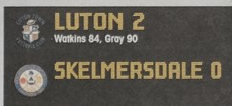


# LAWSON'S SO PROUD OF HIS SKEM HEROES

12/13  
(SAT)



**PROUD** Skelmersdale manager Tommy Lawson saluted his troops after they gave Luton a real scare in the FA Trophy before succumbing to two late goals.

Skem may sit three divisions below the Hatters, but it was only once Luton had emptied their bench that they finally pressed home their advantage in the last six minutes as all three of their substitutes played a part.

The first came when Stuart Fleetwood broke from defence and spread the play to fellow sub Adam Watkins who cut inside and buried a low left-footed effort inside keeper Sam Ashton's near post.

Then in stoppage time Arnaud Mendy released Fleetwood and he eventually managed to dig the ball out of his feet to find star striker Andre Gray, on as sub, at the far post who dinked the ball past the keeper to seal victory and book Town's place in the quarter-finals of the competition for the third season running.

Skem boss Lawson paid tribute to his players, currently unbeaten in Evo-Stik Northern Premier League Division One North.

He said: "I was really proud of the performance that the players put in. We worked very, very hard right until the death.

"I think the people of Skelmersdale can be proud of them today, I certainly am.

"It wasn't a case of hanging on, we thought we could win the game. We felt we had the opportunities to have won it.

"We've played well all season and the manager of Luton's just said to me on the way off 'I can see why you

**By Mark Wood**

haven't been beaten'. It's nice to hear an opposing manager speak like that.

"We are very, very proud of the players and what they've done up to now this season has been immense. Hopefully we've made a few friends here today."

Skem were not without their chances on the day and twice went close late on before Town finally put the game to bed.

First, Mike Phenix had seen his effort deflected into Mark Jackson's path, but he failed to connect properly with his

swivel and shot from six yards as he stroked tamely at Dean Brill.

And just before Luton netted their first they had struggled to clear a corner and Warren Bellow's blast was heading for the roof of the net until Jake Howells headed over the bar.

Lawson said: "The ball was underneath the bar and I don't know how the lad's got the header to head that away for a corner, but it was great defending."

Town boss Paul Buckle was delighted all three of his substitutes had contributed to Luton's victory and spared them a replay.

He added: "I asked the subs to go on and make a difference, because the last thing we wanted was a replay.

"We couldn't afford to have that with our fixtures now. As the clock was ticking I was thinking we would be facing a trip up to Liverpool.

"What it does prove is that if we stay solid and remain within a game, we know we can score. They were two good goals, to be fair."

## MATCH STATS

### LUTON v SK'DALE

|    |                  |    |
|----|------------------|----|
| 4  | SHOTS ON TARGET  | 3  |
| 5  | SHOTS OFF TARGET | 4  |
| 3  | CORNERS          | 6  |
| 4  | OFFSIDE          | 4  |
| 17 | FOULS CONCEDED   | 10 |
| 1  | YELLOW CARDS     | 2  |
| 0  | RED CARDS        | 0  |

**STAR MAN:** Jake Howells (Luton)  
**ATT:** 2,479

**ENTERTAINMENT:** ★★★★★

**REF RATING:** C Breakspear 8/10

**LUTON:** 4-4-2: Brill 6, Rowe-Turner 7, Lawless 6, Rendell 5, Howells 7, Ainge 6, Mendy 5, Dance 5 (Gray 46, 6), Robinson 5, Walker 5 (Fleetwood 68, 7), Jibodu 5 (Watkins 69, 7). **Subs not used:** Smith, Longden.

**SKELMERSDALE:** 4-4-2: Ashton 6, Jackson 7 (Burnett 83, 5), Phenix 6 (Hughes 78, 6), Bellow 6, Turner 5, Corgan 5, Field 5, McIntosh 5, Strickland 6, Woodcott 5, Hardwick 5. **Subs not used:** Wright, Morning, Hickey.