



TAMWORTH 3

Courtney 13, 76, Elford-Alliyu 64 (pen)



LUTON TOWN 4

Smith 31, Parry 41, Benson 46, 55

13/14

LUTON WIN BUT LAMBS REFUSE TO LIE DOWN

By Chris Philpotts

IT MIGHT not have been at Wembley, but Luton boss John Still was all smiles as Luton won a seven-goal thriller in a "cup final atmosphere".

The promotion-chasing Hatters had looked odds on to take a victory after taking a 4-1 lead inside the opening ten minutes of the second-half – but a spirited Tamworth comeback meant it was a less-than-easy victory for Luton in the end.

Despite that late wobble, Still declared himself very proud of his side.

He said: "I have got nothing but praise for my lads. We got a win in a real cup final match. I used to manage one of their lads and he told me, 'that was the big game for us'.

"Am I happy we conceded three goals? No not really, but in the same breath we scored four away from home. I have got to be pleased with that."

In what turned out to be an even affair, it was the home side who struck first, as in just the 12th minute Duane Courtney tapped home from six yards out. That lead was to last just 18 minutes, as Jonathan Smith brought the sides level with a thunderous strike from fully 30 yards out.

Cameron Belford was helpless to stop it, and he was helpless to stop the Hatters from going ahead in similar circumstances four minutes before the break. This time it was Andy Parry with the strike, hit from more of an angle than that of Smith, but the end result was the same as the ball rocketed into the back of the net.

The Lambs would have been hoping to hit back early in the second-half, but instead it was the visitors who stretched their lead just 51 seconds after the restart.

Paul Benson grabbed the goal, nodding past Belford from a tight angle while under pressure.

The Lambs were shell shocked and found themselves 4-1 down nine minutes later when Benson was allowed too much time in the area, and left unmarked to tap home a fine pull-back from

MATCH STATS

TAMWORTH v LUTON

8	SHOTS ON TARGET	5
8	SHOTS OFF TARGET	5
9	CORNERS	4
2	OFFSIDE	1
9	FOULS CONCEDED	10
0	YELLOW CARDS	0
0	RED CARDS	0

STAR MAN: Paul Benson
(Luton Town)

ATT: 2,066

ENTERTAINMENT: ★★★★★

REF RATING: Robert Whitton
8/10

TAMWORTH: (4-4-2): Belford 6; Higgins 6, Richards-Everton 5, Courtney 7, Capaldi 6; Todd 6 (Chadwick HT 6), Baker 5 (Hildreth HT 7) Kerry 7, Wright 5 (Richards 64 6); Elford-Alliyu 8, Peniket 6.
Subs not used: Regan, Woolery.
LUTON: (4-4-2): Tyler 6, Henry 6, McNulty 6, Griffiths 7, Lacey 6, Whalley 7, Smith 8, Parry 7, Guttridge 6 (Lawless 71 5), Benson 8, Gray 7 (Charles 87 5). **Subs not used:** Cullen, Justham, Robinson.

strike partner Andre Gray.

The match looked sewn up at this stage, but the Lambs came back with a vengeance, with Lateef Elford-Alliyu leading the fightback in the 64th minute.

The Lambs frontman won – and converted – a penalty after being brought down in the box by Scott Griffiths, leading to some nervy moments for the visitors.

Those nerves were really tested 12 minutes later when Courtney grabbed his second of the game, somehow flicking the ball over his head in a crowded box and into the back of the net.

Despite piling on the pressure in the last ten minutes the Lambs were unable to see their comeback complete.

Dale Belford added that he thought the fans, if not the Tamworth management, would be able to go home with their heads held high after the defeat.

He said: "From a fans point of view that game was incredible, our fans must be so proud of the way the lads came back.

"Obviously as a manager I am not happy we lost the game, but we did a lot right out there and I think if we keep playing like that we will be alright."