

LEAGUE TWO

NORTHAMPTON 2

Holmes (pen) 64, Gray 86

LUTON TOWN 1

Lawless 46

Att: 5,668 Rating: ★★★

Ref: Graham Scott 7/10

14/15



RUNNING WILD:
James Gray
celebrates scoring
Northampton's second
PICTURES: Action Images

By Jefferson Lake

THE final eight games of the season will be all about the play-off pursuit for both Luton and Northampton, and it's the Cobblers who will be riding high on confidence after James Gray's winner four minutes from time – even if Hatters boss John Still felt it should have been a different story at Sixfields.

The Hatters lost for a sixth straight game despite taking the lead in the first minute of the second half through midfielder Alex Lawless' strike.

The outstanding Ricky Holmes equalised from the spot after Michael Harriman was adjudged to have handled a cross and Gray won it late on.

It was the right result and will once again stir the Cobblers' play-off ambitions as they now sit just four points outside of the top seven.

Luton are two further ahead but have now slipped below the dotted line in a division in which they were leaders in October.

Their manager Still felt his team were deprived at Northampton by a refereeing decision that he viewed as more ball to hand on Harriman.

"The decision that went against us for the penalty was disappointing," he said.

"I can moan about that as much as I like but it's not going to change the result and we've lost again.

"I thought we were comfortable for large parts of the game.

"We had a few more men back in the team and I didn't feel like we were under any real pressure.

"People were doing their job and it was a case of containing them

STILL LEFT FUMING AT REF SHOW

because we knew chances would come after that.

"We did everything that I would have liked us to have done.

"But I can't control the uncontrollables and one of those is the referee. We've had so many decisions go against us this year where we haven't had penalties but nobody even appealed for the one they got.

"Things like that are hurting us at the moment and I felt for the players because we've made mistakes in games recently but our performance here was first class and I've got no problems with it."

Northampton are back on track after after two successive defeats prior to this game and their manager Chris Wilder was delighted with the result.

"That's what you are in this business for, days like this, it was a proper game of football," Wilder said.

"We were disappointed not to go in at half-time ahead but Luton are a dangerous side and they were determined to stop their losing run.

"I felt we deserved to win the game.

"We told the players at half-time to go out and play like they can and get the win they deserved.

"Luton are an attacking team but we pushed them back and moved the ball around well, we just lacked that final pass. Their keeper has made some very good saves to keep them in it but they were always going to be dangerous from set-pieces."

STAR MAN
RICKY HOLMES
Northampton

NORTHAMPTON: Duke 6; Moloney 7; Collins 7; Cresswell 7; Newey 6 (Carter 64 6); Byrom 8; Taylor 8; Holmes 9; O'Toole 5 (Toney 64 7); D'Ath 7; Gray 8
Subs not used: Hackett, Diamond, Warburton, Clifton, Jalal
LUTON: Justham 7; Harriman 5; McNulty 6 (Lacey 56 5); Wilkinson 5; Kinsella 5; Drury 5; Doyle 4; Smith 4; Lawless 6 (McGeehan 82); Cullen 6 (Miller 70 5); Benson 5
Subs not used: Guttridge, Stockley, Hall, Gooch



MY BALL: Luton's Elliot Justham holds on tight