

SALISBURY CITY 0 LUTON TOWN 0

HATTERS GO BASICS TO

FLAGGED: Andre Gray sees the ball roll into the net but his goal was disallowed for offside

PICTURES
Derek Murphy

MATCH STATS SALISBURY v LUTON

8 SHOTS ON TARGET	2
2 SHOTS OFF TARGET	5
5 CORNERS	5
4 OFFSIDE	3
6 FOULS CONCEDED	9
1 YELLOW CARDS	1
0 RED CARDS	0

STAR MAN: Rob Sinclair (Salisbury)
AITE: 2.633
ENTERTAINMENT: *****
REF RATING: Daniel Cook 6/10
SALISBURY: (4-3-3): Puddy 7, Amankwah 6, MacDonald 7, Wilson 7, Clarke 7, Kamdje 6, H Sinclair 6 (White 90+2), S Sinclair 7, Frear 7, McPhee 6, Fitchett 6 (Ward 89). Subs not used: Hart, Green, Ertmer.
LUTON: (4-3-3): Tyler 7, Henry 7, McNulty 7, Franks 8, Griffiths 7, Mpanzu 6, McGeehan 6 (Robinson 75, 6), Howells 6, Gray 7, Lawless 6 (Cullen 90+1), Benson 6. Subs not used: Charles, Shaw, Juntham.



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MIKEY HARRIS,
Salisbury City manager



"We had to work hard, battle hard. Everyone had to put their head in and their foot in and volley it - a bit of playground football - and we did."
JOHN STILL,
Luton Town manager

BACK TO THE GRAB POINT



By **STUART HAMMONDS**

VERDICT: Not a classic, but leaders Luton lope towards League Two with a point from one of the Skit Premier's tortresses

SOME of their recent football may have had the wow-factor of a fairground, but Luton boss John Still was happy to see his side move a point closer to the Skit Premier title by turning in a "playground" performance.

It was an afternoon in which the Hatters never looked like scaling the heights of their previous four matches, in which they'd scored 20 goals without reply.

In truth, they didn't even look like touching the trajectory of the low-flying aircraft heading in and out of Britain's finest surviving World War One airfield, just down the road in Old Sarum.

But with nearest rivals Cambridge losing 3-2 at Forest Green, a hard-fought draw at play-off contenders Salisbury, who started the day in sixth place, ensured the team that City boss Mikey Harris describes as "champions" would finish it 15 points clear.

The stalemate extended Luton's unbeaten run to 26 matches - four short of Crawley's Conference record - and their stretch without conceding a goal now stands at five



STUDS UP: Salisbury's James Clarke, left, gets the ball in front of Alex Lawless

than finding the visiting keeper's gloves.
"It was a tough game on a difficult surface," said Still. "They edged it on chances, in the first half definitely, and we weren't as fluid as we have been."

"We had to work hard, battle hard. Everyone had to put their head in and their foot in and volley it - a bit of playground football - and we did."

Salisbury certainly did have the better of the opening 45, with the Sinclair brothers - Rob and Stuart - revelling in the midfield battle against the club they started their careers with.

Rob, the elder, shot straight at Mark Tyler while Elliott Frear and Dan Fitchett, two of five starters who had represented England C in Jordan, should have done better

than finding the visiting keeper's gloves.

Top scorer Andre Gray, Luton's international representative alongside impressive centre-half Fraser Franks, came closest to breaking the deadlock, however, with a 35-yard thunderbolt. All goalkeeper Will Puddy could do was stand and admire it, then breathe a sigh of relief as it rebounded back past him off a post.

City started the second half impressively too, with the Sinclair siblings each shooting straight at Tyler before Luton eventually scrapped their way to late authority.

Gray almost capped his 100th appearance for the Hatters with his 53rd goal, but saw his effort disallowed for offside against Paul

Benson. Then lovely interplay between Alex Lawless - starting for the first time in two months in place of the injured Luke Guttridge - and Gray forced Puddy into a match-saving dash off his line to deny the lightning quick striker.

Benson spurned the Hatters' clearest chance four minutes into injury-time, when Pelly Raddock Mpanzu hooked a half-cleared corner back into the six-yard box and the veteran striker, at full stretch, poked over the bar.

It was a good point for both sides, even if wins for top-five rivals meant Harris' Whites dropped to eighth.

"There was very little between the teams and for me, that's a positive because I've no doubt that we've just played the champions," said the division's youngest manager, who was up against its most senior in Still, a 63-year-old he calls regularly for advice.

"We've got 11 games to go and we'll see where we end up," continued the 29-year-old rookie. "Put things in perspective; at the start of the season no-one gave us a chance of avoiding relegation, so it's a massive positive to be in with a shout of the play-offs at this stage."

Luton have a dozen left, starting with Tuesday's trip to their nearest rivals Cambridge.

"It is no bigger than today and no bigger than next week," said Still. "It's another game where we've just got to go and compete and try and get as many points as we can. They are all big games"