

ROYSTON EAGLES 3-1 LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY EAGLES YELLOWS

WELL, it would be a bit boring if they reached double figures every week.

Kian Harness' brilliant first-half hat-trick was enough to decide a match which proved tougher than expected but gave Royston the little kick up the backside they probably needed.

Although the home team did not hit the heights of some of their performances earlier in the season, there were good displays throughout the side against opponents who did not roll over as others had done.

It took some solid defending and some good goalkeeping by stand-in stopper Jacob McCormack to stop Letchworth coming back into the game but the visitors did become the first team to stop Eagles scoring for a whole half.

They were also only the second to score against them in the league – and did so inside the first 30 seconds or so.

The clocks had just gone back and the hosts were still enjoying a lie-in as Letchworth pounced on a half-clearance and smacked the ball home.

There was no sense of panic, though, and the Harness show soon began.

Within two minutes, Logan Downie made a trademark run down the left and the striker converted from close range.

Then Jack Piggott hustled the Letchworth defence, winning an aerial duel he had no right to, and Harness swept the ball sweetly in off the bar.

And with 15 minutes on the clock, Sam Fage did some great work on the right and Harness claimed his third.

He had considerable help for all three, but his positioning was so good and so typical of his huge work rate, and his finishing was superb.

Harness earned his man of the match award in just that quarter of an hour, but the way he kept playing and fighting right until the end made absolutely sure.

The lead could and probably should have been extended before half time, but the visiting 'keeper and a lack of killer instinct in the final third kept the score the same.

The second half was a different story, though.

Royston had plenty of possession and further chances, but Letchworth showed real spirit and caused some nervous moments.

The post and McCormack kept one effort out and the 'keeper himself made an important save at a time when a goal for the visitors could have changed the game.

Royston had to dig in and everyone did, including debutant Max Coutts who showed why he will be a real asset.

For the last 10 minutes the home side looked the more likely to score but this time Eagles had to settle for a hard-fought, well-deserved win rather than an emphatic one.

TEAM: Jacob McCormack, Jacob Schroeder, Cameron King, Oscar Youngman, Sam Fage, Kyle Smith, Sean Blois, Logan Downie, Luca Winterton, Jack Piggott, Kian Harness, Owen Maslen, George Palmer, Will Hamblin, Max Coutts.