



GATESHEAD 0 LUTON TOWN 0



"I love it here and I want to take the club back into the Football League - it isn't always about the money and chasing the big clubs."

GARY MILLS,
Gateshead manager



"The two teams are in good form and they both competed well. It was a game of few chances and in the end a draw was a fair result."

JOHN STILL,
Luton manager

13/14

MILLS MAKES LUSTY LUTON

A SPLASH YET STAY AFLOAT



WATERWORLD: Luton's Luke Cutridge and Gateshead's Adam Boyes clash in the rain-lashed conditions

Loyalty pays for the Heed



By JEFF BOWRON

VERDICT: The only winner in a real arm wrestle between the two form sides was the atrocious weather, but both bosses were satisfied with their charges nevertheless.

SO, in the end, this Skirl Premier Match of the Day ended in stalemate - Gateshead missing out on a sixth straight win while Luton extended their unbeaten run to eight games.

Seven months ago, the Heed inflicted Luton's heaviest ever Conference defeat when romping to a 5-1 victory at Carlisle's Brunton Park.

This time, under their much-maligned new boss Gary Mills, the Heed were equally hardworking at a windwept and rain-lashed International Stadium - only this time failed to find that killer touch.

Indeed, all eyes were on the Heed chief after pledging his future to the club this week in the wake of interest from moneysbags Forest Green Rovers.

And the performance was enough to convince the former York City boss that he made the right decision.

"I love it here," Mills said. "Tyreside is a great place to live and work and while Forest Green's approach was flattering it isn't all about money."

"I want to take Gateshead back into the Football League. I achieved that at York and I want to do the same here."

"It's not always about chasing



UP AND AWAY: James Curtis clears his lines to keep out a Luton attack.

big clubs and thinking success is going to happen automatically."

But Mills is not the only welcome new addition to the International Stadium since April, the new playing surface also proved a godsend in miserable conditions, although puddles did start to form early on, making passing football difficult.

With Paul Turnbull and ex-Wales international John Oster pulling the strings in midfield, Gateshead were the more threatening side in the opening 45 minutes.

Indeed, it was from Turnbull's 11th-minute free-kick that brought the Heed first goal as Jonathan Smith picked Colin Larkin's pocket near halfway. Paul Benson's flick on from Andre Gray's pass then

found Cutridge unmarked on the left edge of the box, but the former Aldershot and Torquay schemer sliced badly wide.

But despite enjoying the greater share of the chances, Gateshead just couldn't find a way past McNulty, who cleared from under his crossbar again from Jamie Chandler's job before getting his head in the way of on-loan Midlands-born left-back Lewis Sirell's stinging drive, deflecting it just over the bar.

Cutridge, though, was given a second bite of the cherry to put Luton in front, but once again the midfielder man dragged his shot wide from Gray's lay-off when he should have done better.

Gateshead then thought they had stolen the points late on when Curtis rose highest to win an injury-time header, only to be kept out by Luton keeper Mark Tyler.

"The two teams are in good form and they both competed well in difficult conditions," was Still's

MATCH STATS	
GATESHEAD v LUTON	
5 SHOTS ON TARGET	3
4 SHOTS OFF TARGET	2
3 CORNERS	2
0 OFFSIDE	5
3 FOULS CONCEDED	9
0 YELLOW CARDS	1
0 RED CARDS	0
STAR MAN: Steve McNulty (Luton)	
ATK: 1,080	
ENTERTAINMENT: *****	
REF RATING: Ross Joyce 8/10	
GATESHEAD (4-3-3): Barlow 7, Barker 8, Sirell 7, Chandler 8, Maguire 7.5, Gray 8, Clark 7, Larkin 8, Turnbull 7, Hatch 7, Brown 6.5, Ooster 8, Ranshaw 7, Brown 5.5, 6, Sullivan not used, Cummings, Walker	
LUTON (4-2-3-1): Tyler 7, Smith 7, McNulty 8, Howells 7, O'Sullivan 8.5, 6, Griffiths 7, Parns 8, Cutridge 8, Henry 7, Henry 7, Benson 7, Gray 6, Scullen 7.5, 6, Lacey 8, Sullivan not used, Tawo, Judson, Stevenson	

assessment afterwards. "It wasn't the best of attacking games but when the ball doesn't run true, the rain is lashing down and the wind is blowing a gale it makes it difficult."

"We had the two best chances of the game with Cutridge but the ball wasn't running freely. It was a game of few chances and in the end a draw was a fair result in atrocious conditions."

Mills added: "We were excellent again today in tough conditions. We kept possession and we had to be patient as Luton sat off us and made it difficult."

"We did that and were waiting to stick away one of our chances. We had four good opportunities to win the game but when it didn't happen it was important to keep another clean sheet."

"If you don't win you don't lose. We've had five clean sheets from the last six games and have taken a good point from a team sitting third in the table and tipped to be promoted."