

Stu-pondous

Fleetwood fires two and even McAllister nets as Town keep in the play-off hunt

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BLUE SQUARE BET PREMIER

LUTON TOWN 3
EBBSFLEET UNITED 0

IT was branded a must-win game, and the Hatters did just that, beating Ebbsfleet United with a confident and assured performance.

A brace from rejuvenated striker Stuart Fleetwood and a last-minute effort from Craig McAllister – who finally broke his duck for the season – gave Luton all three crucial points to kick-start a pivotal week for the club's play-off ambitions. Rivals Kidderminster are up next on Saturday and though Luton are one place and two points outside off the top five – after ten-man York City beat Cambridge United 1-0 – their future is still in their hands.

Under the floodlights the Hatters quickly settled into their stride, and a neat passing move provided their first attack on goal.

Surging into the box, Jake Howells crossed to Andre Gray whose powerful header was only kept out by the outstretched arm of Ebbsfleet goalkeeper Tom McNeil.

Luton subjected the visiting stopper to Luton after attack with Adam Watkins, Fleetwood and Gray all faced with opportunities to break the deadlock.

The injury list at Ebbsfleet is so severe that they could only name four substitutes and the first, Lanre Azeez, was called on within the first 15 minutes after Liam Enver-Marum was

stretched off. But still Luton could not capitalise on their advantage and despite technical play, tight passing and good movement, all that was missing was an end product.

The best chance of the half fell for Fleetwood, whose looping volley had the keeper beaten until Ross Smith cleared the effort off the line at the last second.

However, with the striker closing in the defender appeared to grab a handful of his shirt which should have resulted in a red card but only brought a caution.

Fears of repeating Saturday's goalless draw at Alfreton might have resurfaced as the interval approached, but in the fourth minute of stoppage time the Hatters deservedly took the lead.

Gray chested the ball down to Fleetwood, who emphatically buried the chance. The whistle had barely been blown for the restart when he scored a second.

Goalie McNeil could only parry a shot from the impressive Gray into the path of the striker, who confidently took his chance in front of the home faithful to record a second consecutive home double.

The third goal came in the last minute of stoppage time as substitute McAllister found the back of the net with almost his first kick of the game.

Luton: Tyler, Keane, Pilkington, Lawless, Willmott (Poku), Fleetwood, Howells, Osano, Gray (McAllister), Watkins (Blackett), Kovacs
Unused Subs: Dan Gleeson, Shane Blackett, John Paul Kissock