely looked in danger.

Craddock, Hall and Rossi Jarvis all fired in efforts, but they had Tyler to thank for preserving their lead with 12 minutes to go.

Enver-Marum's great shot was destined for the top corner, but Tyler was at his best to tip his effort over as Luton continued their fantastic form on their travels.