

pilks happy to win 'ugly'

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by Mark Wood

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Blue Square Bet Premier
Kidderminster Harriers 1 (0)
Luton Town 2 (1)

"UGLY" Hatters put in a solid and hard-working performance to claim a 2-1 victory against Kidderminster Harriers at Aggborough on Saturday.

The visitors welcomed George Pilkington and Shane Blackett back to their defence after long injury lay-offs.

Captain Pilkington was disappointed this side didn't reward themselves with a deserved clean sheet as Harriers pulled back a late goal to set up a grandstand finish after Robbie Willmott's brace had put Luton in command.

Roared on by Town's travelling army of 931 fans, Pilkington said: "We heard them throughout the game. It was pleasing for the players that we put a good performance in and did the ugly side of the game well. We looked to turn them and get up the pitch and the effort and endeavour was there.

"It's a great result. The lads worked exceptionally hard and Kidderminster are tough opposition. But I'm disappointed not to keep a clean sheet but the result and three points were brilliant.

"It was a very solid performance, but very disappointing we didn't reward ourselves with a clean sheet."

Pilkington admitted Town sat a bit too deep but praised their midfield and work ethic adding: "We were probably a bit guilty of wanting to turn them. Maybe we could have kept the ball a bit better.

"The midfield worked so hard, tackles and second balls and competed well all over the pitch."

With Jake Howells on Welsh U21 duty and Adam Watkins dropping to the bench both Pilkington and Blackett started.

Town almost made an ideal start when Amari Morgan-Smith put in a crunching challenge on keeper Dean Lyness, but unfortunately for Luton the ball rebound-

DOUBLING UP:
Robbie Willmott
in action, right,
and netting the
first goal, main

Pictures by Kidderminster Shuttle and Adrian Hoskins



ed the wrong side of the posts.

Callum Gittings dragged a long range effort well wide, before Pilkington produced a superb block to deny the same player on the edge of the box on 17 minutes.

A lovely passing move ended in Jamie Hand driving a long-range effort just over, while Keith Keane, restored to the centre of midfield, saw his bouncing bomb of an effort well fielded by Lyness. The rejuvenated Aaron O'Connor saw a low effort run just wide, while a powerful weaving run by Morgan-Smith drew a fairly routine stop from Lyness after half an hour.

A swerving effort from James Vincent failed to trouble Tyler, while James Dance's pinpoint pass almost unlocked the Harriers defence on 34 minutes but Lee Vaughan recovered well in the nick of time to turn Willmott's effort past the post.

Town were playing with real intent and deservedly took the lead six minutes before the break. Morgan-Smith robbed Mike Williams on the right, before outpacing the full-back as he burst into the box and showed great awareness to unselfishly square the ball for the onrushing Willmott to stroke home into the unguarded net.

Kidderminster always looked dangerous going forward and should have equalised a minute before the break. Hand's tackle broke kindly for Vincent and he expertly laid it into the path of Tom Sharpe, but Curtis Osano got back to save the Hatters with

a well-timed tackle.

Again the ball dropped nicely for Harriers but Janos Kovacs threw himself in the way to superbly block Jamille Matt's point-blank effort.

The half ended in breathless fashion, O'Connor breaking into the box in stoppage time and forcing a sprawling stop from Lyness, with Willmott's follow-up somehow blocked on the line. Just before the whistle the ball broke to Dance with Lyness out of his ground, but his lob, destined for the net, was headed away from harm by the well-placed Sharpe.

At the start of the second half, Keane saw yellow for an ugly lunge, which curtailed his influence.

A Nick Wright header ran wide, while Gittings' suicidal pass almost let Willmott in but Michael Briscoe made a well-timed tackle to deny the winger.

Town were soaking up the pressure as they looked to hit Harriers on the break and survived a handball appeal against Pilkington as substitute Marc Williams almost made something out of a Kovacs error. Willmott and substitute Stuart Fleetwood combined brilliantly on 70 minutes, with Lyness saving from the winger with an outstretched boot.

Kyle Storer sent an effort from distance harmlessly wide of Tyler's right-hand upright while Wright wastefully spiralled past goal as Kidderminster stepped up the pace against tiring Town.



Town went 4-4-2 with the introduction of Danny Crow for Dance, while Kidderminster bossed possession as Luton looked harried.

However, the Hatters should have put the game to bed with 12 minutes to go when Hand won the ball in the middle and slipped Fleetwood through but he could only warm the gloves of Lyness from a narrow angle.

Luton finally netted their second on 82 minutes when Morgan-Smith beat Wright all ends up with some brilliant skill before floating the ball to the far post where Willmott was on hand to glance home.

Storer saw an audacious long range effort fly wide, while Town should have grabbed a third when Fleetwood got in behind but his dinked cross found Crow on his heels and the chance went begging.

Kidderminster made for a nervy ending when they pulled a goal back with three minutes to go. Williams made inroads on the right and, rather than shooting, unselfishly squared for Sharpe to fire home from a yard out.

Fleetwood almost settled Luton's nerves but his rasping drive flew just wide of the post as three minutes of stoppage time were added.

Harriers pressed for a leveller and Vincent came closest when he sent a volley from the edge of the area flying over the bar, but Luton clung on for three more valuable points.