

Man marking

Simon Rayner: One flap just before half-time almost gifted Luton the lead but was otherwise assured. 6

Simon Rusk: Solid display from the reliable right back. Coped well with the pace of the Hatters wingers and a great block. 7

Karl Broadhurst: Superb block before the break that kept the scores level was the highlight of an excellent afternoon's work. 8

Adam Quinn: His header set up Ben Smith for the winning goal but his all-round game was back to his best. 8

Sam Rents: Was worked hard all afternoon but came through admirably. Offered little going forward. 6

Barry Cogan: Is really starting to come into his own for the Reds now. Had a great chance to double Crawley's lead but sent his shot wide. 7

Thomas Pinault: Was having another quiet afternoon but it all clicked for him in the second half. Found some space on the ball to show off the range and vision of his passing. 8

Eddie Hutchinson: Covered huge amounts of ground to protect the back four and should take credit for the team's overall defensive display. 7

Ben Smith: Wonderful display and finally got the rewards his recent performances have deserved. Brutal finish for his first. 9

Lewis Killeen: Got his chance in the starting line-up ahead of Michael Malcolm but failed to take it. 5

Charlie Ademeno: Led the line well without being at his best. 7

Substitutes:
Michael Malcolm: Offered little in last 20 minutes.
Danny Forrest: Willing runner late on.
Glenn Wilson: Came on to kill time after Smith's winner.

Town roar back to shock the Hatters



Simon Osborn at Broadfield Stadium

CRAWLEY TOWN	2
LUTON TOWN	1

THE fat lady may not have started singing after last weekend's loss at Wrexham, but in terms of Crawley's play-off ambitions she was certainly doing vocal exercises in her dressing room.

But, following this home victory over high-flying Luton Town, she will have to wait a little longer for her curtain call.

A Ben Smith second-half double, either side of substitute Matt Barnes-Homer's equaliser, earned three valuable points for the Devils.

In truth it is unlikely that Town's small squad will be able to maintain this form that brought them to within sight of the play-offs - as David can only beat Goliath so often.

But a few more results like this, against a side who were playing in the Championship just three seasons ago, means the Reds more optimistic supporters will be able to dream for a little longer.

"We deserved to win and I think we were unfortunate not to win more comfortably," said Reds boss Steve Evans after the game. "If Barry Cogan had hit it the other side of the post it would have been 2-0 and we might have gone on to give them a bit of a drubbing at that stage."

"But when they got their goal we hung in there for five minutes and defended well and then we got the winner. It would have been nice if Ademeno could have put the chance at the end away as



STRETCH: Eddie Hutchinson just manages to get to the ball during Crawley's 2-1 victory over Luton Town at the Broadfield on Saturday afternoon.

I think 3-1 would have been a fairer score.

"I'm not complaining though as any win against Luton is a good result as you just have to look at their quality. If they can keep the boy Hutch on and someone of the quality of Barnes-Homer on the bench then they have quality in every position, but that's what you expect from a club like Luton.

"To have any chance of catching up with the sides above us we had to win. It felt strange saying to the players at half-time that if we were still level in injury-time that we'd send the keeper up for a corner! But if we are honest a point would not have suited us today."

Yet for much of the afternoon it looked as though the dream would end here, with moments belonging more to a nightmare.

The Hatters were marginally the better team throughout an awful first half, and they created their first chance of the game after eight minutes.

Keith Keane intercepted a Lewis Killeen cross before breaking up field. The midfielder then showed good awareness to find winger Kevin Gallen on the right flank. Gallen then floated in a delightful ball that looped over Simon Rayner, but was bundled behind for a corner with Keane himself prowling dangerously at the back post having continued his run into the area.

At the other end Sam Rents had a free-kick deflected wide before Killeen volleyed the corner over

the bar from the back post. This was not a game for the purists, and the opening goal almost came in ridiculous circumstances. Rayner came out and missed a Luton corner before the ball hit Adam Quinn, bounced up onto the underside of the cross-bar, before falling perfectly into the arms of a red faced, and highly fortunate, Rayner.

Crawley came flying out of the traps at the start of the second half and Mark Tyler in the visitors' goal had to be at full stretch to deny Barry Cogan.

Smith then found Ademeno to the left of the Luton area and the forward's cross fell kindly for Cogan whose shot whistled inches over the bar.

But the Reds did go ahead moments later. Smith won the ball from Freddie Murray on the far right of the area and charged in towards Tyler. The midfielder hit a fierce drive into the bottom corner to send Town's largest home gate of the season into raptures.

The Reds were on fire and Cogan curled a delightful shot just wide of the post when it looked for all the world that he would double the advantage.

But not for nothing had Luton gone without defeat on the road since October, and they showed the fighting spirit they will need in the play-offs themselves at the end of the year.

Barnes-Homer, who had looked anonymous after coming off the bench, showed his true worth in the 78th minute. The winger was

Fact file: The teams

Crawley Town: Rayner, Rusk, Broadhurst, Quinn, Rents, Pinault (Wilson 88), Hutchinson, Cogan (Forrest 87), Killeen (Malcolm 70), Ademeno, Smith.
Unused subs: Jordan, Napper.

Luton Town: Tyler, Newton, Murray, Kovacs, Pilkington, Jarvis, Hall (Gnapska 52), Nicholls (Barnes-Homer 58), Keane, Gallen (Hatch 58), Craddock. Unused subs: Gore, Howells. Unused: Kovacs, Craddock.

in the perfect place to blast home Liam Hatch's cross for the equaliser from eight yards out.

Now the momentum was back with the Hatters and Broadhurst had to be at his best to deny Craddock at the back post with a desperate block as the visitors smelt blood.

Yet, as so often with Crawley, there was one last twist in the tale. Cogan floated a free-kick to the back post where Quinn rose highest to head the ball back across goal. There, flying in, was Smith, who nodded the ball past the desperate Tyler to keep the Reds' dream alive.

In injury-time Ademeno was one-on-one with Tyler, but he could not make the game safe as his shot was saved.

'Had to win': Evans

