

Magic Watkins nets cup winner

FA Cup, first round proper

Luton Town 1 (0)
Northampton Town 0 (0)

GAMBLER Adam Watkins was delighted after netting an instinctive volley as non-league Luton stunned League Two strugglers Northampton Town in the first round of the FA Cup on Saturday.

Watkins had only been on the pitch five minutes when he hit the winner 10 minutes from time and said: "I'm delighted just to get the win for the boys, that's the main thing, but it's great to come on and score the winner and cause a little bit of an upset.

"I still think my favourite is the goal against Barrow at home, but I was delighted with this and thought it was the most difficult finish I've had.

"I gamble a lot. It just sat up and came up high to me and I hit it crisp with my left foot and it's just sailed in. It was on my weaker foot as well and just delighted to score and get us through to the second round.

"The gaffer puts me on to try and make an impact. I was a little bit disappointed I didn't start but I've got to keep working hard and coming off the bench trying to score goals and trying to make an impact.

"It wasn't a pretty game of football, I'll be honest. But you've got to do that in the FA Cup, that's what it's all about, grinding out a win and getting through to the next

by Mark Wood

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round and I'm delighted."

Town made three changes from the side that lost 2-1 to Fleetwood Town last week and started brightly when Jake Howells made a darting run to the byline, but his pull-back found no takers.

Early shouts for a penalty were turned down by referee Andy D'Urso when Michael Jacobs' dangling foot seemed to catch Amari Morgan-Smith, before keeper Kevin Pilkington pulled off a great close-range save to turn Adebayo Akinfenwa's downward header over the bar after he had been left unmarked from Jacobs' free-kick.

A stonewall penalty appeal was then again turned down by D'Urso as John Johnson blatantly pushed Morgan-Smith over in the box.

Moments later Northampton had the ball in the net following a quickly-taken free-kick but Saido Berahino's strike was chalked out for offside. Injuries forced the lively Morgan-Smith and Keith Keane off as Town's hoodoo hit again on the stroke of half time.

Substitute Danny Crow had an immediate chance when the ball ricocheted into his path after good work by Aaron O'Connor, but he was unable to control it and, in injury time, Jamie Hand's deep free-kick found George Pilkington unmarked at the far post but he could

only send his header wide.

The Cobblers started the second half far brighter, substitute Arron Davies' curler flashing just wide six minutes in, before O'Connor was twice denied by keeper Sam Walker.

An attempted cross from Berahino drew a great tip over from Kevin Pilkington on 64 minutes, before a Crow effort was deflected and O'Connor flicked wide from Robbie Willmott's corner.

The ever-alert Kevin Pilkington got down well to deny Davies on 66 minutes as his low shot crept through a crowd of bodies. Twice the Cobblers went close with headers in a matter of minutes, Johnson powering over from close range and Akinfenwa sending his effort straight at Kevin Pilkington.

A sizzling effort from Willmott was saved at the second attempt by Walker before the Hatters snatched the winner with 10 minutes to go.

Howells' cross was only cleared as far as Watkins on the edge of the box and his first-time left-foot volley was simply too good for Walker.

Jacobs was a whisker away from an equaliser when his long-range effort fizzed just wide with five minutes to go and then jinked through a number of tackles before lasering inches over the bar.

Berahino threatened in injury time but his effort was well over the bar as Town booked their place in the second round of this season's competition.

SUPERMAN:
Adam Watkins
dives to the
floor as he
celebrates his
FA Cup winner
at the weekend

Pictures by Jane Russell

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