LUTON TOWN 0
GRIMSBY TOWN 0

13/14

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PAUL HURST, Grimsby manager

HURST CALLS FOR AN END TO MAYHEM AT MARINERS

SO CLOSE: Jake Howells needs just wide

PICTURES: Gareth Owen

Scott's future is unclear

By STUART HAMMONDS

VERDICT: While Luton continue to build from the back, Grimsby were looking to simply rebuild after a stormy week. The latter certainly left happier with the point.

PAUL HURST says he wants joint-boss Rob Scott back at his side, but would be prepared to manage Grimsby on his own after seeing his team earn a point in his first game in sole charge.

The Mariners headed back to Cleethorpes with a clean sheet, but questions still being asked about Friday morning's vague official club announcement about Scott's absence.

The NLP understands Scott has not been sacked and is still employed by Grimsby, with Hurst – his long-time Rotherham United team-mate and joint-gaffer at Ilkeston, Boston and Blundell Park – keen for the mysterious situation to be resolved.

He said: "It's not a nice situation to be in and having worked for the past five seasons with Rob, it was a bit unusual today.

"There is no reason why I wouldn't want him back. I'd like whatever it is to be resolved as quickly as possible, but in the meantime, I'm confident in my ability to take the team.

"I think I've done every job going today, and it was a real rush, but we've just got to get on with it."

Asked whether he would be prepared to continue on his own, Hurst said: "Of course, because I want to be a manager and want to be part of the football club – as I am whether it's with Rob or not.

"But I'm not going to throw away the relationship we've had, the good times that we've had and the success. Rob's a massive part of that as well, so I hope that he can be back at the football club."

Luton had by far the better of the first half, with Paul Benson spurning four good chances to open his Hatters account on his home debut.

An early far post header went wide, as did a powerful 25th-minute half-volley before a second nod of the head went straight into goalkeeper James McKeown's grateful hands.

The on-loan Swindon man's best chance, however, came in first-half stoppage time when Chris Doig's attempted interception ran invitingly into his path eight yards out, but Shaun Pearson managed to slide back to clear Benson's deft chip over McKeown.

While Benson was leading the line with purpose, if not quite the polish of someone 100 per cent match fit, Luke Guttridge was pulling the strings and Jake Howells – clearly boosted by a brace of penalties at Kidderminster last week – was displaying his confidence of three years ago.

The midfield pair both went close with headed efforts from quality crosses from the right flank by captain Ronnie Henry, though too often the final ball left much to be desired.

Grimsby's attacking efforts amounted to an Alex Rodman free-kick that flew high into the Kenilworth Road End, while Craig Disley skimmed a 20-yarder a foot wide.

The hail storm that ended the half seemed symbolic of their week's end, but Hurst's first solo half-time team talk produced some early intent in the second half, Rodman meeting a Paul Bignot cross at the far post but unable to direct it on target under pressure from Henry.

The ex-Tamworth and Aldershot winger then tried to capitalise on a rare moment of casual defending from Steve McNulty, who allowed a long ball to drift over his head believing it would travel through to goalkeeper Mark Tyler.

It broke to Rodman from a posse of players in the six-yard box, but the Hatters' centre-half recovered quickly to block his shot.

The Mariners were certainly enjoying more possession, but produced little to trouble Tyler with home substitutes Jim Stevenson and Alex Wall coming closest to breaking the deadlock in the final quarter.

John Still's Hatters have not conceded in 387 minutes and have now had three goalless draws in four outings, but he said: "I've got no problems with anything we did today, apart from putting the ball in the net.

"It's always frustrating when that happens, but it's really important that the structure of our team is good.

"We are making progress and we have players in our team who can score. If one goes in, plenty more will follow."

POT SHOT: Grimsby's Paddy McLaughlin tries his luck

MATCH STATS

LUTON v GRIMSBY	
5 SHOTS ON TARGET	0
13 SHOTS OFF TARGET	3
5 CORNERS	3
0 OFFSIDE	1
15 FOULS CONCEDED	7
0 YELLOW CARDS	2
0 RED CARDS	0

STAR MAN: Paul Benson (Luton)
ATT: 6,131
ENTERTAINMENT: ●●○○○
REF RATING: Peter Bankes 7/10

LUTON: (4-1-4-1): Tyler 6, Henry 7, McNulty 7, Lacey 6 (Stevenson 46, 6), Griffiths 6, Parry 7, Gray 5 (Whaley 71, 5), Smith 6, Guttridge 7 (Wall 84, 5), Howells 7, Benson 6. **Subs not used:** Cullen, Justham.

GRIMSBY: (4-3-2-1): McKeown 7, Bignot 6, Pearson 7, Doig 7, Goodall 7, Kerr 7, Disley 6 (Thancy 88), McLaughlin 7, Colback 5 (Cook 87, 5), Rodman 6 (Nelson 80, 5), John-Lewis 6. **Subs not used:** McDonald, Hannah.