



SWEET STRIKE:
Asa Hall nets the
winning goal for
Luton

PICTURE: Gareth Owen

ASA THE ACE BURIES BORO

A SUPERB ninth-minute strike by Asa Hall kept Luton among the play-off places as Eastbourne were made to pay for a poor first half performance at Priory Lane.

It was the Hatters' seventh successive clean sheet away from home, but boss Richard Money felt his side should have scored more goals.

"Overall, I thought it was a thoroughly professional, convincing performance," the boss said. "We could have had more than one goal in the opening nine minutes and we should certainly have been more than one in front at half-time."

"It is never comfortable when you are only one up, but at this stage of the season it's the three points that become all important. If you can play well on top, then that's a bonus and I thought today we had so much quality possession we should have won by two or three goals."

Borough manager Garry Wilson believes his side is capable of taking points against any team at Priory Lane, but was critical of his

By Ken McEwan

side's performance over the opening 45 minutes. "We made a poor start and that did the damage," he said. "It was a big game for us and we certainly expected the team to have more energy early on."

"In the second half we were more solid, but when we did create a chance the keeper made a great save. We certainly felt we had a good penalty shout when Gary Elphick was pushed in the back."

Only the sterling, snow-clearing efforts of an army of volunteers, including Eastbourne supporters, committee members and even referee Ian Cooper enabled the match to go ahead. Just 24 hours earlier the ground had been under several inches of snow.

Borough's Ben Austin returned after injury, while fellow defender Darren Baker was playing his 850th senior match for the club.

The Hatters were soon showing their meat business and home keeper Danny Knowles was in action twice in the opening four minutes, both times denying Tom Craddock with brilliant saves.

But there was nothing Knowles could do about what proved to be the only goal of the game, Hall's sizzling low drive from 25 yards flashing into the bottom corner of the net.

Borough were rarely able to get a look in early on as Knowles again did well to keep out a low header from Hall.

Serious Eastbourne attacks were few and far between, although Jamie Taylor created a moment of anxiety for Luton, beating two players in a fine run before sending his edge-of-the-area shot inches wide.

Borough made a bright start to the second half, but continued to have trouble creating clear cut chances. With Simon Johnson outstanding in midfield

MATCH STATS EASTBOURNE v LUTON

4	SHOTS ON TARGET	6
3	SHOTS OFF TARGET	5
6	CORNERS	7
0	OFFSIDE	4
6	FOULS CONCEDED	12
2	YELLOW CARDS	1
0	RED CARDS	0

STAR MAN: Danny Knowles (Eastbourne)
ATT: 2 018

ENTERTAINMENT: ★★★★★
REF RATING: Ian Cooper 7/10

EASTBOURNE: 4-4-2: Knowles 8, Baker 7 (N Crabb 82, 86), Elphick 7, Austin 7, Pullan 7, Armstrong 6, M Crabb 6, Johnson 8, Taylor 7, Benjamin 7, Enver-Marum 6. Subs not used: Lightwood, Smart, Weatherstone, Rowe.
LUTON: 4-5-1: Tyler 7, Kovacs 7, Pilkington 7, Gnappka 7 (Howells 90, 95), Murray 7, Nicholls 7, Newton 7, Hall 8, Jarvis 3, Craddock 8, Barnes-Homer 7 (Nwoko 80, 86). Subs not used: Gore, Asafu-Adjaye, Gallen.

they managed to put Luton under pressure and Mark Tyler made a spectacular save to deny Liam Enver-Marum. Soon after he was tested by Gary Elphick.

There were loud Eastbourne appeals for a penalty when Elphick went down in the area, but the referee would have none of it.

Borough kept battling away for an equaliser, but against a well organised Luton rearguard, it was an uphill task.

When the final whistle went, keeper Knowles' free-kick from the halfway line was headed clear from a mass Hatters' defence, ensuring a deserved third win on the bounce for the visitors.