

IIuge congratulations must go to everyone connected with Luton Town after their thrilling success at Carrow Road yesterday. Having watched the whole game I can say that they thoroughly deserved to get something from the 90 minutes and despite the odd scare were fantastic value for their win.

We were very happy to offer an industry best price of 10/1 in mid-week for Paul Buckle's side to beat Norwich.

Not because we didn't think they could do it, but because we knew it would be a bet we would be happy to pay out on.

The last team from Non-League's top-flight to reach the Fifth Round was Crawley Town two seasons ago.

They coped with the distraction of a cup run, which ended at Old Trafford of all places, by going on to win the BSBF title.

The Hatters are still competing on three fronts but their sole aim will be to start next season in League 2.

I hope they can land a glamorous Cup tie and a deserved place on TV in this afternoon's draw.

The stats show that FA Cup runs can be very good for teams in terms of their league form.

Improvement

Since we have sponsored the three Conference divisions 22 teams have reached the Third Round (or further).

If you take off the three teams that achieved that feat this season you have 19 clubs, of which 12 improved their points per game haul in the league in the games AFTER the Third Round.

The average improvement was minimal overall, with just a 0.09 points per game improvement across all 19.

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Luton should take heart from the fact that in the last five seasons, of the 15 teams from the Premier division to have reached the Third Round (or further) eight of them made the top five, including two title winners.

Three of the other six made the Promotion Final, with Buckle's own Torquay side winning it in 2006/09.

At the start of the season we offered prices on which Non-League team would go the furthest in the Cup and Luton landed that accolade having been our 7/1 favourites at the start.

That was at the expense of Macclesfield Town who can also take plenty of positives from those stats as well as a great performance against Wigan Athletic yesterday.

The Premier League side needing a penalty to go through. Steve King's Macc outfit were rightly praised in plenty of circles for their silky passing and ability to play the game the right way. The case for three up/three down can only get stronger.

SUCCESS IN CUP BREEDS TITLE TILT

WE'VE DONE IT: Luton's Scott Rendell, centre, celebrates with team mates at the end of the match

PICTURE: Action Images

