

Wasteful Hatters have to do it all over again

by Mark Wood

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FA Trophy first round
Luton Town 0 (0)
Welling United 0 (0)

EXPERIENCED defender Craig Hinton enjoyed getting back into the swing of things as he finally made his Luton debut in Town's goalless home draw against Welling United on Sunday.

Despite creating a slew of chances profligate Luton let Blue Square Bet South high-flyers Welling United off the hook as this FA Trophy first round tie somehow finished goalless.

Youthful Luton created opportunities and completely dominated the second half against the limited Wings, but couldn't find the killer touch.

But 33-year-old Hinton, who is on loan from Northampton Town, was just delighted to be back in action. He said: "I just want to play games. I've probably played three games since the last game of last season.

"I want to get back enjoying my football and playing each week.

"At the age I am you need to be playing week in week out.

"It's nice to be involved in things out on the field playing.

"It's just building fitness and getting back into the swing of things. That's most important thing to me at the moment. To play, to get my fitness up and get in the swing.

"I'm enjoying it at the club and the atmosphere is great."

Hinton felt the Hatters need to



NOT AGAIN: Taiwo Atieno sees another chance go begging at the weekend

Pictures by Colin Bridges

the ball just wide.

A mistake by Poku ended with Andy Pugh lashing an effort well over while Asafu-Adjaye bounced in a shot that was easily saved by Stewart as the sides went in goalless at the break.

The Hatters almost made the perfect start to the second half but Andy Sambrook's bullet of a defensive header was brilliantly turned over the bar by Stewart.

Poku flayed well wide before the Walkers again combined with Atieno only able to slide Dan's near post cross wide.

A storming run from Dan Walker ended with him dragging an effort just wide on 57 minutes before a lovely move saw him slip Atieno through but he could only lift his effort over.

Atieno then missed a gilt-edged opportunity to give Luton the lead when he raced on to a poor defensive mistake but, one on one with Stewart, he could only poke the ball wide.

The Kenyan was having a torrid time as he skipped past his man in the box but again dragged his effort agonisingly wide.

Substitute JJ O'Donnell shot off target, before the offside flag denied Dan Walker as his fine volley was chalked off.

The Wings keeper then produced a fabulous save to thwart the Hatters on 83 minutes, somehow pushing O'Donnell's daisy-cutter on to the post.

Howells curled a late free-kick straight at Stewart but whatever they tried, Town couldn't find a way through.

be more deadly in front of goal in the replay, saying: "We had a bit of possession second half and they probably tired a little bit.

"They came with a game plan and it seemed to work for them and we weren't clinical enough at the other end.

"It's a very, very young side that's learning their trade."

It was one-way traffic in the second half and the defender admitted the most difficult aspect was keeping up the confidence of those who were missing the chances.

Hinton added: "It (the domination) make it easier for us in a certain sense. It's just concentration and keeping people positive.

"They need to get going and not get their head down and keep trying."

The Hatters have nine changes from the team that battled to

a 3-1 defeat against League One Charlton Athletic in their FA Cup second round replay on Thursday night.

The only players to retain their places for the visit of Welling were goalkeeper and captain for the day Mark Tyler and Jake Howells.

There were full debuts for youngsters Alex Lacey and Godfrey Poke and veteran centre-half Hinton and starts for Taiwo Atieno, Alex Lawless, Ed Asafu-Adjaye, Pavel Besta, Jason Walker and Dan Walker.

Atieno had a 10th-minute header easily saved by Gareth Stewart while a Lawless short corner was blasted over the bar by Poku.

The Wings almost snatched the lead out of nothing on 36 minutes. Loui Fazakerley whipped a dangerous free-kick into the box and a scrambling Tyler just deflected