



LUTON TN 2

McGeehan (pen) 60, Mackail-Smith 86

(4-3-3): Tyler 4, O'Donnell 6 (Mpanzu 85 N/A), Cuthbert 7, Sheehan 5, Howells 5, Lawless 6 (Hall 72 5), McGeehan 7, Lee 5, Green 6, Piggot 5 (Mackail-Smith 80 7), Marriott 6 Subs not used: Smith, McCourt, Justham, Okuonghae

HARTLEPOOL U 1

Jackson 65

(4-3-3): Carson 5, Magnay 6, Bates 7, Jackson 7, Carroll 5, Walker 6, Featherstone 7, Hawkins 5, Gray 6, Paynter 6, Thomas 6 (Oates 85 N/A). Subs not used: Harrison, Bingham, Bartlett, Fenwick, Richards, Laurent.

Aft: 7,880 Rating: ★★★ Ref: Andy Davies 7/10

Hignett's wait for first win goes on

THREE games, one win and two defeats – Craig Hignett is finding out about football management the tough way.

Appointed Hartlepool United boss last week, the former Middlesbrough assistant manager saw his new side fall to a harsh defeat at Kenilworth Road.

The Hatters won thanks to an 85th-minute goal from wily striker Craig Mackail-Smith, who latched onto a long ball from the back, and smartly lobbed home from an angle.

"It was harsh on us, I can see the improvement in the lads," said Hignett.

"First half we didn't keep the ball well, but we looked organised and solid which was pleasing.

"The shape of the team was excellent and we worked for each other and we stifled them. They ran out of ideas, second half especially.

"We will win more than we lose, we just need that little run of wins.

"First half we created chances and should have gone in with a goal. Second half we were really good and controlled the game and the lads said they didn't ever feel under any pressure, we were on top.

"I thought we frustrated and they ran out of ideas, started hitting long balls which showed that."

Pools went close in the first half when attacker Nathan Thomas prodded wide from close range.

But the Hatters, who almost led when

By Nick Loughlin

Cameron McGeehan prodded wide after a deep break, were awarded a penalty on the hour mark as Nicky Featherstone was harshly ruled to have handled.

McGeehan made no mistake this time.

But the lead lasted only five minutes as defender Adam Jackson headed in from a Jake Gray corner.

Pools pressed and probed and controlled the game. The Hatters' game was limited to centre-half Alan Sheehan pumping endless angled balls from deep.

They were comfortably dealt with, but when one from fellow defender Scott Cuthbert arrived it brought the winner.

Home boss Nathan Jones said: "They sat back, they came here to do that. We

lacked a bit of cutting edge and that's the only reason why it wasn't much easier for us.

"If we had defended better after going in front it would have been easier. Craig Mackail-Smith gets in that situation and wins it for us, but perhaps we should have been ahead before then.

"Hartlepool knew what we were all about and I want to educate the players here, to educate the fans and hopefully they will start to appreciate what we are all about and what we are trying to do here. But we are happy with a win and overcame a real physiological barrier."

