

# Buckle dedicates amazing win to long-suffering Luton fans

By RICHARD RAE

In terms of coming back to earth, the prospect of Tuesday night's FA Trophy tie at Grimsby Town ensured the players and staff of Luton Town kept their celebrations within reasonable bounds after they pulled off the FA Cup's most significant giant-killing for 24 years.

"In some respects it's a more important game because it's a competition we can win," said Scott Rendell, the journeyman striker – Luton are the 12th club whose shirt he has worn during his career – who scored the goal which made the Hatters the first non-league side to knock out top-flight opposition since Luton United beat Coventry City in 1989.

His words were accompanied by a smile though, because it is hard to imagine that lifting the FA Trophy will create the national and international headlines created by their performance against the Canaries, who they beat 1-0. In some respects, said manager Paul Buckle, it was an easy game to prepare for.

"We knew they'd play the team that beat Peterborough in the last round and planned accordingly," said Buckle. "We couldn't afford to open the pitch up, it would have been suicide, so we cut it in half by letting them come on to us, pressed very well, limited them to two chances which goalkeeper Mark Tyler was ready for, and not only were we good enough to do that, but we were good enough to break and be clinical."



**PAUL BUCKLE**

Luton manager's tactics saw his non-league side beat Premier League Norwich

In short, the boys from Bedfordshire did a job on their illustrious opponents at Grimsby Town. Luton manager Chris Hughton starts on three regular Premier League starters in Grant Holt, Anthony Pilkington and Wes Hoolahan during the second half, it was the non-league replacements who made the difference to the outcome. Stuart Fleetwood's pass sent JJ O'Donnell down the left and Rendell got ahead of his marker Ryan Bennett to turn his cross past City goalkeeper Declan Rudd.

After years of almost unbroken misery, the 4,000 or so Luton supporters who had accompanied their heroes to Norfolk (the largest and by far the noisiest away contingent seen at Carrow Road) were finally fairly exploded with joy, and Luton striker, Jon Shaw, who never stopped running and covering before being replaced by Rendell, admitted he had come close to tears at the final whistle.

Buckle's first thoughts were also for

## NORWICH CITY 0



## LUTON TOWN 1

Goal: Luton Town Rendell 80.  
Substitutions: Norwich City Holt 6 (Kane, 6-1), Hoolahan (Burman, 72), Pilkington (Barnett, 73), Luton O'Donnell 6 (Mendy, 68), Rendell (Shaw, 74), Hetherwood (Gray, 75).  
Man of the match: Tyler. Match rating 6/10.  
Possession: Norwich 60%, Luton 40%.  
Attempts on target: Norwich 6, Luton 2.  
Referee: A. Mariner (West Midlands).  
Attendance: 26,521.

the supporters. "I'm so pleased for the fans, they've been right through the mill in the past few years. The noise they made today kept us going, and this win, and the win against Wolves in the last round, will hopefully keep them following us up and down the country," he said.

Tyler, a Norwich boy who didn't make it at Carrow Road but enjoyed a long career on the other side of the Fens with Peterborough United before moving to Luton, was similarly emotional.

"It's where I started, this is where I wanted to be as a little boy playing football," he said, gesturing at the stands, where many Norwich fans had waited to applaud Luton from the pitch. "To come back here, play and keep a clean sheet, means the absolute world to me and my family."

More practically it also means £90,000 is added to the approximate sum of £250,000 Luton reckon to have banked from this Cup run. Currently lying sixth in the Conference, one place outside the play-off places, Buckle's hope now is that he will be

given the go-ahead to strengthen his squad for the run-in.

"We're half way through our league season, we're in the fifth round of the FA Cup and still in the FA Trophy, and I can't ask any more of our players," he said. "We've missed out on so many players of late, the one thing we have to do is add to the squad. It's money I'm sure isn't accounted for, and what we have to do now is to plan on how we're going to take the club forward, that's all I want to do."

Hughton was gracious, as he always is. The six changes he made to the side last put out in the Premier League – and which was thrashed 5-0 by



Scott Rendell, of Luton Town, celebrates his winning goal at Carrow Road on Saturday

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# 24

Years since a non-league side last beat a top-flight team – Luton defeated Coventry in 1989

at the break, almost broke through with a diving header splendidly saved by Tyler, but otherwise the only time Norwich really looked like scoring, was when Leon Barnett's first-half header hit the post and came desperately close to rebounding in off his leg before being hacked clear by Alex Lawless.

"They came with a game plan but we should have been good enough to open them up," said Hughton, whose side has now won just once in their last eight games. "We certainly need to turn it round. We're in a downward spiral, but fortunately we have a big game here against Tottenham on Wednesday. This is a real blow, but we've been there before, and there's enough character and confidence in our changing room to turn it around."

Rendell was also looking to the future. "If we get a home draw in the next round there will be a few teams, not exactly worried, but looking at us a lot more seriously now," he said. "Nobody will want to come down to Kenilworth Road."

The team that must do exactly that is Millwall, giant killers themselves against Aston Villa. The Championship club will fancy their chances but will certainly heed Rendell's word.

The Welsh side stunned champions Arsenal through late goals from Mickey Thomas and Steve Watkin.

**2003 Shrewsbury 2-1 Everton**  
Former Toffees captain Kevin Ratcliffe (left) led the Shrews to a shock win against the side 80 places above them.

## MAGIC OF THE CUP BIGGEST UPSHOTS IN HISTORY

### ■ 1949 Yeovil 2-1 Sunderland

Top-flight Sunderland were humbled by the Southern League minnows at Hush Park, Eric Bryant scoring the winner on a stoppage pitch.

### ■ 1972 Hereford 2-1 Newcastle

The non-league side produced one of the great upsets against First Division Newcastle, Ronnie Radford and Ricky George scoring the goals.

### ■ 1984 Bournemouth 2-0

**Manchester United**  
The holders were undone by Harry Redknapp's Third Division side through strikes from Milton Graham and Ian Thompson.

### ■ 1992 Wrexham 2-1 Arsenal

Bottom of the Football League,



the Welsh side stunned champions Arsenal through late goals from Mickey Thomas and Steve Watkin.