



LEAGUE TWO

EXETER CITY 1
LUTON TOWN 1

Nichols (pen) 72

Griffiths 3

Att: 5,400 Rating: ★★★★★ Ref: Dean Whitestone 8/10

14/15

NICHOLS PENALTY SAVES EXETER

By Matt Bamsey

JOHN Still didn't know whether to cuddle or berate Scott Griffiths after the defender went from hero to villain in this thrilling spectacle between the league's in-form sides.

Griffiths netted only his second goal in 68 games for the Hatters to hand the visitors a dream start in the third minute.

But Exeter launched a second-half bombardment and their pressure paid off when Griffiths, who was about to be substituted due to cramp, lunged in on Christian Ribeiro.

Having just come off the bench, Exeter striker Tom Nichols kept his composure to send Mark Tyler the wrong way from the spot – and end Luton's seven-game winning run.

"I was about to make a change when they scored. Scott had run out of petrol and he should have stayed on his feet," said Still.

"But the one time we dive in it is a penalty and he is more experienced than that. That said he scored a good goal to give us the lead so I am not going to blame him.

"I am delighted to have got something from the game because we knew this was going to be a tough one. Wycombe and Bury have both lost here and we are pleased to come away with a point."

The Hatters grabbed an early breakthrough when Griffiths was given far too much space to head home an Andy Drury corner.

Graham Cummins squandered a glorious chance to haul Exeter level on 19 minutes when he gathered Scot Bennett's header, only to see his close-range effort saved by Tyler.

The Grecians survived a scare before half-time, Drury's cross picking out Paul Benson and he side-footed across goal with Mark Cullen almost connecting.

The pattern of the game remained largely the same after the break, Exeter bossing possession and pinning Luton deep in their half and the visitors counter-attacking.

It was a strategy that suited Luton well and Cullen tested Christy Pym with a piledriver before Exeter boss Paul Tisdale made a double substitution.

David Noble and Liam Sercombe came off the bench to replace Arron Davies and Jimmy Keohane and the switch almost paid off.

Sercombe's deep cross found Cummins and, after his header was pushed away by Tyler, Bennett fired over the bar.

Pym produced a great save to keep out Drury's free-kick and, at the other end, Sercombe shot narrowly past the post.

Exeter's pressure finally paid off after Ribeiro swept into the box and Griffiths sent the former Bristol City man tumbling, Nichols making no mistake with the spot kick.

"That's the best we have played at home this season by a distance. It is another top-of-the-table side coming here and not leaving with all three points," said Tisdale.

"Obviously it was disappointing to concede a goal in the first few minutes but after that we played really well and had the lion's share of it.

"You have to say then that maybe they defended well, but it was our game to take at the end. It just shows how well we are progressing but there is a long season ahead of us."

EXETER: (3-5-2): Pym 7, Ribeiro 8, Butterfield 7, Woodman 7, Oakley 7, Bennett 7, Wheeler 7, Grimes 8, Davies 6 (Noble 55 7), Keohane 6 (Sercombe 55 7), Cummins 7 (Nichols 70 7)
Subs not used: Hamon, Riley-Lowe, Tillson, Jay
LUTON: (4-4-2): Tyler 7, Harriman 7, McNulty 7, Wilkinson 7, Griffiths 6 (Lacey 73 6), Drury 7, Doyle 6, Smith 7, Howells 6 (Gultridge 63 6), Cullen 7 (Miller 81 6), Benson 6
Subs not used: Justham, Rooney, Whalley, Stevenson



STAR MAN
CHRISTIAN RIBEIRO
Exeter

GREAT SCOTT:
Scott Griffiths
has just scored
for Luton
PICTURES: Pinnacle