

Keane: We let Town supporters down

by Mark Wood

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FA Trophy semi-final, second leg

Luton Town 1 (1) York City 1 (0)
(York win 2-1 on aggregate)

LETTING the fans down was behind Keith Keane's all-action display in Saturday's 1-1 FA Trophy semi-finals second leg draw with York City.

Robbie Willmott's first half tap-in had given the Hatters hope, but Town's Wembley dreams were ended in heartbreaking fashion as the Minstermen's Matty Blair headed home a close-range equaliser in the last minute.

Keane lamented: "We didn't do enough in the first game. Partly that's my fault for getting sent off.

"It just wasn't our day, it wasn't meant for us to go through. We had chances we didn't take and got punished.

"I think it was mainly heartbreaking because we had played so well. For 80 minutes I felt we were on top, played some really good stuff, and that's why I thought we may have deserved to win.

"But we didn't get the second goal and got punished for it.

"That's what they say in the game, when you are on top you've got to punish teams. If you don't you're the ones that get punished and that's what happened.

"We played really well for 45 minutes, had them penned in the whole half, and just couldn't get that second goal.

"They had that spell in the second half which any team is always going to have, and we coped with it and kicked on, but just couldn't get that second goal."

On his own performance, Keane said: "I felt I owed the club, the team and even the supporters a performance because of getting sent off.

"It was stupid of me to get sent off. I get booked all the time but I don't get sent off, it was just a stupid mistake. I felt I owed everyone a performance and that's what I did."

The midfielder was inches away from connecting with a Willmott cross-cum-shot that could have altered the course of the game, adding: "I just saw it coming across, dived at it and I think Robbie hit it a bit too hard.

"It's just one of them things, on

DISPLAY: Keith Keane felt he owed the club after his red card at York



another day it would have hit my head and gone in, but it just wasn't our day."

Town made four changes from the side that grabbed a 1-1 draw at lowly Darlington last Tuesday night with Jake Howells, Keane, Curtis Osano and Stuart Fleetwood coming in for cup-tied duo Craig McAllister and Godfrey Poku, Adam Watkins dropped to the bench and Ed Asafu-Adjaye missed out with a back injury, as Town started with a 4-4-2 formation.

Luton should have taken the lead after just five minutes when Alex Lawless slipped through Fleetwood but his angled drive just beat the far post.

Crow's low effort had to be touched round the post by Michael Ingham as Town completely bossed the first half.

Some lenient refereeing let the Minstermen get away with too many fouls and too much time-wasting, while Willmott looked lively, having one firecracker headed away.

A deep-free-kick from Osano was headed down by Janos Kovacs on 35 minutes but Howells could only scoop wide, before Town took the lead two minutes before the break.

Daniel Parslow missed Kovacs' long ball over the top as Danny Crow raced through and unselfishly squared for Willmott to prod past Ingham and square the tie.

Ineffective former Hatters striker Jason Walker, whose every touch had been jeered, was replaced by the dangerous Ashley Chambers at the break, and he almost made an instant impact as his 25-yarder flew just over.

York looked far more purposeful and should have equalised on 56 minutes when Chambers was on to a quickly-taken free-kick, skipped past Osano and sold the covering defence a dummy before dragging wide with just Mark Tyler to beat.

Substitute Watkins was straight into the action as he fed Howells who was cynically fouled by Jamal Fyfield and was lucky to escape with just a yellow card.

Willmott whipped in a great effort from the free kick but Ingham did well to beat it away.

At the other end, Patrick McLaughlin's threaded ball came off Chambers' heels with him clean through, before Watkins powered clear on 73 minutes with options either side, but delayed too long and when he found Howells, his effort was deflected behind.

York had another great chance when Blair scampered down the right and crossed low to the near post, but Jamie Reed could only find Tyler's midriff.

More Minstermen rough-housing saw Reed catch George Pilkington with a terrible late, high challenge but again just saw yellow in complete contrast to how Town were treated in the first leg.

Town ratcheted up the pressure in the closing moments as Willmott's corner was headed back by Kovacs but Crow's fine volley was deflected as it dipped just over.

There was late heartbreak for Luton as Fyfield angled in a great 90th-minute cross and Blair was allowed to plant his free header home from just six yards to book York's place at Wembley.