



RENDELL COMES TO THE RESCUE!

By Mark Wood

12/13 (FAC)

SCOTT RENDELL struck with six minutes to go to spare Luton's blushes and maintain the Hatters' interest in the FA Cup.

The former Wycombe and Cambridge striker headed home Jake Howells' free-kick for his seventh goal of the season, much to the relief of the frustrated Kenilworth Road faithful, after Tyrell Waite had given Boro a shock lead.

And it also brought a smile to the face of Hatters' boss Paul Buckle, who felt his side were worthy of the draw for all their possession.

He said: "It's disappointment really, not relief because we believe we are going to score with the amount of possession and chances we had."

"It was wave after wave of attack and it's not always easy to break down a defensive five sat in and a midfield three sat in. It's hard, there's no space."

"Our players worked extremely hard to create space all game. Obviously their goal gave them a lift and something to hold on to, but I'm absolutely delighted with the players."

A good advantage played by referee Robert Whitton and impressive work by Luton target Adam Walker helped to give Boro the lead on 19 minutes. His cross into the box was turned on by Danny Sleath to the far post where the unmarked Waite tapped home, despite strong claims for offside.

The Hatters bossed possession throughout but found resilient Nuneaton hard to break down. Ronnie Henry had a sharp snapshot well saved and Arnaud Mendy had a header cleared off the line as they searched for an equaliser, while the visitors twice went close to doubling their lead before the break.

First Dean Brill came rushing out to brilliantly deny Adam Walker from point-blank range and seconds later Waite found room on the edge of the box and Brill did just enough to save as the ball squirmed away from him and behind for a corner.

Boro continued to try and hit lethargic Luton on the break in the second half, but Town's pressure eventually took with six minutes to go when Jake Howells' free-kick picked out strike Scott Rendell at the far post as he headed home his seventh goal of the season to ensure both teams' names are in the hat for today's draw.

Boro boss Kevin Wilkin was proud of his team's efforts, adding: "Luton had the lion's share of possession but our keeper hasn't had to make a save that I can remember."

"I thought we were really organised and very structured. Everyone has given their all today."

LUTON: 4-3-3: Brill, Rowe-Turner (J Robinson 70), Kovacs, Walker, Rendell, Howells, Fleetwood (Watkins 83), Mendy, O'Donnell, Henry, Gray. Subs not used: Tyler, Dance, M Robinson, Longden, Lacey.

NUNEATON: 5-3-2: McNamara, Malaga, Cowan, Dean, Walker, Brown, Sleath, Fondick, James, McNamee (Armstrong 46), Waite (Taylor 72). Subs not used: York, Gordon, Thompson-Brown, O'Halloran.

STAR MAN: Jake Howells (Luton)

ENTERTAINMENT: ★★★★★

GET A LEG UP: Luton's Dan Walker stretches for the ball. Inset: Nuneaton celebrate Tyrell Waite's opener

PICTURE: Gareth Owen

