



TENACIOUS TAMWORTH HOLD ON TO DENY TOWN

12/13

BATTLE: Luton's Jonathan Smith, right, and Tamworth's Lee Hendrie in action



By Mark Wood

LUTON'S faint play-off hopes are now over as Tamworth held on for a crucial point – after referee Adam Bromley had helped clear snow off the pitch to get the game on.

Whistler Bromley and home fans worked hard to get the game played but Luton couldn't capture the three points at Kenilworth Road.

The Hatters dominated proceedings throughout as they registered six shots on target and forced 18 corners, but couldn't find a way through.

After a mini-revival under John Still that gave a little light in the play-off tunnel, Luton's top five chances are now all but over.

The hosts' best chances came early in the second half when Alex Wall's far post header from Jon Shaw's cross bounced inches wide, before Shaw himself forced d his way into the box but Tom Marshall's last-ditch tackle was just enough to put him off as his effort flew past the far post. Town were rarely troubled at the back and kept up the pressure right until the very end, but couldn't find a way to silence the Lambs.

Town boss Still said: "I thought we defended superbly. I thought we created very, very good opportunities to score, but they didn't go in. A combination of reasonable defending, difficult conditions and poor finishing."

And Still was particularly disappointed Wall's second half header didn't find the net, as he continued: "To be fair that's one of the incidents where we should have scored because I thought the ball was in the air, it wasn't on the floor,



SNOW GO: Luton's Andre Gray, left, challenges Tamworth's Connor Gudgeon
PICTURE: Action Images

so it wasn't a difficult bounce, wasn't a difficult run.

"We should have scored that. There were two or three of those I felt that we should have and when I say score, I mean make the goalkeeper save it."

Tamworth had their best chances in the first half when Marcus Kelly intercepted Solomon Taiwo's loose pass on the halfway line and Luton keeper Mark Tyler grabbed his 20-year effort at the second attempt with Darren Byfield lurking.

And just before the break Danny Lloyd streaked past Simon Ainge and Tyler parried his acute blast with Ian Haines. Rowe-Turner muskicking and clearing at the second attempt.

Tamworth caretaker manager Dale Belford was delighted with the character

his side showed in blizzard-like conditions, but admitted that Luton had had the lion's share of chances on the day.

He said: "It was absolutely fantastic, I'm really proud of the lads. They've given absolutely everything on a very difficult pitch and it was like a throwback to years gone by – players don't complain and grumble and the referee gets on with it.

"In terms of chances Luton were far and away above ourselves, but we showed a lot of character and spirit. The referee contributed fantastically well with his performance."

He added: "Absolutely I'm interested in the job permanently. We've taken over 12 games ago and at the moment we're doing OK. But the biggest thing is just to continue doing what we're doing."

MATCH STATS

LUTON V TAMWORTH	
6 SHOTS ON TARGET	2
11 SHOTS OFF TARGET	3
16 CORNERS	2
3 OFFSIDE	0
9 FOULS CONCEDED	18
1 YELLOW CARDS	1
0 RED CARDS	0

STAR MAN: David Martin (Luton) AT: 5.50

ENTERTAINMENT: ★★ ★★
REF RATING: Adam Bromley 7/10

LUTON: 4-4-2: Tyler 7, Rowe-Turner 6, McNulty 7, Ainge 6, Howells 6, Martin 6, Smith 7, Goodman 6, Taiwo 6, Shaw 7, Hendrie 7.5, Wall 6 (Goal 61, 6). Subs not used: Robinson, Henry, Bitt.

TAMWORTH: 4-4-2: Mitchell 7, Kelly 6, Wyke 7, Marshall 7, Hendrie 6, Courtney 6, Gudgeon 7, Lloyd 6 (Wright 62, 5), Thomas 6 (Bell 35, 6), Cunningham 7, Perry 8.5, Byfield 6. Subs not used: Whin, S. Hendrie.