

Luton run riot as Oxford throw in towel

Anniversary waltz for superb Hatters

Hats off to brilliant display

LUTON TOWN were in party mood when they visited the Manor Ground, and Oxford United, who are celebrating their 25th anniversary in the Football League, certainly allowed the visitors to have more than their fair share of the fun.

By LEO CLARKE

For it was hats off to the Hatters as the side – orchestrated by mid-field genius Ricky Hill – ran riot scoring five spectacular goals to wrap up their first victory of the season and in doing so, fired a warning to champions Everton who visit Kenilworth Road on Saturday.

Oxford boss Maurice Evans was still shell-shocked after the crushing defeat and declared his side as, “rubbish.”

He added: “It was absolute rubbish. Luton deserved to win and deserved to win 5-2.

“We threw the towel in when we were 3-1 down and I thought we may as well as come off. I thought

OXFORD UNITED 2, LUTON TOWN 5

Luton played well: I thought we were awful.”

Luton manager Ray Harford, able to field his first full strength side since the first four minutes at Derby, beamed: “When the goals go in it makes everybody relax and when we were three or four up we passed the ball quite well.

“We were back to full strength, and it showed. Luton players like exhibiting their skills and they were good quality goals that were shared around.”

Quality was certainly the right word to describe Luton's display especially in the second half as they simply destroyed the home team. But there were moments, especially in the early opening encounters when it seemed both sides would be content to settle for a draw.

Luton really didn't get into their stride until well into the first half when they were stirred into action after Les Sealey had to hack away a clearance when Dean Saunders broke through to chase a

deep ball. Brian Stein and Mick Harford combined well with Harford just missing the target with a well-judged header.

However, the Hatters didn't have to wait long before breaking the deadlock when Stein popped up in the area in the 33rd minute.

Hill had been tripped by Neil Slatter on the edge of the box, David Preece hit the free kick towards the centre of the area and Stein did the rest with a glancing header which gave Peter Hucker no chance. But Oxford were allowed to get back into the game when Mal Donaghy gave away a needless corner.

Although the first effort was cleared the following corner, pushed deep into the area by Ray Houghton spelled trouble.

First Martin Foyle was denied when Sealey turned his header onto the bar but Slatter drove the ball home to level the score.

Luton were back in front on the stroke of half time thank's to Tim

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Breacker who powered his drive home after a neat one, two with Stein. Within 25 seconds of the second half, Luton were 1-3 up after a spectacular flying header from Emeka Nwajiobi.

Stein set up the move passing to Harford who tore down the wing before sending over his cross.

Hill got into the act in the 71st minute sweeping the ball past Hucker and Harford showed deft skill in the 75th minute with a beautiful lob from about 25 yards.

Foyle earned some consolation for Oxford two minutes later when he forced his way down the middle to score more from close range.

The result was Luton's best against Oxford and Oxford's worst at home since joining the Division 1.

OXFORD: Hucker, Langan, Dreyer (Rhoades-Brown 83), Reck (Mustoe 46), Slatter, Caton, Houghton, Foyle, Whitehurst, Hebbard, Saunders.

LUTON: Sealey, Breacker, Grimes, Hill, Foster, Donaghy, Wilson, B. Stein, (M. Stein 83), Harford, Nwajiobi, Preece (Johnson 73).

Referee: Mr John Deakin (Middlesex). Attendance: 6,804.

● No holds barred! — Mick Harford who scored Luton's fifth goal is kept firmly on the ground.



● Emeka Nwajiobi — who scored Luton's third goal 25 seconds after the interval.



● It's there — Tim Breacker puts Luton ahead on the stroke of half time.